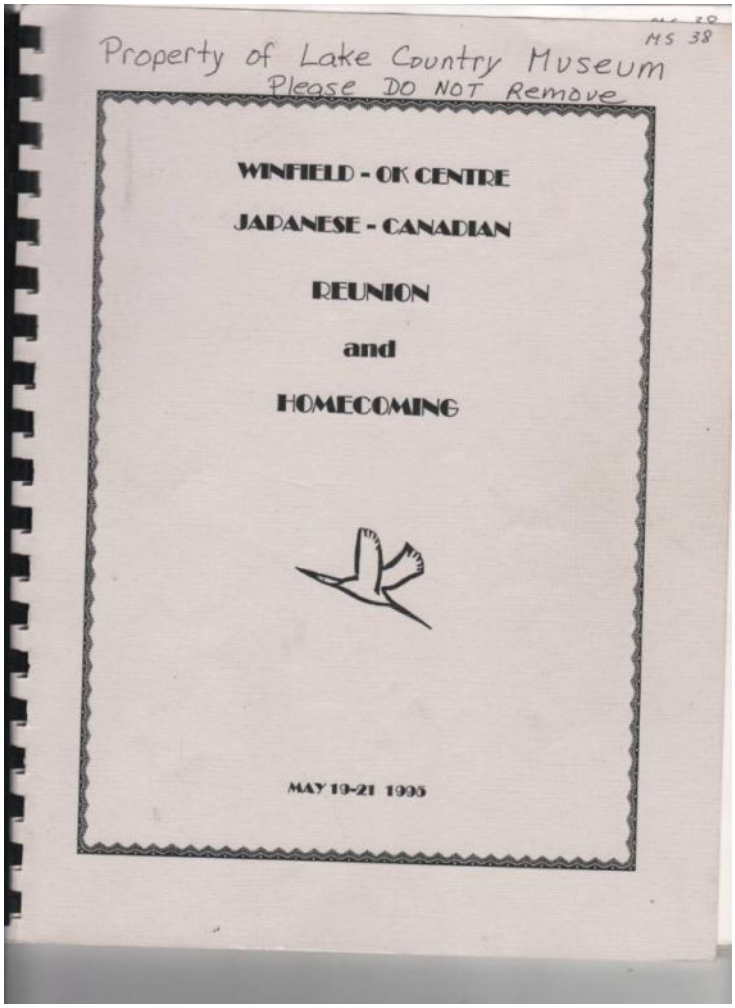
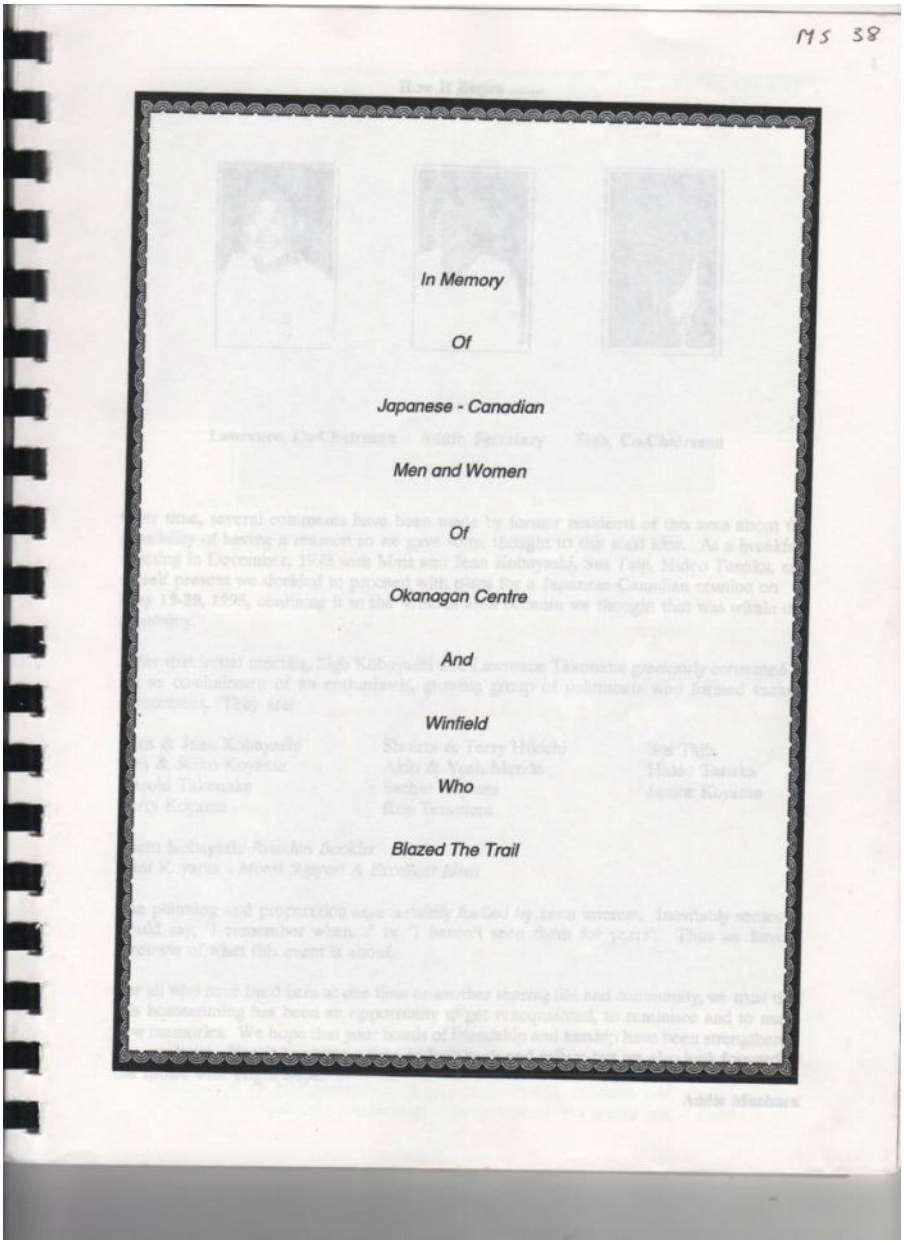


Winfield - OK Centre

Japanese - Canadian

Reunion and Homecoming

May 19 - 21 1995



In Memory

Of

Japanese - Canadian

Men and Women

Of

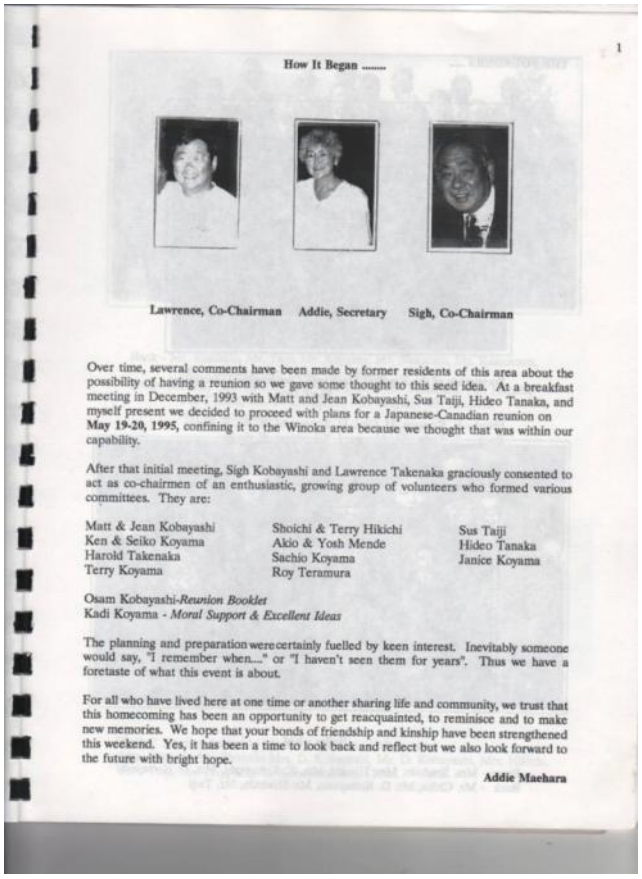
Okanagan Centre

And

Winfield

Who

Blazed The Trail



1

How It Began .....

Lawrence, Co-Chairman Addie, Secretary Sigh, Co-Chairman

Over time, several comments have been made by former residents of this area about the possibility of having a reunion so we gave some thought to this seed idea. At a breakfast meeting in December, 1993 with Matt and Jean Kobayashi, Sus Taiji, Hideo Tanaka, and myself present we decided to proceed with plans for a Japanese-Canadian reunion on **May 19-20, 1995**, confining it to the Winoka area because we thought that was within our capability.

After that initial meeting, Sigh Kobayashi and Lawrence Takenaka graciously consented to act as co-chairmen of an enthusiastic, growing group of volunteers who formed various committees. They are:

Matt & Jean Kobayashi	Shoichi & Terry Hikichi	Sus Taiji
Ken & Seiko Koyama	Akio & Yosh Mende	Hideo Tanaka
Harold Takenaka	Sachio Koyama	Janice Koyama
Terry Koyama	Roy Teramura	

Osam Kobayashi-*Reunion Booklet*
Kadi Koyama - *Moral Support & Excellent Ideas*

The planning and preparation were certainly fuelled by keen interest. Inevitably someone would say, "I remember when...." or "I haven't seen them for years". Thus we have a foretaste of what this event is about.

For all who have lived here at one time or another sharing life and community, we trust that this homecoming has been an opportunity to get reacquainted, to reminisce and to make new memories. We hope that your bonds of friendship and kinship have been strengthened this weekend. Yes, it has been a time to look back and reflect but we also look forward to the future with bright hope.

Addie Maehara

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THE FOUNDERS .....

Formation of the Koyukai (Japanese Community Association)
Early 1920 s

Front - E. Koyama, H. Oka, D. Kobayashi, Y. Ito, S. Koide
Back - T. Toda, G. Aizawa, I. Kikushima, K. Sawa

Haiku - Kai

Front - Mrs. Shishido, Mrs. Hikichi, Mrs. K. Kobayashi, Mrs. D. Kobayashi
Back - Mr. Chiba, Mr. D. Kobayashi, Mr. Shishido, Mr. Taiji

Visit of the Japanese Consul - 1930 s

Back - Mr. Shishido, Mr. Taiji, Mr. Koyama, Mr. Nakatani, Mr. Kanamaru, Mr. Takenaka, Mr. Toda, Mr. Ohashi
Front- Mr. Ito, Mr. Tanaka, Sigh Kobayashi, Mr. Teramura, Mr. Hikichi, The Consul, Mr. D. Kobayashi, Mr. Tsuyuki, Mr. Iwashita, Mr. K. Kobayashi.

"Haiku" Meeting hosted by Mr. D. Kobayashi. Left to right:
Mrs. Shishido, Mr. Shishido, Mrs. D. Kobayashi, Mr. D. Kobayashi, Mrs. Hikichi, Mrs. Taiji, Mr. Taiji, Mrs. K. Kobayashi, Mr. Chiba.

Early Pioneers .....

Mr. and Mrs. Eijiro Koyama

Mr. Koyama, Mrs. T. Koyama, Mrs. Shishido, Mrs. Koyama
.... wearing sweaters knitted by Mr. Koyama

Mr. and Mrs. D. Kobayashi
..... in front of the flowering cherry

Mr. and Mrs. Kanamaru

Wedding reception at the
D. Kobayashi house.

6

Memories and Photos from Matt and Jean

Matt and Jean Kobayashi were born and raised in Okanagan Centre and Winfield. Matt went to school in OK Centre in an old church building which housed Grades 1 to 8. The student population ranged from 14 to 23 with Mrs. Parker teaching all the grades. In 1932 a new school was built with Mr. Ted Hare as contractor. This building has now been turned into a museum. Jean was born in Winfield, one of 9 children of Eijiro and Fumi Koyama. She attended school at the George Elliot Elementary School which is still in use today. This school celebrated its 70th anniversary in May, 1993.

Matt and Jean married in November 1943 and celebrated their 50th anniversary two years ago. The photo at the right shows the wedding and attendants. Sax Koyama was the best man and Chiyoko Shishido was Jean's bridesmaid. "Chokes" is now living in Toronto. In days gone by we had a baseball team and played against the Kelowna and Summerland Japanese. We also played hockey against Vernon up on a pond above Vernon.

Matt

The K. Kobayashi Family - 1940 s

School Picnic at Carr's Landing

6

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Matt

Koyama Family

Eijiro and Fumi Koyama were married in Japan February, 1912. They homesteaded in Winfield, cleared land and gradually got a vegetable and dairy farm going. They raised a family of 9 children. Fumi passed away in 1930. Kimie who was in Japan at the time came back to care for her brothers and sisters. Each sister in turn took on the responsibilities of the house. Eijiro worked hard to keep his family together and eked out a living from the land. All are still living except for Sakuji who tragically drowned in a boating accident in January, 1988. Kimi is on the home farm, Seichi is in Japan, Ted in Toronto, Harue in Vancouver, Jean in OK Centre, Motoy in Quesnel, Mary in Corvallis, Oregon, U.S.A., and Kadi in Quesnel.

Jean

Community Picnic - 1930's

Kobayashis with Yoshiokas at Kizo's new house on Camp Road

Mieko, Jean, and Yosh
Harue and Chokes
Mr. Kanamaru's truck.

The Fabled S.S. Sicamous

7

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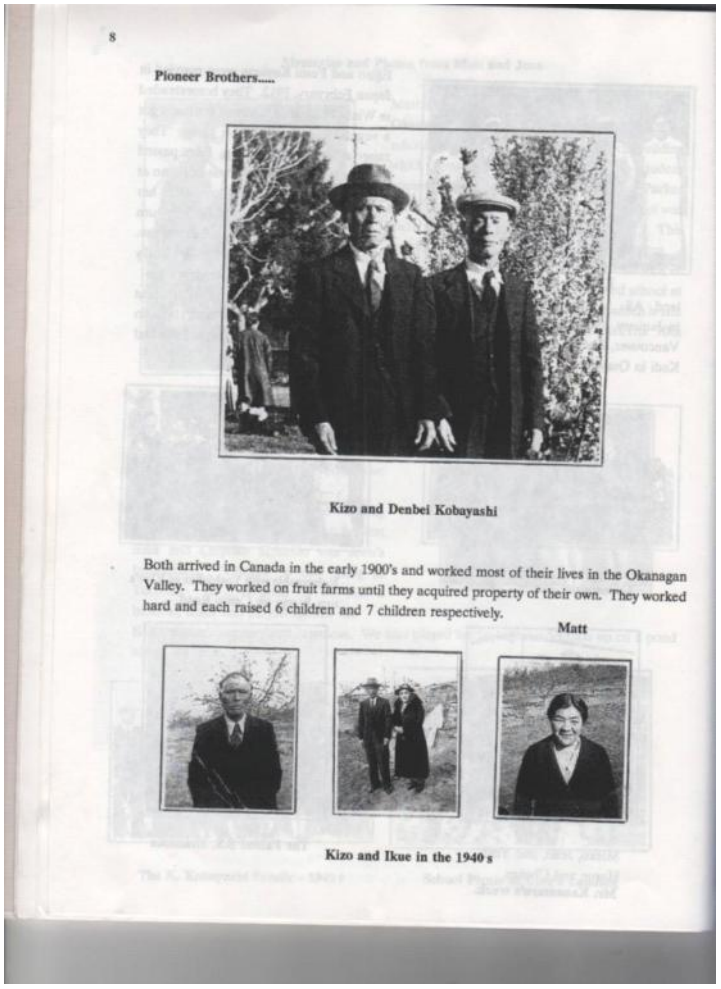

8

Pioneer Brothers.....

Kizo and Denbei Kobayashi

Both arrived in Canada in the early 1900's and worked most of their lives in the Okanagan Valley. They worked on fruit farms until they acquired property of their own. They worked hard and each raised 6 children and 7 children respectively.

Matt

Kizo and Ikue in the 1940 s

8

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Kizo and Ikue in the 1940s

The T. Koyama Family ..... Now and Then...

Yoshi, Mrs. Koyama, Ken, Mr. Koyama and Paul, Terry — 1930 s

Terry, Paul Yoshi, Ken

Terry, Paul, Sayuri, Yoshi, Isamu, Ken, Seiko — 1993

Sus Taiji Remembers When...

