

THE JAPANESE
PIONEERS
OF
LAKE COUNTRY

(Winfield, Oyama, Okanagan Centre)

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In the late part of the 19th and the early part of the 20th century, the Japanese government was encouraging the emigration of its people. Large numbers of Japanese, from whole families to bachelors, made the journey from their homeland to various locations around the world. Many went to Brazil, El Salvador, Haiti and various other areas in South America. Many more came to Canada and British Columbia.

Many of these pioneers landed in Vancouver and amidst rumours of fortune being made in the Valley made the long trek to the interior. Some worked as fishermen on the Skeena; others worked as recruiters and builders on the CPR. While labouring on the CPR interior route many of these workers made their way to Vernon and the Coldstream Ranch.

The Coldstream Ranch hired a great number of Japanese workers who learned the fruit trade that would be part of their lives for a great many years. Several of these workers who became friends at the Coldstream Ranch became the pioneers of Okanagan Centre and Winfield orchard industries when they moved from Vernon to the Winfield area in the mid 1910's to 1920's.

Almost all who moved to Winfield, from English to Japanese, worked in some capacity for the Okanagan Valley Land Company or the Rainbow Ranche. (see appendix photo number 1d, 2, 3). Fathers worked as pickers and orchard foremen or in the packing house. Mothers picked up cuttings and windfalls or worked as cooks in the Japanese camps located on the Rainbow Ranche and the area now known as Jack Seaton Park. The children, when old enough, also participated in the orchard activities. Some followed in their parents footsteps and became second generation foremen and cooks.

Some families eventually moved off the workers' camps into their own homes, where they ran their own orchards or farms. However, most continued to work for the Rainbow or the Land company.

Sons and daughters of these early pioneers began to break away from the large companies and orchards in order to enlarge their private orchards and run independent fruit and vegetable stands. Many started businesses radically different from the fruit industry. Men like A. Kobayashi, (Sigh)son of Denbei, started Lake Country's first newspaper while in his teens, organized a dance band, and started an electronic repair business. The second generation of Japanese settlers would

become entrepreneurs and orchardists who would continue to affect this community.

Socially and culturally, the Japanese community was generally self contained, as it was the practice of the time to exclude many nationalities (non-English and non-western) from formal clubs and activities. The Japanese families gathered on the Rainbow Ranch from both camps to participate in community picnics, festivals, tournaments and plays. Most remember gathering for two major festivals; Hanami, the blossom festival, held around May and a Fall festival held sometime between August and October. Many different games and races would be held for the children and prizes would be given to all who participated. A third celebration, the celebration of the Japanese New Year, was celebrated in all Japanese homes in the community and visitations were made and much feasting for three days.

The Rainbow Ranche had its own baseball field and tennis courts that were frequently used by the Japanese community. The Rainbow had its own Japanese workers' baseball team and tennis club. (see appendix photo 1a).

When weather permitted, Samurai plays and Japanese traditional theater plays were performed outdoors along with displays of Kendo, a Japanese fencing technique. (see appendix photos 1b/c) When bad weather prevented the outdoor gatherings, families and workers congregated in the Dewonk house on Pow Road near the Japanese "Rainbow" Camp. The house was a large rectangular log cabin that could easily be used as a theater and social gathering spot.

Besides plays and sports events there was an Aoba Kai Club or Haiku Club run by Denbei Kobayashi. Haiku poetry is defined in English terms as a 17 syllable poem written in three lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. The principle objective of the poetry is to record and create an emotional poetic feeling. It is a brief poem that relays a sentiment that if expressed in western convention would be a much longer poem. An example of Mr. Kobayashi's Haiku poetry:

"Increasing glory and peaceful light
Now shine in the garden of God
As the Yamato Cherry bursts into bloom."