Mr. and Mrs. Taiji
60th Wedding Anniversary

I am immediately taken back to my parents who happened into the Winfield-Okanagan Centre area as a husband and wife team, employed in the orchard industry. The husband laboured in the orchard and the wife cooked for a Japanese crew. This camp was situated where Seaton Park now exists. Almost all of the west bench of Winfield extending over the ridge to Okanagan Centre was owned by the Okanagan Valley Land Company.

This was in the early 20's. My mother told me about the McCarthy boys and Ron Gunn herding milk cows during the summer holidays. They would stop at the camp knowing Mrs. Taiji would give them something to eat. My mother first learned English from these boys and Mrs. Brinkman and Mrs. Harrop who taught her the customs of Christmas such as - exchanging gifts, Christmas cake, and TURKEY.

The Japanese community relied then and for years on each other for entertainment, and help in building homes. My father was an apprenticed carpenter and oversaw most "Building Bees"

Social events were held at the Rainbow Ranch where Japanese were employed most of whom were bachelors. It was not unusual for families to stay overnight at times such as New Year's Eve. The mode of travel was by horse and buggy or wagon and "Shanks Pony". One simply took the shortest route with few fences to force one to stay on the roads. Community picnics with many sporting events were enjoyed in the summer months. Someone from the non-Japanese community must have taught some of the men how to play the card game of "500". they in turn taught others who then taught their children. Over the years it seems the Japanese people are about the only ones who are familiar with this game. Others who knew the game were from Ontario and some prairie people knew a variation of it. It is a game probably second to Bridge in strategy requirement. The Japanese game of "Gaji" was always enjoyed at social gatherings. "Haiku", a form of Japanese poetry was enjoyed by some who took turns hosting a meeting every month.

10

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"Haiku" Meeting

"Haiku" meeting hosted by the Taijis in the 1930's. Left to right:
Mr. Taiji, Mrs. D. Kobayashi, Mrs. Shishido, Mrs. Taiji, Mrs. Hikichi,
Mrs. K. Kobayashi, Mr. D. Kobayashi, Mr. Chiba, Sus and Michi Taiji, Mr. Shishido.

After leaving the "Company", my father worked for James Aberdeen in South Winfield. During harvest he would hook the horses to the wagon, go a mile to the packing house and load up with empty boxes. Returning to the orchard, he would pick and fill these boxes and haul them back to the packing house for .05¢ a box. Those were good wages for those times! I recall going with my father on this same wagon with steel wheels to ship boxes of apples to friends in Vancouver. We bounced five miles over the "Back Centre Road" to the wharf at OK Centre to load the apples on to the "boat" which took the freight to Vernon where it was transferred to trains. These friends in Vancouver would send us a crate of salted spring salmon which became a main part of our diet. At school I would gladly trade my salmon sandwich for almost any other kind!

I believe the Japanese community played an important role. They were diligent workers and possessed a special touch in "making things grow". For example, they were the only ones capable of budding and grafting fruit trees so important in the early years of orcharding. Those that took up roots here integrated well into the community and aided in the advancement of it.

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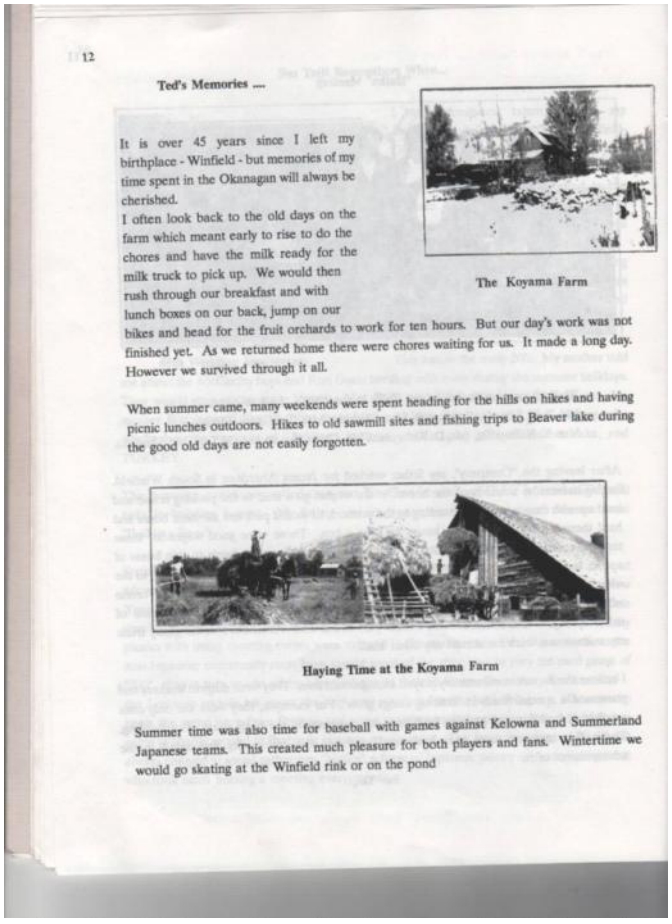

Ted's Memories ....

It is over 45 years since I left my birthplace - Winfield - but memories of my time spent in the Okanagan will always be cherished.
I often look back to the old days on the farm which meant early to rise to do the chores and have the milk ready for the milk truck to pick up. We would then rush through our breakfast and with lunch boxes on our back, jump on our bikes and head for the fruit orchards to work for ten hours. But our day's work was not finished yet. As we returned home there were chores waiting for us. It made a long day. However we survived through it all.

The Koyama Farm

When summer came, many weekends were spent heading for the hills on hikes and having picnic lunches outdoors. Hikes to old sawmill sites and fishing trips to Beaver lake during the good old days are not easily forgotten.

Haying Time at the Koyama Farm

Summer time was also time for baseball with games against Kelowna and Summerland Japanese teams. This created much pleasure for both players and fans. Wintertime we would go skating at the Winfield rink or on the pond

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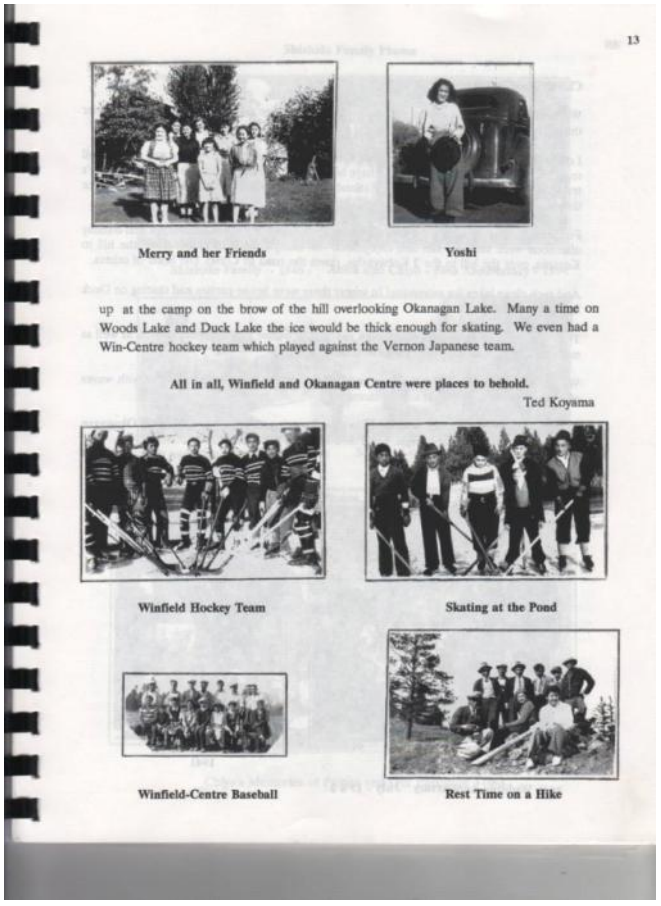

Merry and her Friends

Yoshi

up at the camp on the brow of the hill overlooking Okanagan Lake. Many a time on Woods Lake and Duck Lake the ice would be thick enough for skating. We even had a Win-Centre hockey team which played against the Vernon Japanese team.

All in all, Winfield and Okanagan Centre were places to behold.

Ted Koyama

Winfield Hockey Team

Skating at the Pond

Winfield-Centre Baseball

Rest Time on a Hike

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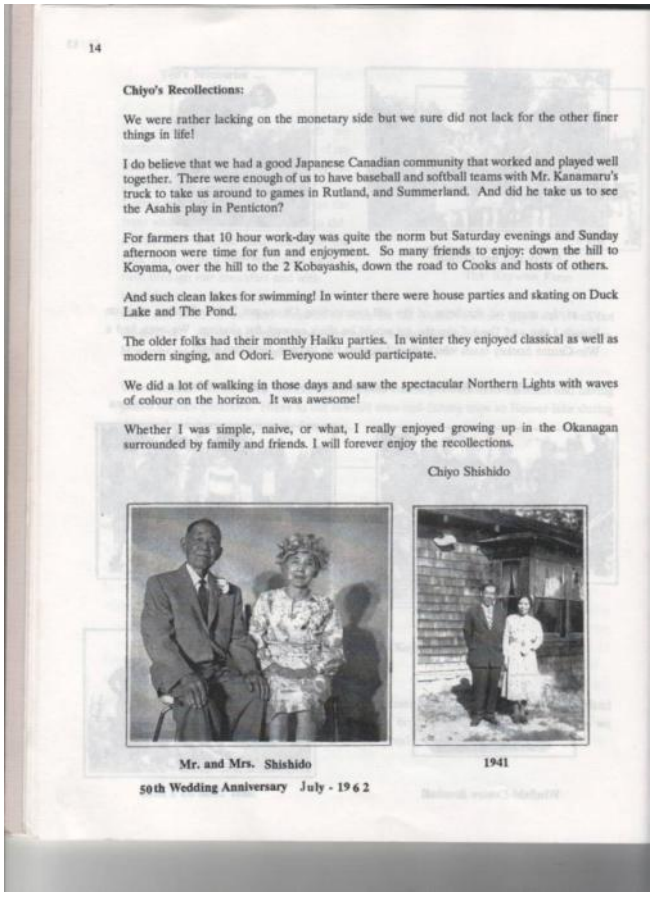

Chiyo's Recollections:

We were rather lacking on the monetary side but we sure did not lack for the other finer things in life!

I do believe that we had a good Japanese Canadian community that worked and played well together. There were enough of us to have baseball and softball teams with Mr. Kanamaru's truck to take us around to games in Rutland, and Summerland. And did he take us to see the Asahis play in Penticton?

For farmers that 10 hour work-day was quite the norm but Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoon were time for fun and enjoyment. So many friends to enjoy: down the hill to Koyama, over the hill to the 2 Kobayashis, down the road to Cooks and hosts of others.

And such clean lakes for swimming! In winter there were house parties and skating on Duck Lake and The Pond.

The older folks had their monthly Haiku parties. In winter they enjoyed classical as well as modern singing, and Odori. Everyone would participate.

We did a lot of walking in those days and saw the spectacular Northern Lights with waves of colour on the horizon. It was awesome!

Whether I was simple, naive, or what, I really enjoyed growing up in the Okanagan surrounded by family and friends. I will forever enjoy the recollections.

Chiyo Shishido

Mr. and Mrs. Shishido
50th Wedding Anniversary July - 1962

1941

14

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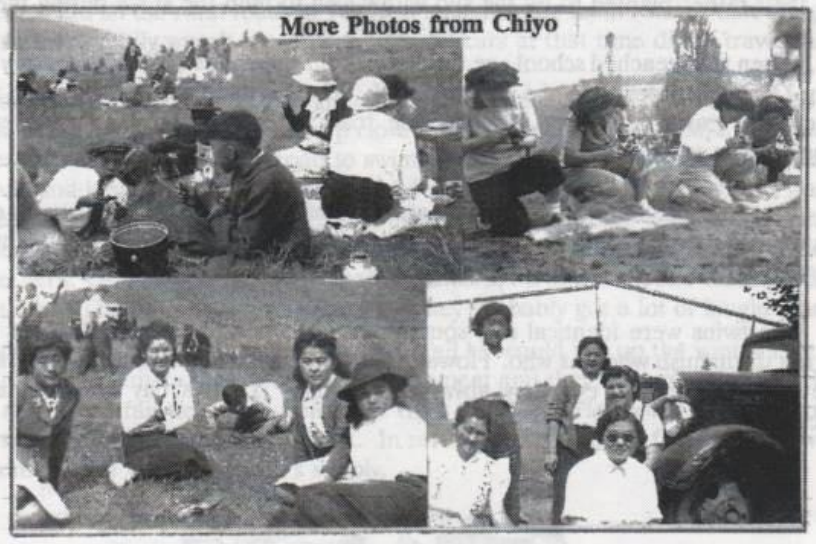
Shishido Family Photos

Shishido Family - 1940 s Akira and Chiyo - 50th Anniversary - 1994

Nick and Mae's Sons Dale, Russel Deceased - 1975, 1977. Sons - Colin and Shawn - 1973 Nick and Mae

More Photos from Chiyo



Chiyo's Memories of Picnics and Our Favourite Truck

Scenes from the Koyama Family

The Koyama Family

Harold and Addie Takenaka
Ken in the boat.

At the Picnic

Mr. E. Koyama's grandchildren at his funeral - January, 1957

In 1948 I left Winfield with 3 other fellows - Jack Gunn, Ernie Gill, and Hank Stoll. We came up to Quesnel. I met and married my wife, Cora. We had four children - Debbie, Doug, Colleen, and Kim. They are all married and we have seven beautiful grandchildren.

Kadi Koyama

In 1948 I left Winfield with 3 other fellows - Jack Funn, Ernie Gill and Hank Stoll. We came up to Quesnel. I met and married my wife, Cora. We had four children - Debbie, Doug, Colleen, and Kim. They are all married and we have seven beautiful grandchildren.

Kadi Koyama

Saks and Sachio

Matt Merry Saks

Saks Akio

Saks and Sharon with Mr. and Mrs. D. Kobayashi - 1952

Childhood Scenes.....

Sigh attired as an ancient Japanese Warrior accompanied by Aiko and a Childhood Friend .

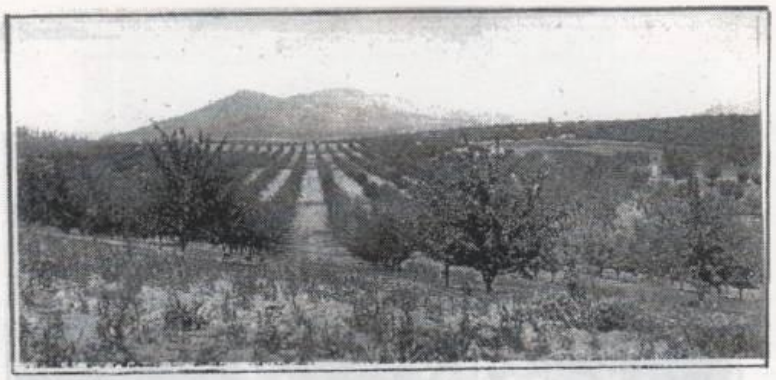
Okanagan Centre School - 1920 s

Okanagan Centre School - 1936
Standing - Nora, Osam, Eiko, Flo, Amy, Mrs. Parker
Sachio, Akira, Lorraine.
Seated - Pat, Margaret, Ruth, Nobu.

D. Kobayashi and Hikichi Children

Michi and Yoshi as Tiny Tots

Denbei Kobayashi



He Planted Apple Trees.....