Mr. Kobayashi wrote and taught this specifically Japanese poetry to an all men's Haiku Club and then eventually to both men and women of the Japanese community. (see appendix photo 7a)

The men and women of the Rainbow and Workers' camp who were members of the United faith made the long trek to Kelowna on the Kanamaru's flat bed truck to the Japanese Untied Church

located on Harvey and Water Street (see appendix photo 4). This church was started in 1920 by Dr. S. Osterhout and consisted of a church hall and Sunday school. The church itself still exists but has been moved to a different location. In addition to the church in Kelowna, many services were held in the D. Kobayashi home in Okanagan Centre. Though many of the workers had converted to or were of a Christian faith, a lot were still members of the Buddhist religion.

During this time the Japanese population of Lake Country was also visited by the Japanese Consul from Vancouver. These visits would usually end with a garden social at the house of Mr. Goldie of the Rainbow Ranche, or at the home of one of the more prominent members of the Japanese community (see appendix photo 7 c\d). More than just a social gathering these visits were a spontaneous check on the welfare and well-being of Japan's former inhabitants. For although the government of Japan encouraged the emigration of their people in order to obtain fortunes elsewhere, it still took a special interest in the well being of its nationals. Records of births, deaths, and marriages which occurred outside of Japan were still recorded in the country's official record offices.

Eventually many of the pioneers of the Lake Country Japanese community returned home, usually after the death of a spouse or retirement from the business world. However, many of their children remained and came to play as much of a significant part in the history here as did their parents.

These people were the workers and innovators of the fruit industry and pillars of the community. They were and are people respected and admired for their special contributions to the past and future.

The remainder of this paper is specific family histories of the Lake Country Japanese pioneers.

NOTE: All dates before 1925 rely on family memories and variation between family branches may occur. In addition, all information and events are also subject to memory and may not be totally accurate.

KOBAYASHI, KIZO

Kizo Kobayashi was born around 1893 in the province of Naganokēn. He and his brother Denbei both decided to come to Canada in order to "make their fortune". Denbei arrived first, and Kizo followed several months later.

Mr. Kobayashi arrived at the Coldstream Ranch around 1911. He and his brother arrived at Okanagan Landing and walked inland to the Ranch where they hoped jobs would be available. As they walked, stopping every now and then to pick up windfall apples to eat, they met Mr. Koyama, head of the Coldstream Nursery. At first the two brothers were worried about getting into trouble for the apples they had gathered, but Mr. Koyama was friendly and offered to give them a ride to the Coldstream Ranch's main encampment. Once there he offered them a job in the nursery under his direction.

In 1918 Kizo went back to Japan to marry Ikue Kitagawara. Upon their return to Canada, the couple moved to Winfield to work in the orchards for the Okanagan Valley Land Company. Mrs. Kobayashi became a cook at the Japanese camp along with her sister-in-law, Mrs. Denbei Kobayashi.

In 1921 Kizo bought 20 acres of orchard land which he cleared by hand. A log house was built for the family residence off Camp Road, just up the hill from the orchard acreage. At first they grew all kinds of berries and sold them at fruit stands. Later, when the trees matured, they sold apples to the Land Company at Okanagan Centre.

Kizo and his wife Ikue raised six children, 2 boys and 4 girls. Of these children, Kiechi is deceased, Matt lives with his wife Jean (nee Koyama) in Winfield, Meiko (Kawano) lives in Kelowna, Flo Kaminishi lives in Kamloops, Margaret (Yamamoto) lives in Kelowna, and Jane (Wakita) lives in Surrey, B.C.

Mr. K. Kobayashi died in 1950; his wife died in 1987 at age 88. Mrs. Kobayashi was also a member of the Haiku Club run by her brother-in-law Denbei. The house built on Camp Road was vandalized in the early 1980's and was eventually torn down.

HIKICHI, SHIGEHISA

Mr. Shigehisa Hikichi came to Canada from Fukushima province in the early part of the twentieth century. The exact date is unknown. He worked in the Vancouver Hotel before coming to

the Coldstream Ranch around 1915. In approximately 1917 he came to the Rainbow Ranche and stayed with the Koyama family whom he and met while working at the Coldstream.