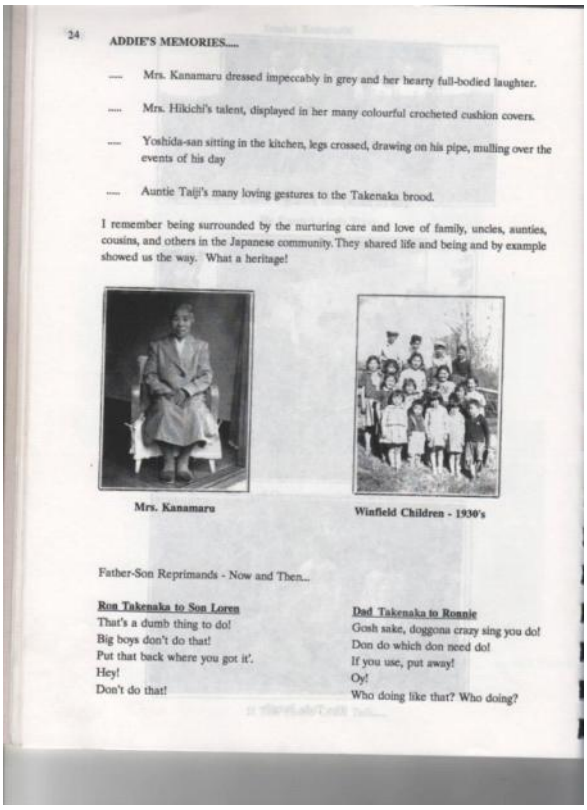
And Commemorative Trees....

If This House Could Talk.....

The D. Kobayashi Family - 1940 s

Aiko and Sigh with Hiro and Ikue Kobayashi - Pre-1920 s

The Toda Family



24

ADDIE'S MEMORIES.....

— Mrs. Kanamaru dressed impeccably in grey and her hearty full-bodied laughter.

— Mrs. Hikichi's talent, displayed in her many colourful crocheted cushion covers.

— Yoshida-san sitting in the kitchen, legs crossed, drawing on his pipe, mulling over the events of his day

— Auntie Taiji's many loving gestures to the Takenaka brood.

I remember being surrounded by the nurturing care and love of family, uncles, aunties, cousins, and others in the Japanese community. They shared life and being and by example showed us the way. What a heritage!

Mrs. Kanamaru

Winfield Children - 1930's

Father-Son Reprimands - Now and Then...

Ron Takenaka to Son Loren
That's a dumb thing to do!
Big boys don't do that!
Put that back where you got it'.
Hey!
Don't do that!

Dad Takenaka to Ronnie
Gosh sake, doggona crazy sing you do!
Don do which don need do!
If you use, put away!
Oy!
Who doing like that? Who doing?

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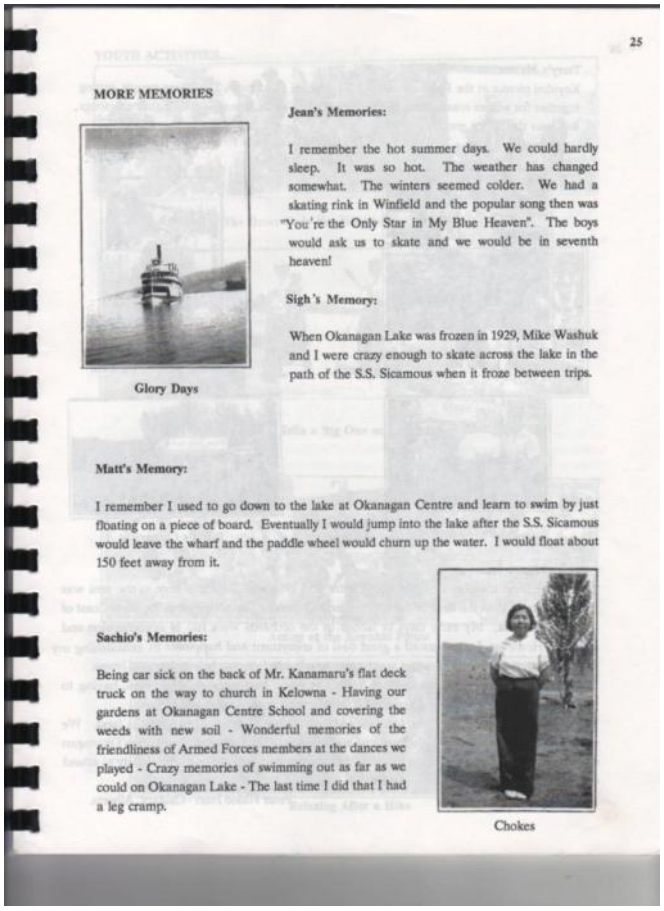

MORE MEMORIES

Jean's Memories:

I remember the hot summer days. We could hardly sleep. It was so hot. The weather has changed somewhat. The winters seemed colder. We had a skating rink in Winfield and the popular song then was "You're the Only Star in My Blue Heaven". The boys would ask us to skate and we would be in seventh heaven!

Sigh's Memory:

When Okanagan Lake was frozen in 1929, Mike Washuk and I were crazy enough to skate across the lake in the path of the S.S. Sicamous when it froze between trips.

Matt's Memory:

I remember I used to go down to the lake at Okanagan Centre and learn to swim by just floating on a piece of board. Eventually I would jump into the lake after the S.S. Sicamous would leave the wharf and the paddle wheel would churn up the water. I would float about 150 feet away from it.

Sachio's Memories:

Being car sick on the back of Mr. Kanamaru's flat deck truck on the way to church in Kelowna - Having our gardens at Okanagan Centre School and covering the weeds with new soil - Wonderful memories of the friendliness of Armed Forces members at the dances we played - Crazy memories of swimming out as far as we could on Okanagan Lake - The last time I did that I had a leg cramp.

Glory Days

Chokes

MORE MEMORIES

Jean's Memories:

I remember the hot summer days. We could hardly sleep. It was so hot. The weather has changed somewhat. The winters seemed colder. We had a skating rink in Winfield and the popular song then was "You're the Only Star in My Blue Heaven". The boys would ask us to skate and we would be in seventh heaven!

Sigh's Memory:

When Okanagan Lake was frozen in 1929, Mike Washuk and I were crazy enough to skate across the lake in the path of the S.S. Sicamous when it froze between trips.

Matt's Memory:

I remember I used to go down to the lake at Okanagan Centre and learn to swim by just floating on a piece of board. Eventually I would jump into the lake after the S.S. Sicamous would leave the wharf and the paddle wheel would churn up the water. I would float about 150 feet away from it.

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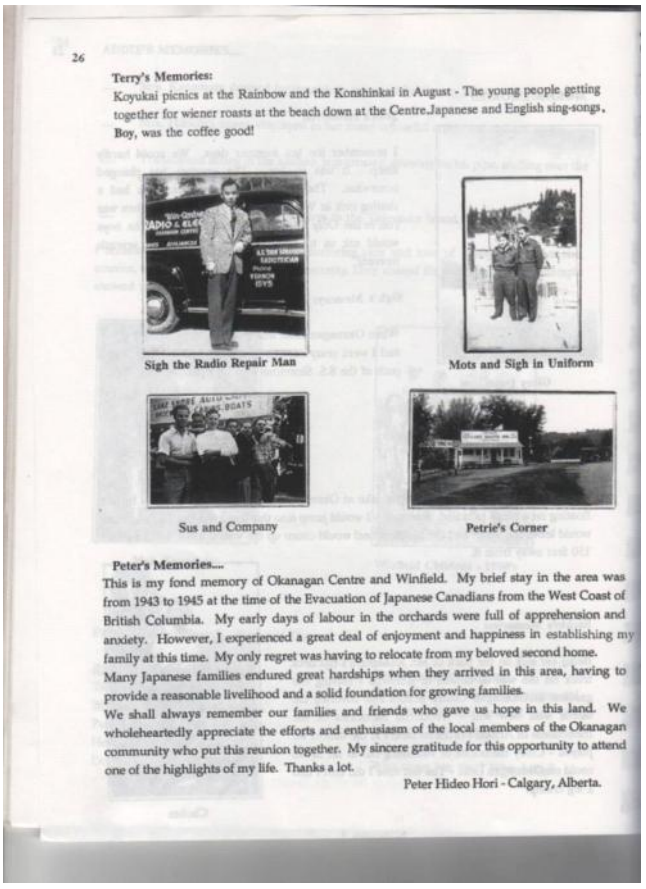

26

Terry's Memories:
Koyukai picnics at the Rainbow and the Konshinkai in August - The young people getting together for wiener roasts at the beach down at the Centre.Japanese and English sing-songs, Boy, was the coffee good!

Sigh the Radio Repair Man

Mots and Sigh in Uniform

Sus and Company

Petrie's Corner

Peter's Memories....
This is my fond memory of Okanagan Centre and Winfield. My brief stay in the area was from 1943 to 1945 at the time of the Evacuation of Japanese Canadians from the West Coast of British Columbia. My early days of labour in the orchards were full of apprehension and anxiety. However, I experienced a great deal of enjoyment and happiness in establishing my family at this time. My only regret was having to relocate from my beloved second home.
Many Japanese families endured great hardships when they arrived in this area, having to provide a reasonable livelihood and a solid foundation for growing families.
We shall always remember our families and friends who gave us hope in this land. We wholeheartedly appreciate the efforts and enthusiasm of the local members of the Okanagan community who put this reunion together. My sincere gratitude for this opportunity to attend one of the highlights of my life. Thanks a lot.

Peter Hideo Hori - Calgary, Alberta.

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Peter Hideo Hori - Calgary, Alberta.

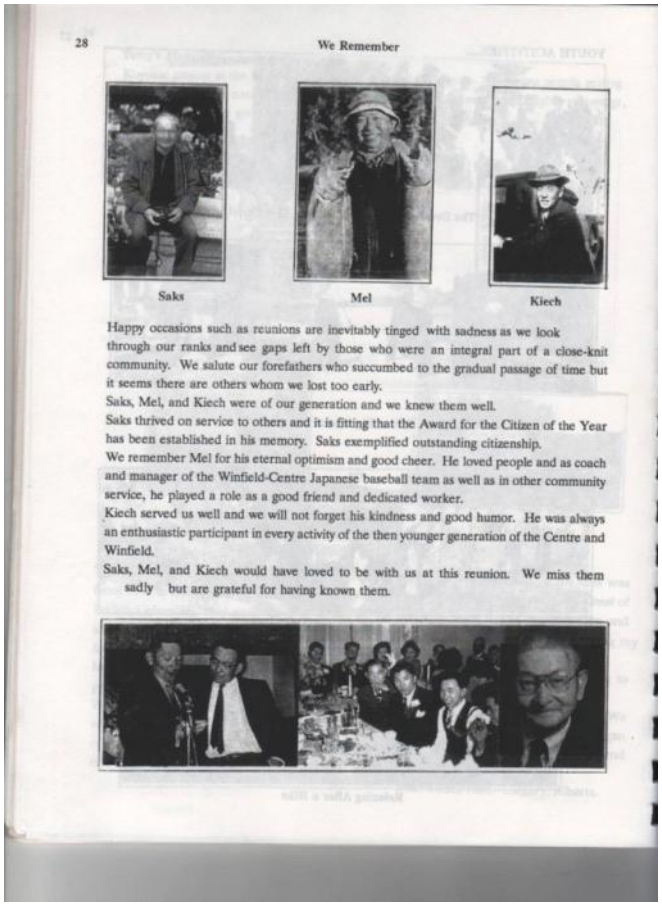
YOUTH ACTIVITIES.....

The Dress Code For Hikers Was Very Strict

Sigh Tells a Big One at Beaver Lake

Action at the Koyukai Picnic

Relaxing After a Hike



We Remember

Saks Mel Kiech

Happy occasions such as reunions are inevitably tinged with sadness as we look through our ranks and see gaps left by those who were an integral part of a close-knit community. We salute our forefathers who succumbed to the gradual passage of time but it seems there are others whom we lost too early.

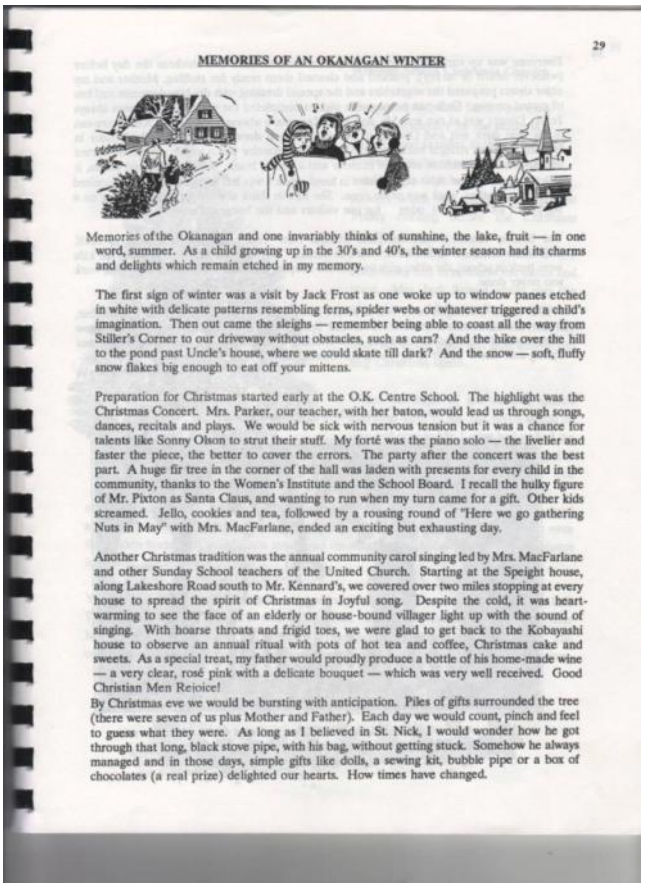
Saks, Mel, and Kiech were of our generation and we knew them well.

Saks thrived on service to others and it is fitting that the Award for the Citizen of the Year has been established in his memory. Saks exemplified outstanding citizenship.

We remember Mel for his eternal optimism and good cheer. He loved people and as coach and manager of the Winfield-Centre Japanese baseball team as well as in other community service, he played a role as a good friend and dedicated worker.

Kiech served us well and we will not forget his kindness and good humor. He was always an enthusiastic participant in every activity of the then younger generation of the Centre and Winfield.

Saks, Mel, and Kiech would have loved to be with us at this reunion. We miss them sadly but are grateful for having known them.



MEMORIES OF AN OKANAGAN WINTER

Memories of the Okanagan and one invariably thinks of sunshine, the lake, fruit — in one word, summer. As a child growing up in the 30's and 40's, the winter season had its charms and delights which remain etched in my memory.

The first sign of winter was a visit by Jack Frost as one woke up to window panes etched in white with delicate patterns resembling ferns, spider webs or whatever triggered a child's imagination. Then out came the sleighs — remember being able to coast all the way from Stiller's Corner to our driveway without obstacles, such as cars? And the hike over the hill to the pond past Uncle's house, where we could skate till dark? And the snow — soft, fluffy snow flakes big enough to eat off your mittens.

Preparation for Christmas started early at the O.K. Centre School. The highlight was the Christmas Concert. Mrs. Parker, our teacher, with her baton, would lead us through songs, dances, recitals and plays. We would be sick with nervous tension but it was a chance for talents like Sonny Olson to strut their stuff. My forté was the piano solo — the livelier and faster the piece, the better to cover the errors. The party after the concert was the best part. A huge fir tree in the corner of the hall was laden with presents for every child in the community, thanks to the Women's Institute and the School Board. I recall the hulky figure of Mr. Pixton as Santa Claus, and wanting to run when my turn came for a gift. Other kids screamed. Jello, cookies and tea, followed by a rousing round of "Here we go gathering Nuts in May" with Mrs. MacFarlane, ended an exciting but exhausting day.

Another Christmas tradition was the annual community carol singing led by Mrs. MacFarlane and other Sunday School teachers of the United Church. Starting at the Speight house, along Lakeshore Road south to Mr. Kennard's, we covered over two miles stopping at every house to spread the spirit of Christmas in Joyful song. Despite the cold, it was heart-warming to see the face of an elderly or house-bound villager light up with the sound of singing. With hoarse throats and frigid toes, we were glad to get back to the Kobayashi house to observe an annual ritual with pots of hot tea and coffee, Christmas cake and sweets. As a special treat, my father would proudly produce a bottle of his home-made wine — a very clear, rosé pink with a delicate bouquet — which was very well received. Good Christian Men Rejoice!

By Christmas eve we would be bursting with anticipation. Piles of gifts surrounded the tree (there were seven of us plus Mother and Father). Each day we would count, pinch and feel to guess what they were. As long as I believed in St. Nick, I would wonder how he got through that long, black stove pipe, with his bag, without getting stuck. Somehow he always managed and in those days, simple gifts like dolls, a sewing kit, bubble pipe or a box of chocolates (a real prize) delighted our hearts. How times have changed.

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The holiday season wasn't complete without New Year's but this is a story in itself. Celebrations were over and life returned to normal. The fruit trees needed pruning, the kids were back in school, the older girls took house-keeping jobs and for Mother, as always, work was never done.

Winter in the Okanagan never was as severe as we know it to be in Alberta or Ontario but, rather, as an interlude between Fall and Spring. By the end of February the snow disappears, the earth stirs and buds start swelling in the trees. Another season, another Spring and where better to be but in the Okanagan.

Susan Kobayashi Hidaka

Okanagan Centre School Christmas Concert

Back: Akira, Amy, Mieko, Sachio, Eiko, Flo, Santa Claus, Nora, Lorraine.
Front: Susan, Margaret, Nobu, Jane, Ruth, Pat, Osam

30

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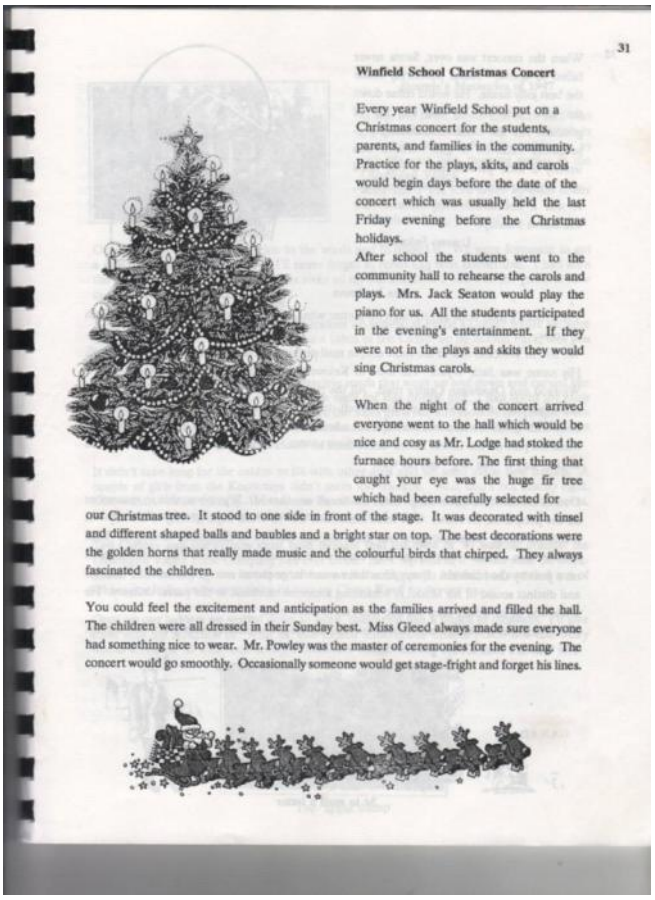

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Winfield School Christmas Concert

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After school the students went to the community hall to rehearse the carols and plays. Mrs. Jack Seaton would play the piano for us. All the students participated in the evening's entertainment. If they were not in the plays and skits they would sing Christmas carols.

When the night of the concert arrived everyone went to the hall which would be nice and cosy as Mr. Lodge had stoked the furnace hours before. The first thing that caught your eye was the huge fir tree which had been carefully selected for our Christmas tree. It stood to one side in front of the stage. It was decorated with tinsel and different shaped balls and baubles and a bright star on top. The best decorations were the golden horns that really made music and the colourful birds that chirped. They always fascinated the children.

You could feel the excitement and anticipation as the families arrived and filled the hall. The children were all dressed in their Sunday best. Miss Gleed always made sure everyone had something nice to wear. Mr. Powley was the master of ceremonies for the evening. The concert would go smoothly. Occasionally someone would get stage-fright and forget his lines.

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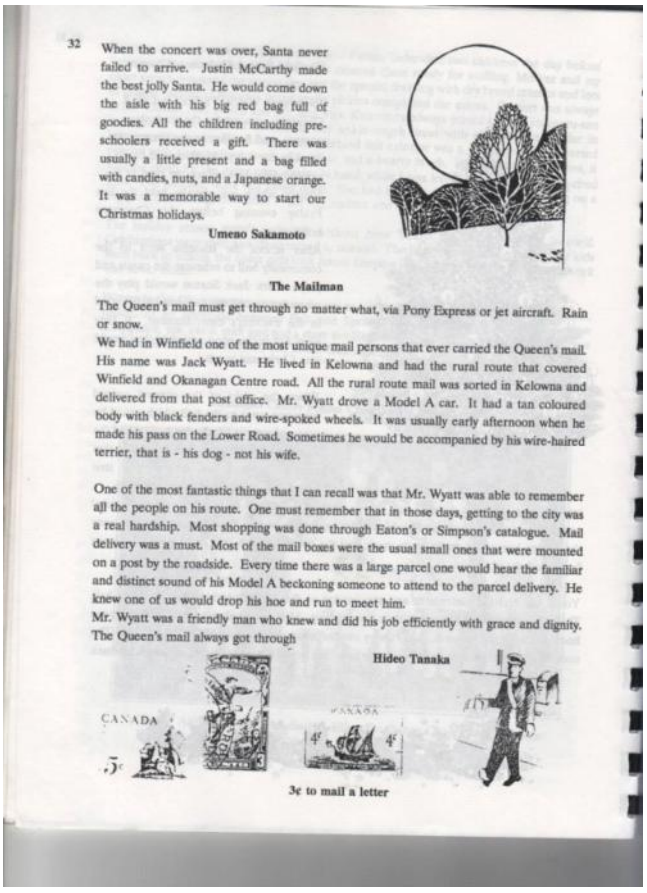

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When the concert was over, Santa never failed to arrive. Justin McCarthy made the best jolly Santa. He would come down the aisle with his big red bag full of goodies. All the children including pre-schoolers received a gift. There was usually a little present and a bag filled with candies, nuts, and a Japanese orange. It was a memorable way to start our Christmas holidays.

Umeno Sakamoto

The Mailman

The Queen’s mail must get through no matter what, via Pony Express or jet aircraft. Rain or snow.

We had in Winfield one of the most unique mail persons that ever carried the Queen’s mail. His name was Jack Wyatt. He lived in Kelowna and had the rural route that covered Winfield and Okanagan Centre road. All the rural route mail was sorted in Kelowna and delivered from that post office. Mr. Wyatt drove a Model A car. It had a tan coloured body with black fenders and wire-spoked wheels. It was usually early afternoon when he made his pass on the Lower Road. Sometimes he would be accompanied by his wire-haired terrier, that is - his dog - not his wife.

One of the most fantastic things that I can recall was that Mr. Wyatt was able to remember all the people on his route. One must remember that in those days, getting to the city was a real hardship. Most shopping was done through Eaton’s or Simpson’s catalogue. Mail delivery was a must. Most of the mail boxes were the usual small ones that were mounted on a post by the roadside. Every time there was a large parcel one would hear the familiar and distinct sound of his Model A beckoning someone to attend to the parcel delivery. He knew one of us would drop his hoe and run to meet him. Mr. Wyatt was a friendly man who knew and did his job efficiently with grace and dignity. The Queen’s mail always got through

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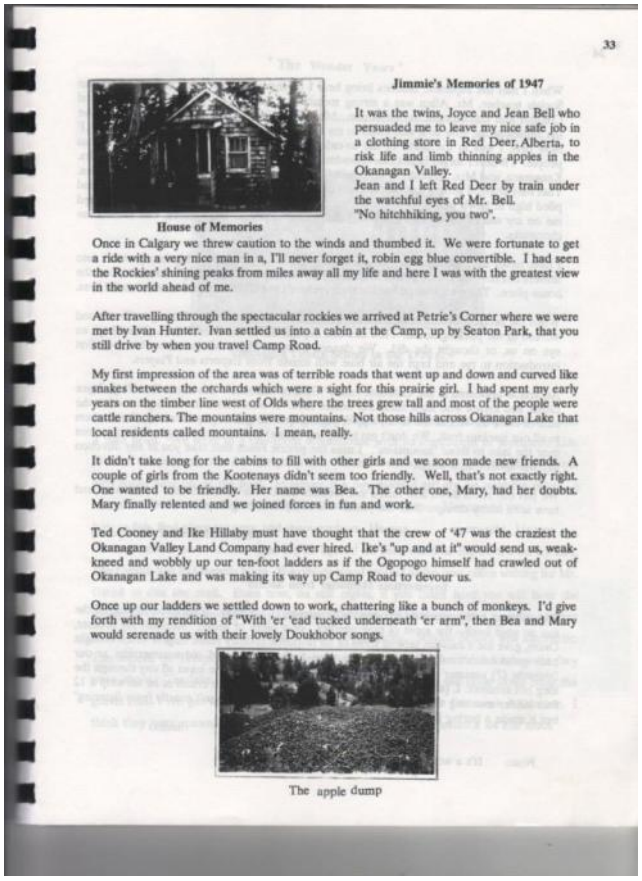

Jimmie's Memories of 1947

It was the twins, Joyce and Jean Bell who persuaded me to leave my nice safe job in a clothing store in Red Deer, Alberta, to risk life and limb thinning apples in the Okanagan Valley.

Jean and I left Red Deer by train under the watchful eyes of Mr. Bell. "No hitchhiking, you two".

House of Memories

Once in Calgary we threw caution to the winds and thumbed it. We were fortunate to get a ride with a very nice man in a, I'll never forget it, robin egg blue convertible. I had seen the Rockies' shining peaks from miles away all my life and here I was with the greatest view in the world ahead of me.

After travelling through the spectacular rockies we arrived at Petrie's Corner where we were met by Ivan Hunter. Ivan settled us into a cabin at the Camp, up by Seaton Park, that you still drive by when you travel Camp Road.

My first impression of the area was of terrible roads that went up and down and curved like snakes between the orchards which were a sight for this prairie girl. I had spent my early years on the timber line west of Olds where the trees grew tall and most of the people were cattle ranchers. The mountains were mountains. Not those hills across Okanagan Lake that local residents called mountains. I mean, really.

It didn't take long for the cabins to fill with other girls and we soon made new friends. A couple of girls from the Kootenays didn't seem too friendly. Well, that's not exactly right. One wanted to be friendly. Her name was Bea. The other one, Mary, had her doubts. Mary finally relented and we joined forces in fun and work.

Ted Cooney and Ike Hillaby must have thought that the crew of '47 was the craziest the Okanagan Valley Land Company had ever hired. Ike's "up and at it" would send us, weak-kneed and wobbly up our ten-foot ladders as if the Ogopogo himself had crawled out of Okanagan Lake and was making its way up Camp Road to devour us.

Once up our ladders we settled down to work, chattering like a bunch of monkeys. I'd give forth with my rendition of "With 'er 'ead tucked underneath 'er arm", then Bea and Mary would serenade us with their lovely Doukhobor songs.

The apple dump

When I met the Japanese families living here I remembered how back in high school our Socials teacher, Mr. Allen was a strong member of the C.C.F. My father was a Social Crediter and had brought me up as one. Mr. Allen told us that the C.C.F. wanted to give the Japanese the vote so it was much to my father's dismay that I joined the Young C.C.F Now here I was in the midst of the so-called "enemy". Polite, thoughtful, and gracious people. I'll never forget ladies like Grandma Kobayashi, Mrs. Taiji, Aunt Kobayashi, Mrs. Kanamaru, and Mrs. Shishido. These ladies would put on dinners for everyone in the area. That they enjoyed getting together showed in their unending chatter and laughter. The food piled high in bowls would soon disappear. I felt pretty good when they all complimented me on my use of chopsticks. I still feel that to do Japanese food justice, one should use chopsticks.

I have never seen gardens like the ones Grandpa Kobayashi grew. My family wasn't into flowers but here they were grown in abundance. You can still find Taiji's flower beds at the home place. The men worked hard in their orchards but still had time for active social lives.

When the orchard work was finished we moved down to the dorm at Okanagan Centre and worked in the packing house. How can one explain life in the dorm? Mrs. Gleed kept an eye on us, or thought she did. We danced a lot to Sigh's Modernaires, had our first introduction to rye and kept the air blue with smoke from Exports and Players.

An article appeared in the Calendar called "Girls of Summer". It's about Bea Taiji, Joyce Gunn, and myself who have made our homes here. It wasn't hard for us to get used to the lack of snow as well as the lovely apple, peach, apricot, and cherry blossoms; forerunners to all our luscious fruit. We don't get to the top of twelve-foot ladders anymore to gaze out over the lake to those "mountains". I miss the prairie roads that take you in any direction like the spokes on a wheel.

We put our roots down and raised our families here. We've contributed to the area and have seen many changes over the years. We've come a long way since 1947.

Jimmie Medvedeff (Kobayashi)

Summertime Memories from Sachio

Sometimes it takes very little to open the floodgates of memory. It could be the feel of the sun on your back - the scent of pine needles - or a piece of music. Recently my brother, Osam, gave me a cassette tape of some of his favourite country music singers which brought back good memories! Once again we were back in the good old summertime at our favourite (?) summer pastime - picking little green apples off the trees all day through the long hot summer. I, (and the bees) were his audience and severe critics as he sat atop a 12 foot ladder moaning the latest Hank Snow heart-wrencher. Wasn't exactly "easy listening" but it made a boring job a little less tedious!

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Note: It's a wonder them green apples ever got thinned.

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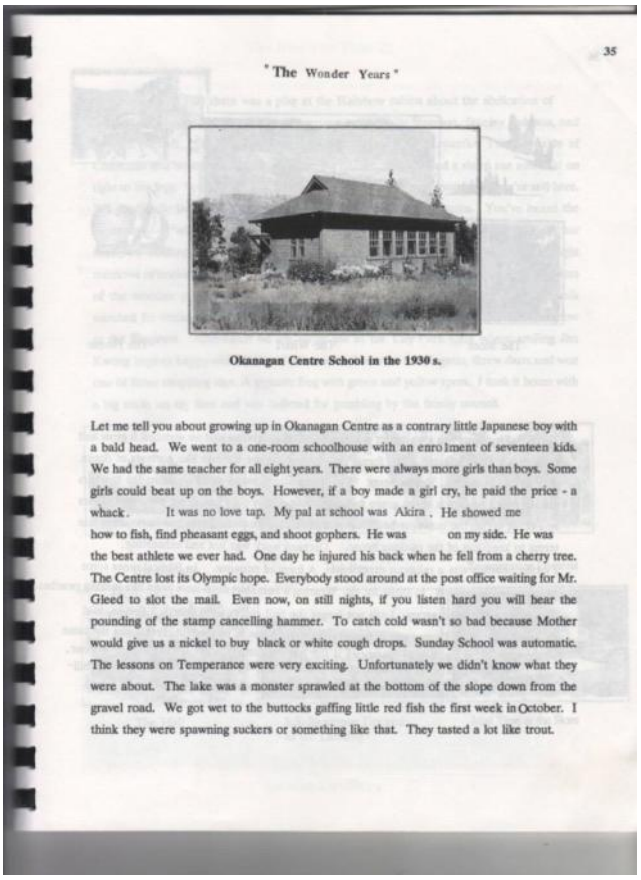

"The Wonder Years"

Okanagan Centre School in the 1930 s.

Let me tell you about growing up in Okanagan Centre as a contrary little Japanese boy with a bald head. We went to a one-room schoolhouse with an enro lment of seventeen kids. We had the same teacher for all eight years. There were always more girls than boys. Some girls could beat up on the boys. However, if a boy made a girl cry, he paid the price - a whack. It was no love tap. My pal at school was Akira . He showed me how to fish, find pheasant eggs, and shoot gophers. He was on my side. He was the best athlete we ever had. One day he injured his back when he fell from a cherry tree. The Centre lost its Olympic hope. Everybody stood around at the post office waiting for Mr. Gleed to slot the mail. Even now, on still nights, if you listen hard you will hear the pounding of the stamp cancelling hammer. To catch cold wasn't so bad because Mother would give us a nickel to buy black or white cough drops. Sunday School was automatic. The lessons on Temperance were very exciting. Unfortunately we didn't know what they were about. The lake was a monster sprawled at the bottom of the slope down from the gravel road. We got wet to the buttocks gaffing little red fish the first week in October. I think they were spawning suckers or something like that. They tasted a lot like trout.