He married Tome and they had five sons. Shoichi (Sam) was born in 1920 at the Rainbow Ranche and, like most births at the time, was delivered by Dr. Knox. He is the only son still living and working in Winfield. Shigahisa's other sons; Hisao lives in Japan; Akira in Toronto; Isao (Jack) lived in Kelowna and Mits in Summerland.

The senior Mr. Hikichi worked at the Rainbow Ranche with Mr. Goldie till about 1952. Mr. Hikichi is known for being the first foreman at the Rainbow Ranche to start the procedure of crop estimating, a procedure that continued until the Rainbow was subdivided and sold.

In 1952 Shigahisa bought Brodie's orchard on Okanagan Centre Road. In 1970 he went back to Japan. Mrs. Hikichi, a member of the Haiku Club, had died previously.

Their son, (Sam) Shoichi worked at the Rainbow under Mr. Goldie for 10 years before he bought his own fruit orchard on Goldie Road. He married his wife Teru in 1951. Teru, a local girl, was born in Kelowna. They still live on Goldie Road in Winfield. (see appendix photos 5, 6, 13).

TAKENAKA, SAM

Mr. Sam Takenaka came to Canada from the province of Wakayama-Ken in 1925. He travelled into the interior to Okanagan Landing and then took the S.S. Sicamous to Okanagan Centre where he met his sister and her husband (Taiji), who had a farm on Bond Road.

From Okanagan Centre, Mr. Takenaka went to Alberta where he worked on a Japanese-run vegetable farm for three years. In 1929 he returned to the Okanagan to house sit for his sister and brother-in-law who went back to Japan. For the two years of his stay he worked for Mr. Aberdeen at Fintry.

Later Mr. Takenaka bought his own home on Lodge Road in Winfield. He worked in the orchards for Mr. McDonagh and grew onions on his own land. In 1951 he took over the running of his wife's (Kimmie Koyama) father's land, also located on Lodge Road.

In 1970 Sam Takenaka retired from farming and his son Harold took over. In 1973 Sam and his wife built a new house beside the original home which is still located on the Koyama property.

Sam and Kimmie had 7 children, all of whom still live in the area: Addy, Harold, Judy, Grace, Jerry, Lawrence, and Ron.

In 1993 Sam celebrated his 88th birthday, a special landmark in Japanese culture, as the symbol for 88 is also the symbol used for the word rice.

A huge traditional celebration was planned and traditional foods such as red rice were served. Red rice is served at all happy occasions.

Sam belonged to the Aoba Kai, the Haiku Club run by Denbei Kobayashi.

(see appendix photos 8a, 8b, 8c)

TAIJI, TOYOKICHI

Toyokichi Taiji came from the village of Tanamimura to Vancouver in 1919. His mother, father, and brother were already settled in southern Alberta and had encouraged him to make the move to the prairies. They had rented land south of Lethbridge in Raymond, where they had a small grain farm.

Mr. Taiji eventually brought his wife, Oei, to the small community in Alberta. Mrs. Taiji was shocked by the desolate appearance of the Canadian prairies, especially after coming from a bustling and heavily populated village in Japan. They farmed only for a short time before returning to Vancouver.

The Okanagan Valley Land Company had been advertising in Vancouver for orchard and kitchen help for their Jack Seaton Park area holdings. After a few months the couple moved to the interior to work for the Land Company. Toyokichi worked in the orchards full time while Oei would make the meals for the workers, cleanup the mess hall, and work in the orchards between the mid-day and evening meals, all for 10 cents a day.