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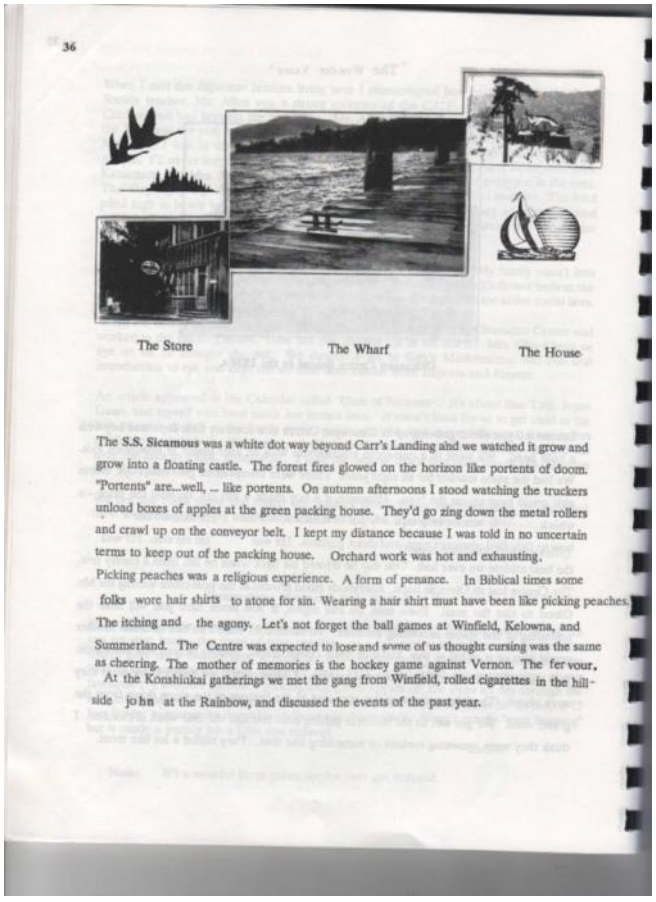

The Store The Wharf The House

The **S.S. Sicamous** was a white dot way beyond Carr's Landing and we watched it grow and grow into a floating castle. The forest fires glowed on the horizon like portents of doom. "Portents" are...well, ... like portents. On autumn afternoons I stood watching the truckers unload boxes of apples at the green packing house. They'd go zing down the metal rollers and crawl up on the conveyor belt. I kept my distance because I was told in no uncertain terms to keep out of the packing house. Orchard work was hot and exhausting. Picking peaches was a religious experience. A form of penance. In Biblical times some folks wore hair shirts to atone for sin. Wearing a hair shirt must have been like picking peaches. The itching and the agony. Let's not forget the ball games at Winfield, Kelowna, and Summerland. The Centre was expected to lose and some of us thought cursing was the same as cheering. The mother of memories is the hockey game against Vernon. The fervour. At the Konshinkai gatherings we met the gang from Winfield, rolled cigarettes in the hill-side john at the Rainbow, and discussed the events of the past year.

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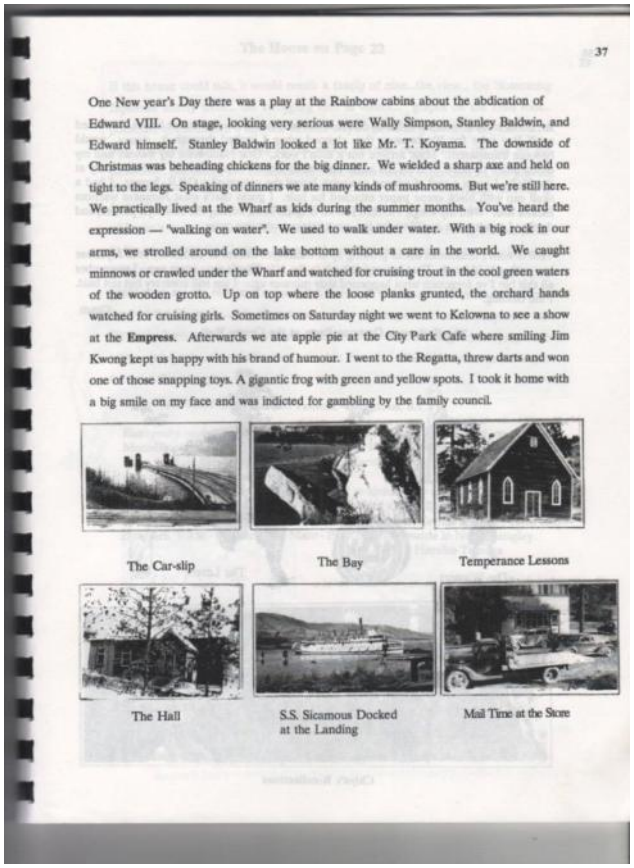

One New year's Day there was a play at the Rainbow cabins about the abdication of Edward VIII. On stage, looking very serious were Wally Simpson, Stanley Baldwin, and Edward himself. Stanley Baldwin looked a lot like Mr. T. Koyama. The downside of Christmas was beheading chickens for the big dinner. We wielded a sharp axe and held on tight to the legs. Speaking of dinners we ate many kinds of mushrooms. But we're still here. We practically lived at the Wharf as kids during the summer months. You've heard the expression — "walking on water". We used to walk under water. With a big rock in our arms, we strolled around on the lake bottom without a care in the world. We caught minnows or crawled under the Wharf and watched for cruising trout in the cool green waters of the wooden grotto. Up on top where the loose planks grunted, the orchard hands watched for cruising girls. Sometimes on Saturday night we went to Kelowna to see a show at the **Empress**. Afterwards we ate apple pie at the City Park Cafe where smiling Jim Kwong kept us happy with his brand of humour. I went to the Regatta, threw darts and won one of those snapping toys. A gigantic frog with green and yellow spots. I took it home with a big smile on my face and was indicted for gambling by the family council.

The Car-slip

The Bay

Temperance Lessons

The Hall

S.S. Sicamous Docked at the Landing

Mail Time at the Store

37

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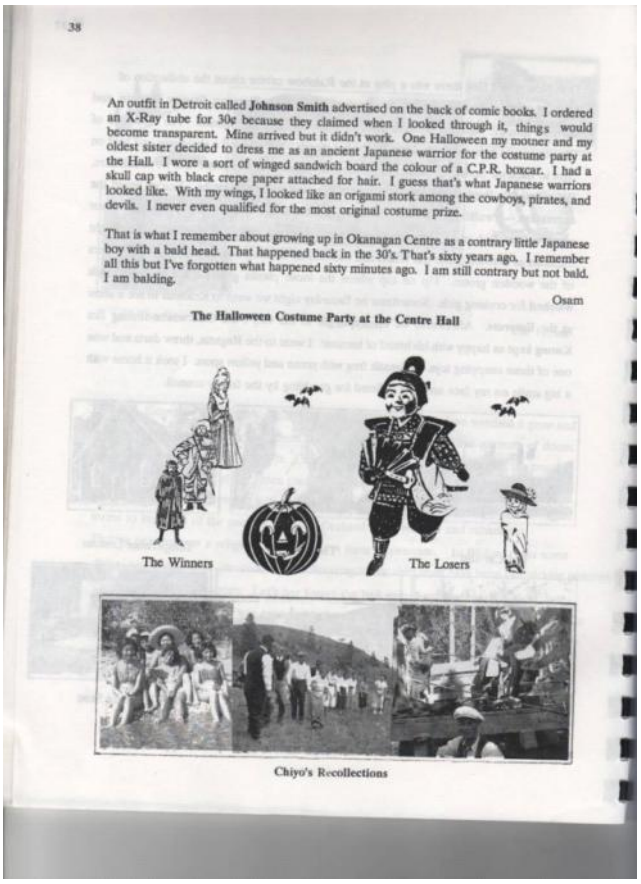

An outfit in Detroit called **Johnson Smith** advertised on the back of comic books. I ordered an X-Ray tube for 30¢ because they claimed when I looked through it, things would become transparent. Mine arrived but it didn't work. One Halloween my mother and my oldest sister decided to dress me as an ancient Japanese warrior for the costume party at the Hall. I wore a sort of winged sandwich board the colour of a C.P.R. boxcar. I had a skull cap with black crepe paper attached for hair. I guess that's what Japanese warriors looked like. With my wings, I looked like an origami stork among the cowboys, pirates, and devils. I never even qualified for the most original costume prize.

That is what I remember about growing up in Okanagan Centre as a contrary little Japanese boy with a bald head. That happened back in the 30's. That's sixty years ago. I remember all this but I've forgotten what happened sixty minutes ago. I am still contrary but not bald. I am balding.

Osam

The Halloween Costume Party at the Centre Hall

The Winners

The Losers

Chiyo's Recollections

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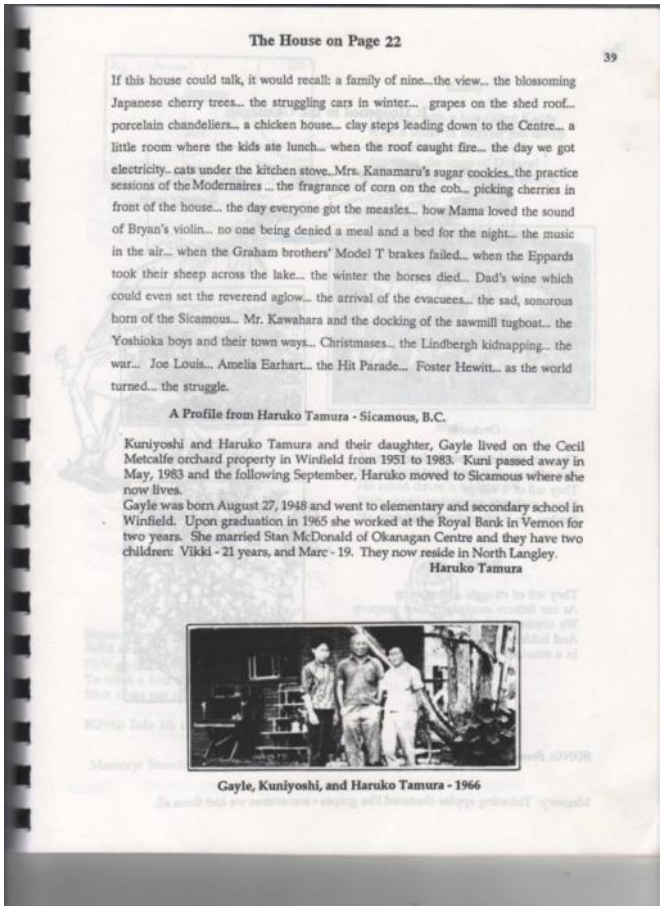

The House on Page 22

If this house could talk, it would recall: a family of nine...the view... the blossoming Japanese cherry trees... the struggling cars in winter... grapes on the shed roof... porcelain chandeliers... a chicken house... clay steps leading down to the Centre... a little room where the kids ate lunch... when the roof caught fire... the day we got electricity... cats under the kitchen stove...Mrs. Kanamaru's sugar cookies...the practice sessions of the Modernaires ... the fragrance of corn on the cob... picking cherries in front of the house... the day everyone got the measles... how Mama loved the sound of Bryan's violin... no one being denied a meal and a bed for the night... the music in the air... when the Graham brothers' Model T brakes failed... when the Eppards took their sheep across the lake... the winter the horses died... Dad's wine which could even set the reverend aglow... the arrival of the evacuees... the sad, sonorous horn of the Sicamous... Mr. Kawahara and the docking of the sawmill tugboat... the Yoshioka boys and their town ways... Christmases... the Lindbergh kidnapping... the war... Joe Louis... Amelia Earhart... the Hit Parade... Foster Hewitt... as the world turned... the struggle.

A Profile from Haruko Tamura - Sicamous, B.C.

Kuniyoshi and Haruko Tamura and their daughter, Gayle lived on the Cecil Metcalfe orchard property in Winfield from 1951 to 1983. Kuni passed away in May, 1983 and the following September, Haruko moved to Sicamous where she now lives.
Gayle was born August 27, 1948 and went to elementary and secondary school in Winfield. Upon graduation in 1965 she worked at the Royal Bank in Vernon for two years. She married Stan McDonald of Okanagan Centre and they have two children: Vikki - 21 years, and Marc - 19. They now reside in North Langley.

Haruko Tamura

Gayle, Kuniyoshi, and Haruko Tamura - 1966

The House on Page 22

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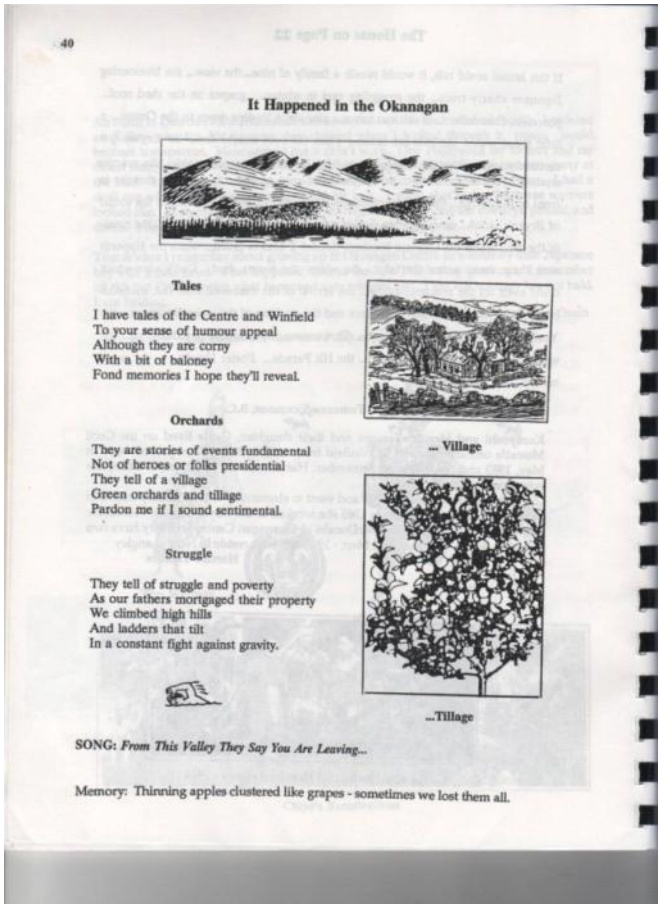


40

It Happened in the Okanagan

Tales

I have tales of the Centre and Winfield
To your sense of humour appeal
Although they are corny
With a bit of baloney
Fond memories I hope they'll reveal

Orchards

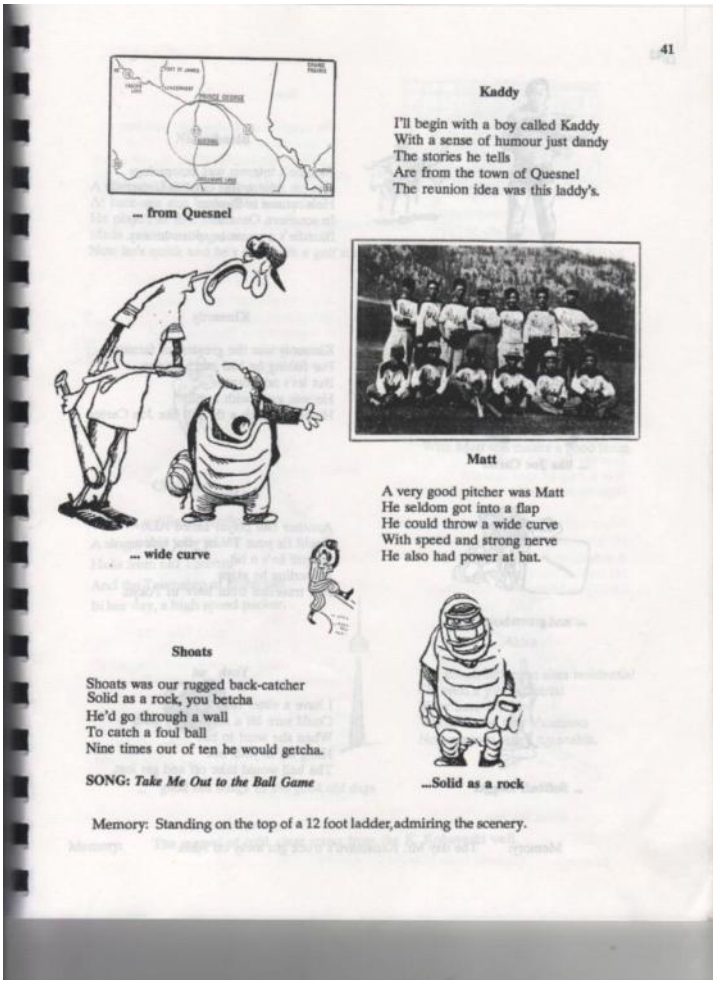
They are stories of events fundamental
Not of heroes or folks presidential
They tell of a village
Green orchards and tillage
Pardon me if I sound sentimental.

Struggle

They tell of struggle and poverty
As our fathers mortgaged their property
We climbed high hills
And ladders that tilt
In a constant fight against gravity.

SONG: ***From This Valley They Say You Are Leaving...***

Memory: Thinning apples clustered like grapes - sometimes we lost them all



41

Kaddy

I'll begin with a boy called Kaddy
With a sense of humour just dandy
The stories he tells
Are from the town of Quesnel
The reunion idea was this laddy's.

... from Quesnel

... wide curve

Matt

A very good pitcher was Matt
He seldom got into a flap
He could throw a wide curve
With speed and strong nerve
He also had power at bat.

Shoats

Shoats was our rugged back-catcher
Solid as a rock, you betcha
He'd go through a wall
To catch a foul ball
Nine times out of ten he would getcha.

SONG: ***Take Me Out to the Ball Game***

...Solid as a rock

Memory: Standing on the top of a 12 foot ladder, admiring the scenery.

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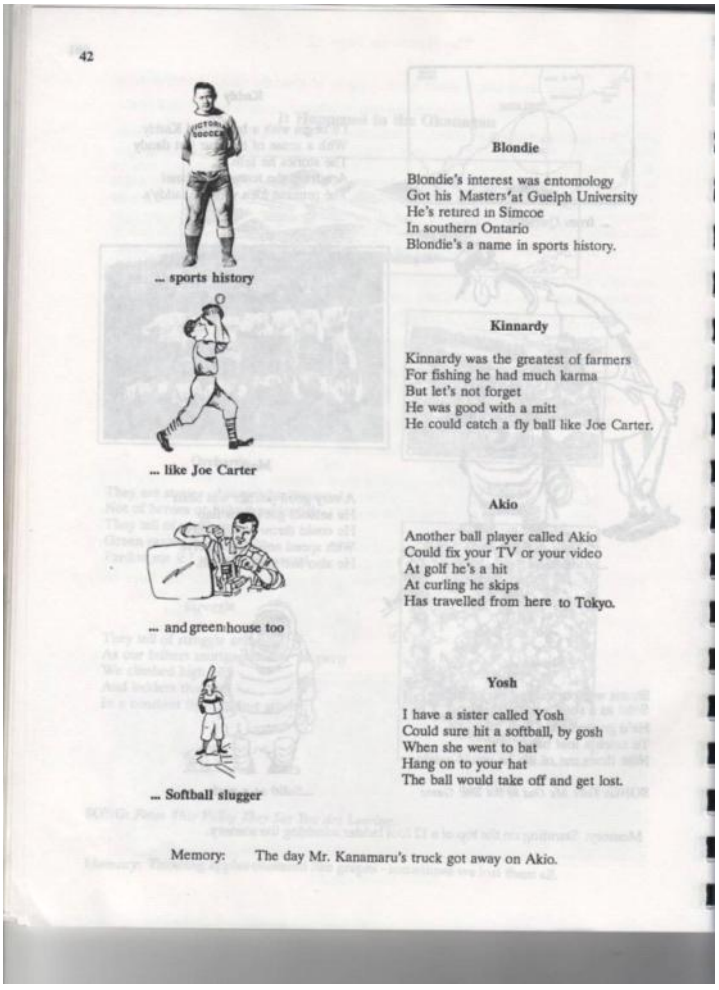

... sports history

Blondie

Blondie's interest was entomology
Got his Masters'at Guelph University
He's retired in Simcoe
In southern Ontario
Blondie's a name in sports history.

... like Joe Carter

Kinnardy

Kinnardy was the greatest of farmers
For fishing he had much karma
But let's not forget
He was good with a mitt
He could catch a fly ball like Joe Carter.

... and green-house too

Akio

Another ball player called Akio
Could fix your TV or your video
At golf he's a hit
At curling he skips
Has travelled from here to Tokyo.

... Softball slugger

Yosh

I have a sister called Yosh
Could sure hit a softball, by gosh
When she went to bat
Hang on to your hat
The ball would take off and get lost.

Memory: The day Mr. Kanamaru's truck got away on Akio.

42

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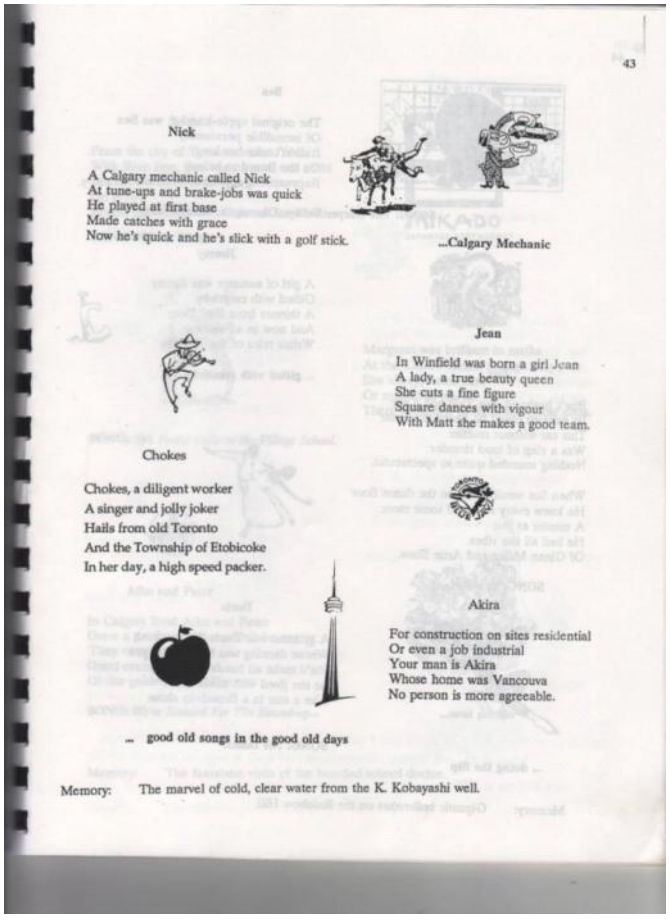

43

Nick

A Calgary mechanic called Nick
At tune-ups and brake-jobs was quick
He played at first base
Made catches with grace
Now he's quick and he's slick with a golf stick.

...Calgary Mechanic

Jean

In Winfield was born a girl Jean
A lady, a true beauty queen
She cuts a fine figure
Square dances with vigour
With Matt she makes a good team.

Chokes

Chokes, a diligent worker
A singer and jolly joker
Hails from old Toronto
And the Township of Etobicoke
In her day, a high speed packer.

Akira

For construction on sites residential
Or even a job industrial
Your man is Akira
Whose home was Vancouva
No person is more agreeable.

... good old songs in the good old days

Memory: The marvel of cold, clear water from the K. Kobayashi well.

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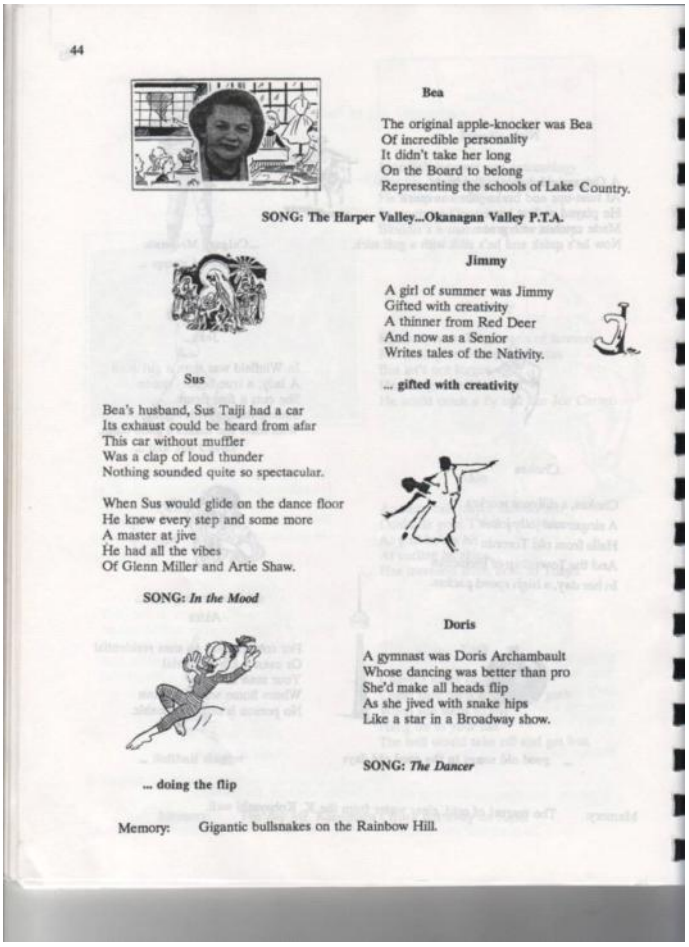

44

Bea

The original apple-knocker was Bea
Of incredible personality
It didn't take her long
On the Board to belong
Representing the schools of Lake Country.

SONG: The Harper Valley...Okanagan Valley P.T.A.

Jimmy

A girl of summer was Jimmy
Gifted with creativity
A thinner from Red Deer
And now as a Senior
Writes tales of the Nativity.

... gifted with creativity

Sus

Bea's husband, Sus Taiji had a car
Its exhaust could be heard from afar
This car without muffler
Was a clap of loud thunder
Nothing sounded quite so spectacular.

When Sus would glide on the dance floor
He knew every step and some more
A master at jive
He had all the vibes
Of Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw.

SONG: *In the Mood*

Doris

A gymnast was Doris Archambault
Whose dancing was better than pro
She'd make all heads flip
As she jived with snake hips
Like a star in a Broadway show.

SONG: *The Dancer*

... doing the flip

Memory: Gigantic bullsnakes on the Rainbow Hill.

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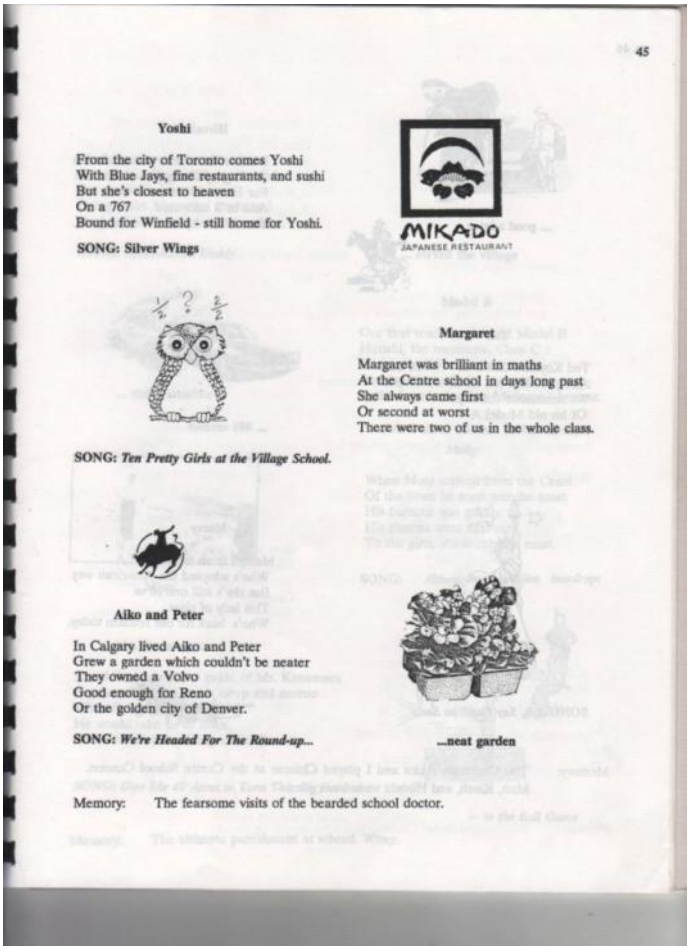

Yoshi

From the city of Toronto comes Yoshi
With Blue Jays, fine restaurants, and sushi
But she's closest to heaven
On a 767
Bound for Winfield - still home for Yoshi.

SONG: Silver Wings

Margaret

Margaret was brilliant in maths
At the Centre school in days long past
She always came first
Or second at worst
There were two of us in the whole class.

SONG: ***Ten Pretty Girls at the Village School.***

Aiko and Peter

In Calgary lived Aiko and Peter
Grew a garden which couldn't be neater
They owned a Volvo
Good enough for Reno
Or the golden city of Denver.

SONG: ***We're Headed For The Round-up...***

...neat garden

Memory: The fearsome visits of the bearded school doctor.

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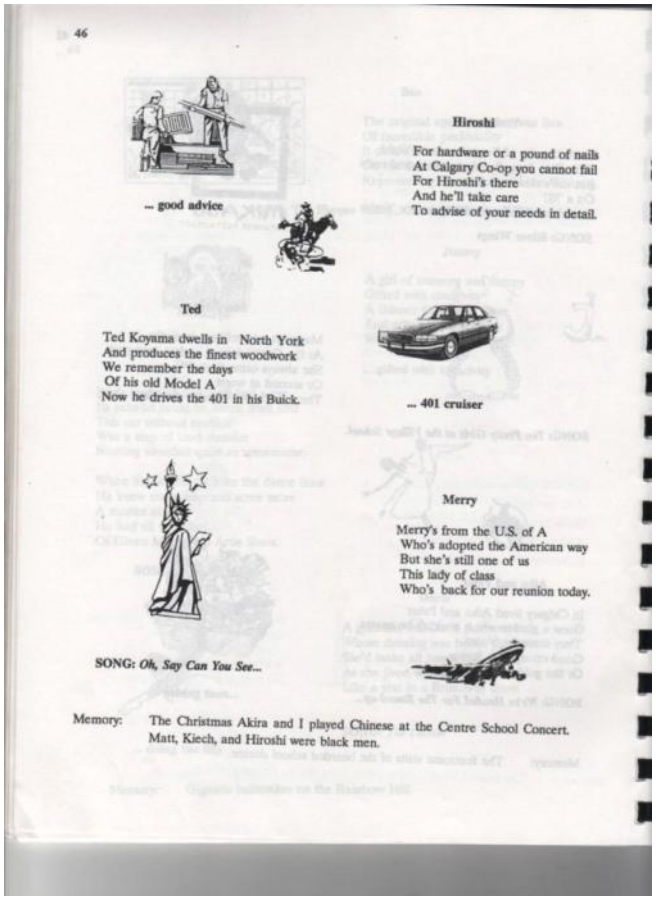

46

... good advice

Hiroshi

For hardware or a pound of nails
At Calgary Co-op you cannot fail
For Hiroshi's there
And he'll take care
To advise of your needs in detail.

Ted

Ted Koyama dwells in North York
And produces the finest woodwork
We remember the days
Of his old Model A
Now he drives the 401 in his Buick.

... 401 cruiser

Merry

Merry's from the U.S. of A
Who's adopted the American way
But she's still one of us
This lady of class
Who's back for our reunion today.

SONG: ***Oh, Say Can You See...***

Memory: The Christmas Akira and I played Chinese at the Centre School Concert. Matt, Kiech, and Hiroshi were black men.