While Mr. Taiji learned his English from working in the orchards, Mrs. Taiji learned to speak English from the McCarthy boys, Morris and Lionel. Morris and Lionel along with Ron Gunn would stop in at the Camp while herding cattle that had been allowed to graze on the side of the road. They knew Mrs. Taiji would have food for them and, in return, she would have an opportunity to learn and practice English. She also taught the boys a smattering of Japanese. This scene was unusual because most Japanese women did not have much contact with the outside English-speaking world. Many were isolated in their homes and had little opportunity to learn and speak the language of their adopted country.

In 1924 a daughter, Michi (Koyama), was born in winfield. A son Susie was born in 1926 half way up Camp Road in a cabin on Archie Smith's property. He was delivered by Dr. Knox who arrived from Kelowna in his Model T Ford. Mr. Charlie Harrop held the lantern to guide Dr. Knox to the cabin.

Around 1936 Mr. Taiji rented his own orchard on Beaver Lake Road (now Glenmore). He ran this farm till 1941 when he expanded by buying a parcel of land across from the gravel pit on Glenmore Road. From 1941 onwards he ran both farms until his son bought part of it in 1962.

During the war years, Mr. Taiji remembers the anger he felt towards the government and the people who treated his family as outsiders because of their Japanese heritage. Mr. Taiji was 17 when the war started and, like his friends, he wanted to join up but was prevented from doing so. Though no land was confiscated, as at the coast, many Japanese who had lived here for years, or were born here, were treated with suspicion. It would take a long time for many of the families, including Mr. Taiji, to overcome the anger that their treatment caused.

Susie Taiji had his own orchard on Harwood Road in winfield from 1958 on, taking over his father's whole operation in 1970 when his father retired.

Besides working in the orchards, Susie Taiji also worked for Hiram Walker Distillery in its first year of operation. He married in 1949 at the Anglican church in Winfield.

His mother and father both suffered strokes in the early 1970's and had to move in with their son and daughter-in-law. Both passed away in 1981: Toyokichi in March at age 89, and Oei in December at age 90.

Michi Taiji married Motoy Koyama, son of Eijiro, and they now reside in Quesnel. Susie Taiji and his wife still live on their orchard land on Harwood Road and are active in the community.

KOBAYASHI, DENBEI

KOBAYASHI, HIRO nee YANAGISAWA

Mr. D. Kobayashi and his wife Hiro were leaders of the Okanagan Centre Japanese Community. Both were well respected and loved. Their home was situated on a farm overlooking Okanagan Lake.

Mr. Kobayashi was born in 1878 in Nishimura, Chiisagata gun, Nagano-Ken, Japan. He was the second son of Tanezo and Kin

Kobayashi. After graduating from the village school he spent years taking care of the younger children. Eventually he worked at a silk factory and travelled throughout Japan selling silk worm eggs.

Mr. Kobayashi's future wife, Hiro Yanagisawa, was the youngest of five children of Kyugo and Ishi Yanagisawa who raised silk worms for a living. The two families arranged the marriage between the two young people.

Denbei arrived in Canada in 1906 leaving his bride-to-be waiting for him in Japan. While she waited for her groom to return she began experimenting in "westernizing" herself. In the photo number 12 (see appendix) Hiro is sitting with her sister. As one can see she has styled her hair in a western pompadour style while her sister Yomeno has a more traditional Japanese style. When Denbei returned in 1913 to pick up his new bride she was already equipped with a stylish western wardrobe for her new life in "America".

From 1906 to 1913 Denbei Kobayashi had worked at several different jobs. He arrived in Vancouver at the Canadian Pacific Railway dock aboard the Azanian which was on her last voyage across the Pacific. Like many pioneers, Mr. Kobayashi had sailed from his homeland to build a new and prosperous life in Canada.

After remaining in Vancouver for a few days, Denbei set out on his first money-making venture - fishing on the Skeena River. He had wanted to go to the USA but had heard that one could make close to one thousand dollars for two months of fishing. He worked hard but his partner eventually drank and gambled away both their earnings. He returned to Vancouver where he joined a CPR work gang being sent to blast rocks for the new main line going through Sicamous.