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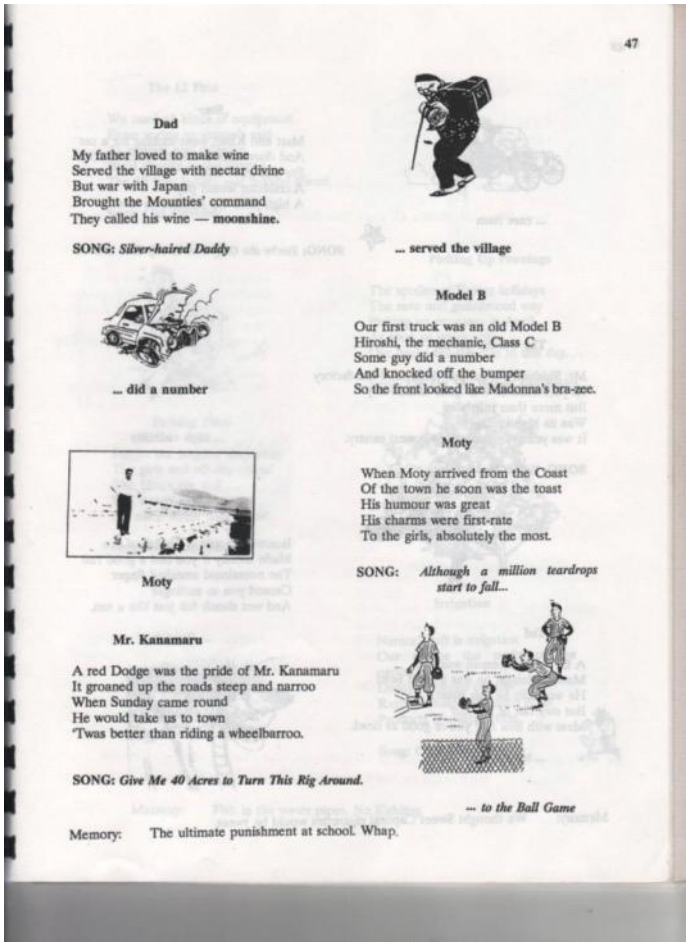

Dad

My father loved to make wine
Served the village with nectar divine
But war with Japan
Brought the Mounties' command
They called his wine — **moonshine.**

SONG: ***Silver-haired Daddy***

... served the village

... did a number

Model B

Our first truck was an old Model B
Hiroshi, the mechanic, Class C
Some guy did a number
And knocked off the bumper
So the front looked like Madonna's bra-zee.

Moty

When Moty arrived from the Coast
Of the town he soon was the toast
His humour was great
His charms were first-rate
To the girls, absolutely the most.

SONG: ***Although a million teardrops start to fall...***

Mr. Kanamaru

A red Dodge was the pride of Mr. Kanamaru
It groaned up the roads steep and narroo
When Sunday came round
He would take us to town
'Twas better than riding a wheelbarroo.

SONG: ***Give Me 40 Acres to Turn This Rig Around.***

... to the Ball Game

Memory: The ultimate punishment at school. Whap.

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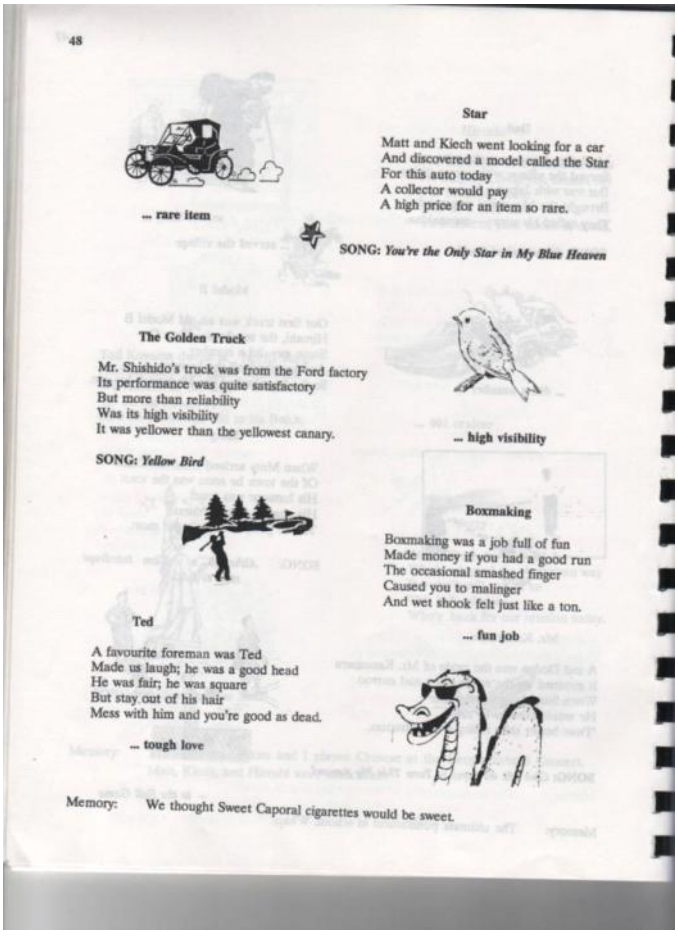
SONG: ***Although a million teardrops start to fall...***

Mr. Kanamaru

A red Dodge was the pride of Mr. Kanamaru
It groaned up the roads steep and narroo
When Sunday came round
He would take us to town
'Twas better than riding a wheelbarroo.

SONG: ***Give Me 40 Acres to Turn This Rig Around***

Memory: The ultimate punishment at school. Whap.



48

Star

Matt and Kiech went looking for a car
And discovered a model called the Star
For this auto today
A collector would pay
A high price for an item so rare.

... rare item

SONG: ***You're the Only Star in My Blue Heaven***

The Golden Truck

Mr. Shishido's truck was from the Ford factory
Its performance was quite satisfactory
But more than reliability
Was its high visibility
It was yellower than the yellowest canary.

... high visibility

SONG: ***Yellow Bird***

Boxmaking

Boxmaking was a job full of fun
Made money if you had a good run
The occasional smashed finger
Caused you to malinger
And wet shook felt just like a ton.

... fun job

Ted

A favourite foreman was Ted
Made us laugh; he was a good head
He was fair; he was square
But stay out of his hair
Mess with him and you're good as dead.

... tough love

Memory: We thought Sweet Caporal cigarettes would be sweet.

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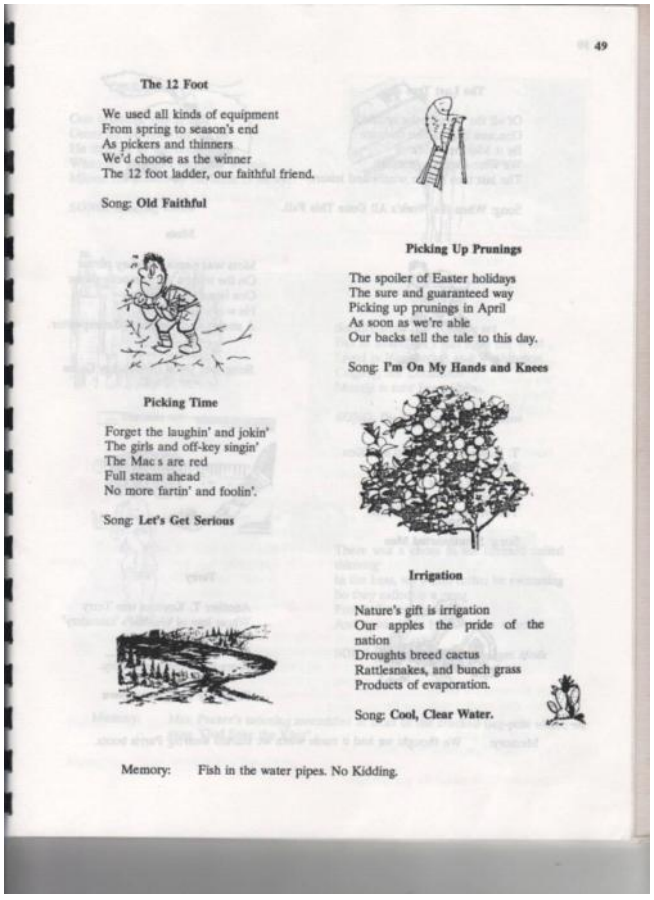

The 12 Foot

We used all kinds of equipment
From spring to season's end
As pickers and thinners
We'd choose as the winner
The 12 foot ladder, our faithful friend.

Song: **Old Faithful**

Picking Up Prunings

The spoiler of Easter holidays
The sure and guaranteed way
Picking up prunings in April
As soon as we're able
Our backs tell the tale to this day.

Song: **I'm On My Hands and Knees**

Picking Time

Forget the laughin' and jokin'
The girls and off-key singin'
The Mac s are red
Full steam ahead
No more fartin' and foolin'.

Song: **Let's Get Serious**

Irrigation

Nature's gift is irrigation
Our apples the pride of the nation
Droughts breed cactus
Rattlesnakes, and bunch grass
Products of evaporation.

Song: **Cool, Clear Water.**

Memory: Fish in the water pipes. No Kidding.

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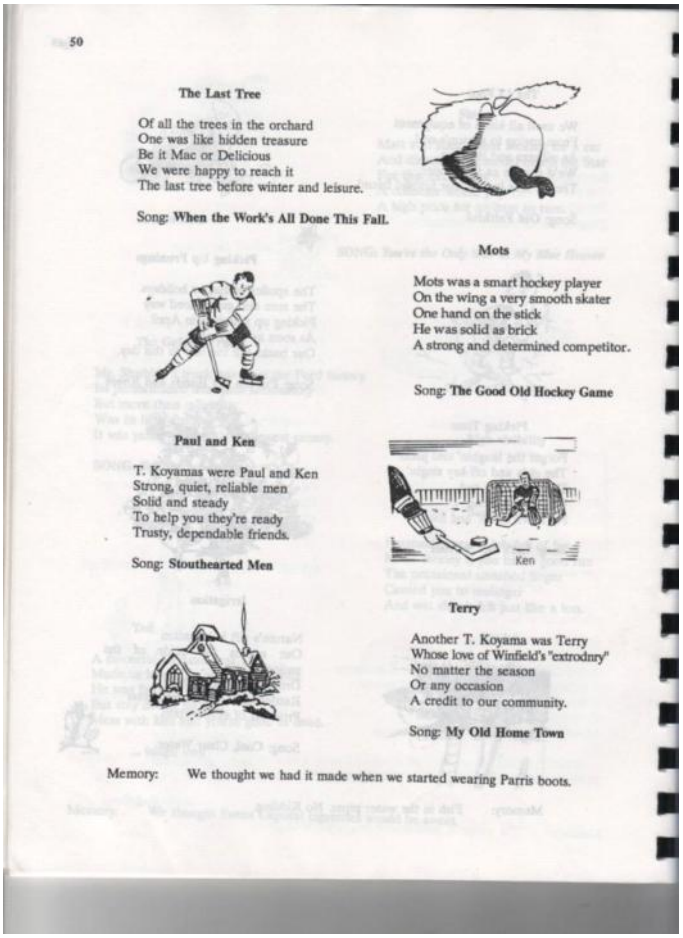

50

The Last Tree

Of all the trees in the orchard
One was like hidden treasure
Be it Mac or Delicious
We were happy to reach it
The last tree before winter and leisure.

Song: **When the Work's All Done This Fall.**

Mots

Mots was a smart hockey player
On the wing a very smooth skater
One hand on the stick
He was solid as brick
A strong and determined competitor.

Song: **The Good Old Hockey Game**

Paul and Ken

T. Koyamas were Paul and Ken
Strong, quiet, reliable men
Solid and steady
To help you they're ready
Trusty, dependable friends.

Song: **Stouthearted Men**

Terry

Another T. Koyama was Terry
Whose love of Winfield's "extrodnry"
No matter the season
Or any occasion
A credit to our community.

Song: **My Old Home Town**

Memory: We thought we had it made when we started wearing Parris boots.

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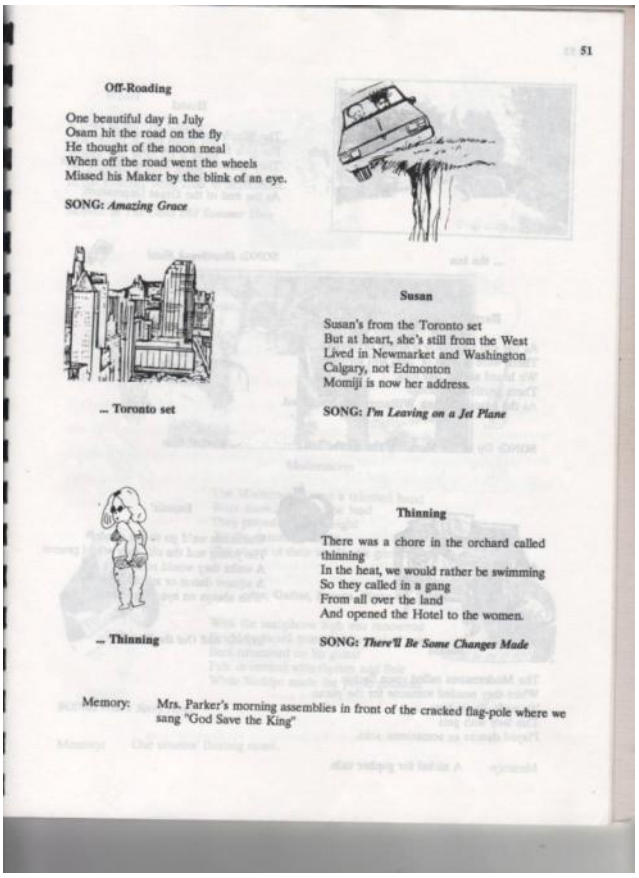


Off-Roading

One beautiful day in July
Osam hit the road on the fly
He thought of the noon meal
When off the road went the wheels
Missed his Maker by the blink of an eye.

SONG: ***Amazing Grace***

Susan

Susan's from the Toronto set
But at heart, she's still from the West
Lived in Newmarket and Washington
Calgary, not Edmonton
Momiji is now her address.

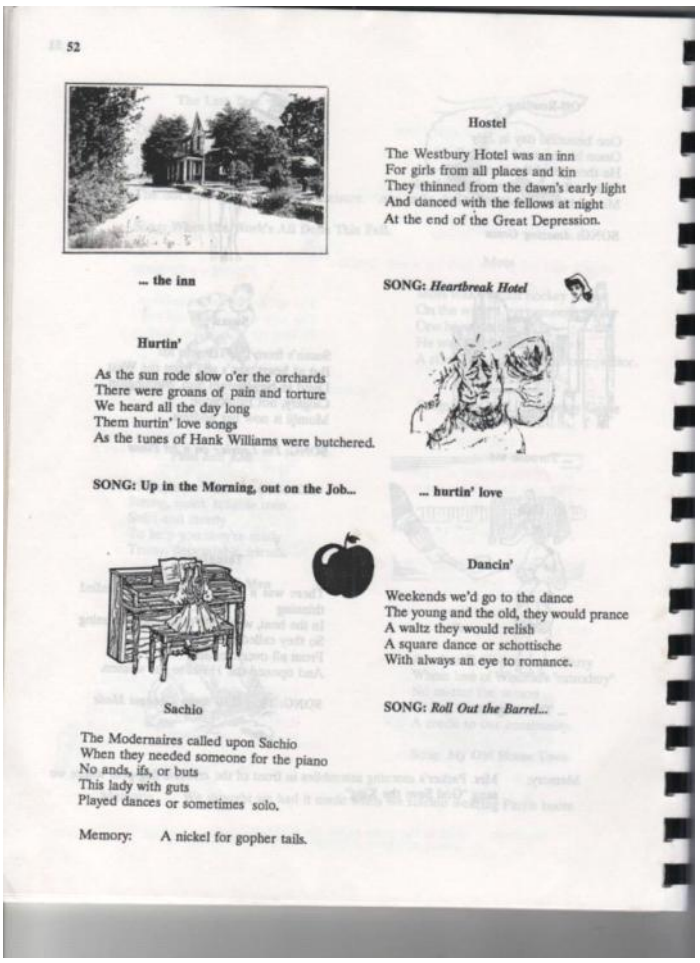
SONG: ***I'm Leaving on a Jet Plane***

Thinning

There was a chore in the orchard called
thinning
In the heat, we would rather be swimming
So they called in a gang
From all over the land
And opened the Hotel to the women.

SONG: ***There'll Be Some Changes Made***

Memory: Mrs. Parker's morning assemblies in front of the cracked flag-pole where we sang "God Save the King"



... the inn

Hostel

The Westbury Hotel was an inn
For girls from all places and kin
They thinned from the dawn's early light
And danced with the fellows at night
At the end of the Great Depression.

SONG: ***Heartbreak Hotel***

Hurtin'

As the sun rode slow o'er the orchards
There were groans of pain and torture
We heard all the day long
Them hurtin' love songs
As the tunes of Hank Williams were butchered.

SONG: Up in the Morning, out on the Job...

... hurtin' love

Dancin'

Weekends we'd go to the dance
The young and the old, they would prance
A waltz they would relish
A square dance or schottische
With always an eye to romance.

SONG: ***Roll Out the Barrel...***

Sachio

The Modernaires called upon Sachio
When they needed someone for the piano
No ands, ifs, or buts
This lady with guts
Played dances or sometimes solo.

Memory: A nickel for gopher tails.

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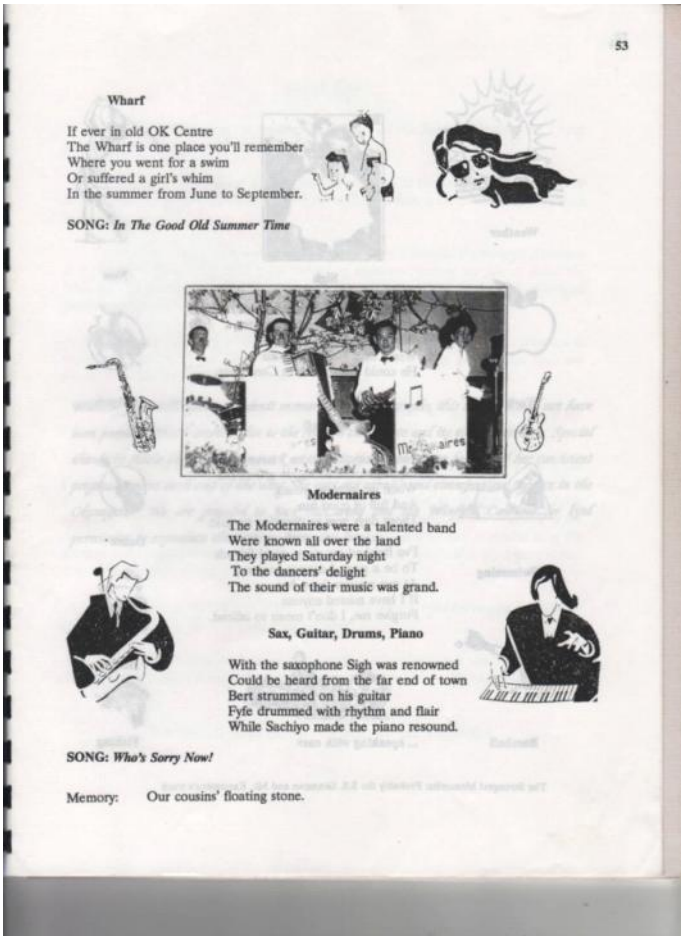

53

Wharf

If ever in old OK Centre
The Wharf is one place you'll remember
Where you went for a swim
Or suffered a girl's whim
In the summer from June to September.

SONG: ***In The Good Old Summer Time***

Modernaires

The Modernaires were a talented band
Were known all over the land
They played Saturday night
To the dancers' delight
The sound of their music was grand.

Sax, Guitar, Drums, Piano

With the saxophone Sigh was renowned
Could be heard from the far end of town
Bert strummed on his guitar
Fyfe drummed with rhythm and flair
While Sachiyo made the piano resound.

SONG: ***Whose Sorry Now!***

Memory: Our cousins' floating stone.

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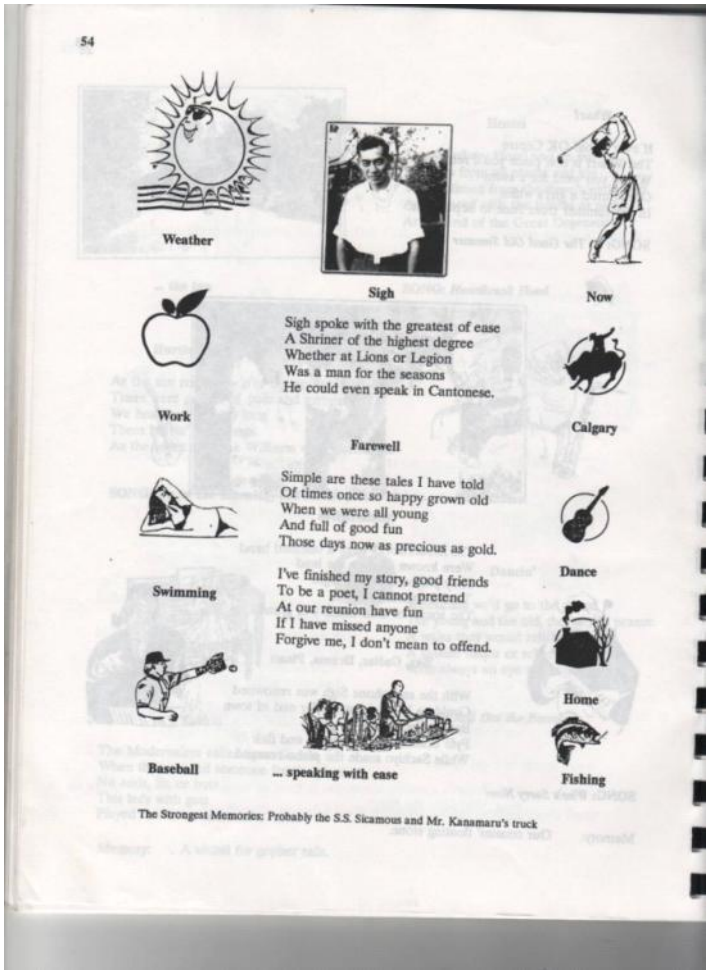

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Weather

Sigh

Now

Work

Calgary

Farewell

Swimming

Dance

Home

Baseball

... speaking with ease

Fishing

The Strongest Memories: Probably the S.S. Sicamous and Mr. Kanamaru's truck

Sigh

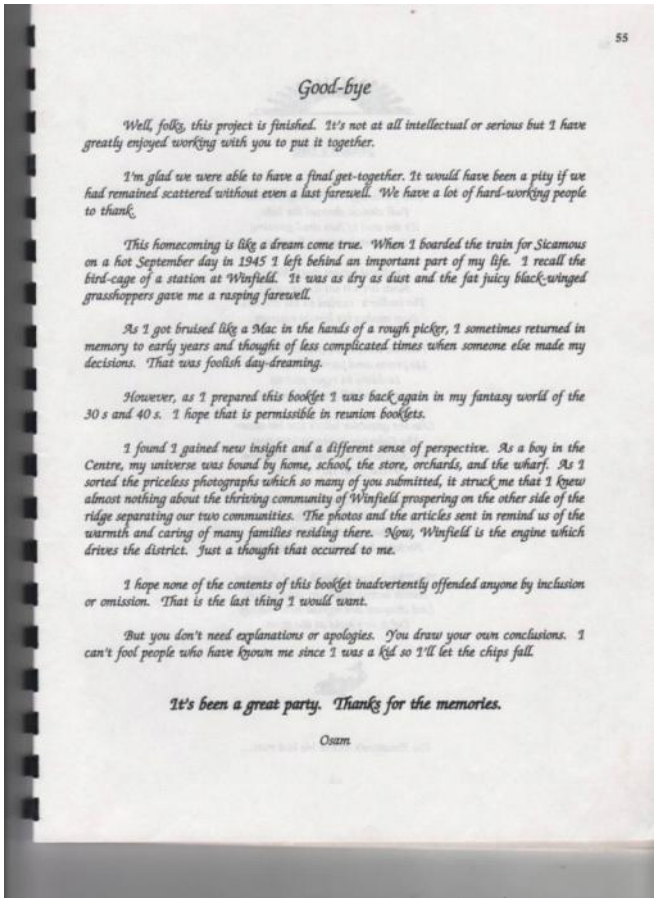
Sigh spoke with the greatest of ease
A Shriner of the highest degree
Whether at Lions or Legion
Was a man for the seasons
He could even speak in Cantonese.

Farewell

Simple are these tales I have told
Of times once so happy grown old
When we were all young
And full of good fun
Those days now as precious as gold.

I've finished my story, good friends
To be a poet, I cannot pretend
At our reunion have fun
If I have missed anyone
Forgive me, I don’t mean to offend.

The Strongest Memories: Probably the SS. Sicamous and Mr. Kanamaru's truck



Good-bye

Well, folks, this project is finished. It's not at all intellectual or serious but I have greatly enjoyed working with you to put it together.

I'm glad we were able to have a final get-together. It would have been a pity if we had remained scattered without even a last farewell. We have a lot of hard-working people to thank.

This homecoming is like a dream come true. When I boarded the train for Sicamous on a hot September day in 1945 I left behind an important part of my life. I recall the bird-cage of a station at Winfield. It was as dry as dust and the fat juicy black-winged grasshoppers gave me a rasping farewell.

As I got bruised like a Mac in the hands of a rough picker, I sometimes returned in memory to early years and thought of less complicated times when someone else made my decisions. That was foolish day-dreaming.

However, as I prepared this booklet I was back again in my fantasy world of the 30 s and 40 s. I hope that is permissible in reunion booklets.

I found I gained new insight and a different sense of perspective. As a boy in the Centre, my universe was bound by home, school, the store, orchards, and the wharf. As I sorted the priceless photographs which so many of you submitted, it struck me that I knew almost nothing about the thriving community of Winfield prospering on the other side of the ridge separating our two communities. The photos and the articles sent in remind us of the warmth and caring of many families residing there. Now, Winfield is the engine which drives the district. Just a thought that occurred to me.

I hope none of the contents of this booklet inadvertently offended anyone by inclusion or omission. That is the last thing I would want.

But you don't need explanations or apologies. You draw your own conclusions. I can't fool people who have known me since I was a kid so I'll let the chips fall.

It's been a great party. Thanks for the memories.

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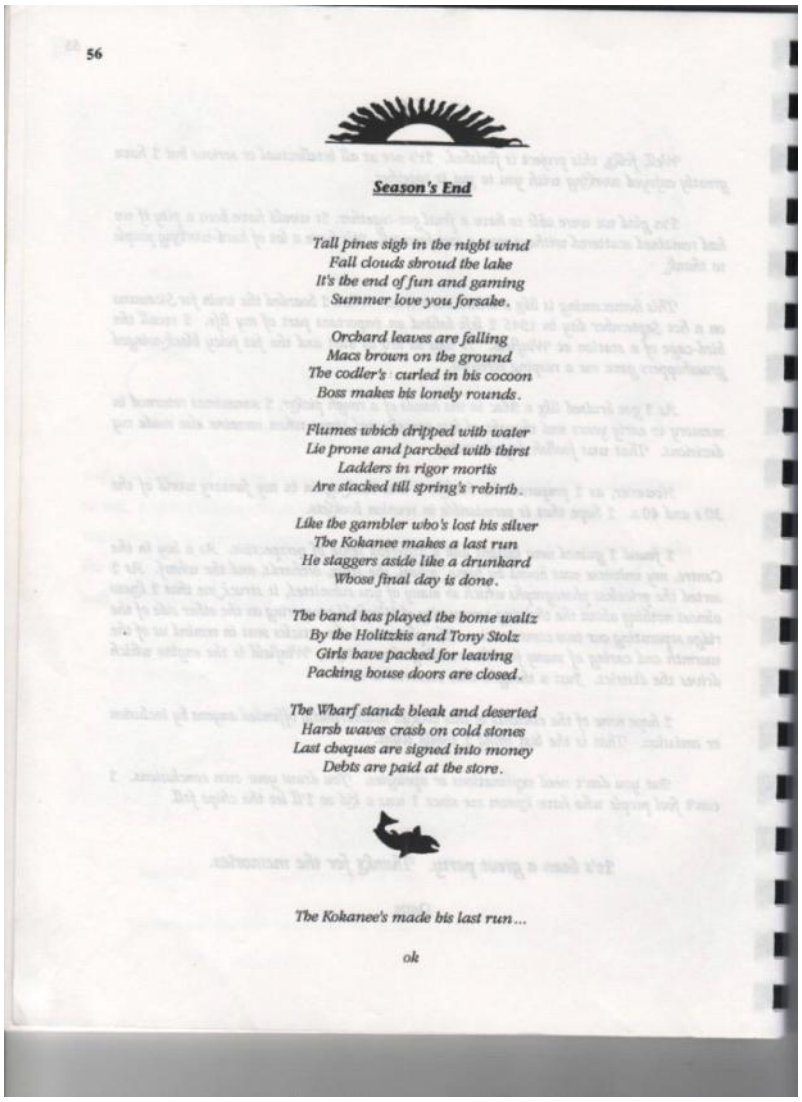

Season's End

Tall pines sigh in the night wind
Fall clouds shroud the lake
It's the end of fun and gaming
Summer love you forsake.

Orchard leaves are falling
Macs brown on the ground
The codler's curled in his cocoon
Boss makes his lonely rounds.

Flumes which dripped with water
Lie prone and parched with thirst
Ladders in rigor mortis
Are stacked till spring's rebirth.

Like the gambler who's lost his silver
The Kokanee makes a last run
He staggers aside like a drunkard
Whose final day is done.

The band has played the home waltz
By the Holitzkis and Tony Stolz
Girls have packed for leaving
Packing house doors are closed.

The Wharf stands bleak and deserted
Harsh waves crash on cold stones
Last cheques are signed into money
Debts are paid at the store.

The Kokanee's made his last run...

ok

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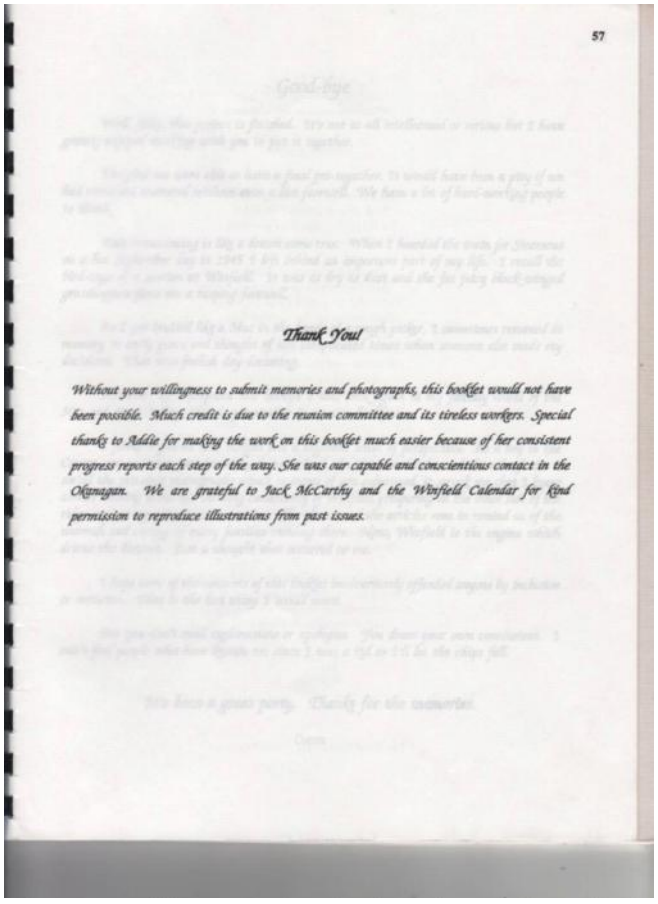

Thank You!

Without your willingness to submit memories and photographs, this booklet would not have been possible. Much credit is due to the reunion committee and its tireless workers. Special thanks to Addie for making the work on this booklet much easier because of her consistent progress reports each step of the way. She was our capable and conscientious contact in the Okanagan. We are grateful to Jack McCarthy and the Winfield Calendar for king permission to reproduce illustrations from past issues.