When winter arrived the crew stopped work and spent the cold season in a box car at Notch Hill sidling. The crew suffered extreme discomfort as the box car was not equipped to deal with the 40 below weather. In the spring of 1907 the crew moved to the branch line near Vernon and continued to blast rocks.

In 1907 he left the CPR and headed to the Coldstream Ranch where he worked under the direction of Mr. Eijiro Koyama. He, his brother, and a friend were hired at a wage of one dollar and forty cents a day for ten hours' work. The Coldstream orchard employed more than forty Japanese workers and many were from the Denbei native prefecture of Nagano. It was here at the Coldstream that Denbei learned how to care for young fruit trees, including grafting and pruning procedures.

In July 1907 the Consul of Japan in Vancouver visited the Japanese immigrants in the Okanagan Valley. He came to the

Coldstream Ranch earlier than was expected and Mr. Kobayashi and the other workers were unprepared. They asked the camp cook to make something special, so the cook baked a sponge cake in a hurry. Unfortunately after the cake was served black spots were discovered in it. These black spots were found out to be ants that had been in the flour. Mr. Kobayashi apologized to the Honourable Choosuke Yada. The consul just smiled and said "It's all right, this cake is delicious and I was told if you eat ants you get strength". (see historical society report vol. 47 pg. 99-103). Mr. Kobayashi never forgot the incident.

As winter approached many of the workers left the Ranch in search of other work. Mr. Kobayashi stayed on until February 1908 and then he went to Okanagan Centre on the S.S. Sicamous which carried passengers, mail, and cargo up and down the lake. At the time of Denbei's arrival, Okanagan Centre was a thriving township with two grocery stores, a butcher shop, a Presbyterian church, two hotels, and a post office. The post master, Mr. Aikens, was also the owner of the Grandview Hotel and he proved to be a good friend to Mr. Kobayashi. Mr. Aikens employed Mr. Kobayashi as the hotel cook. It was here that he learned how to cook western cuisine as well as understand and speak the English language.

After leaving the hotel he went to work for a Mr. Goulding at Oyama, building fences. He lived and worked in orchards in Oyama. It was during this time in the Lake Country that Mr. Kobayashi became a Canadian naturalized citizen (April 1908).

His next big opportunity was receiving the contract to plant eight hundred acres of apple trees for the Okanagan Valley Land Company. This task took over three years to complete.

By 1913 Denbei had earned and saved enough money to return to Japan for his bride Hiro. They were married on February 5th, 1914 and left Japan on March 17, 1914. They travelled by ship, train, and on foot to reach Okanagan Centre. A reception party was held by the camp members from the Rainbow and other members of the community.

The next day Mrs. Kobayashi started work at the camp at Jack Seaton Park as a cook. Mrs. Kobayashi was a well educated and privileged young lady. She was accustomed to a relatively comfortable lifestyle as the youngest in a well-to-do family. The log cabin in an all-male work camp was a shock and disappointment to her, according to her youngest daughter Susan Hidaka (see Calendar issue August 5, 1992). But, she soon took her new surroundings in stride, and she equipped herself with how-to books on cooking and Midwifery.

Later in 1914 Mr. Kobayashi bought an orchard of his own, located at the corner of Camp and Hare Road in Okanagan Centre. He rebuilt the existing house and made it a

comfortable residence for the family's first real home. Mr. Kobayashi was very interested in Japanese plants and botany. He imported many native Japanese plants such as the early blossom cherry tree (higan sukura), Japanese peonies (Botan), Persimmons (kaki), bamboo butter burrs, coltsfoot (fuki) and Japanese asparagus (udo). Due to the seasonal differences and the severe winters all but three varieties dies. The early blossoming cherry was reproduced and sent all over Canada to adorn many parks and boulevards. According to one interviewee the trees became the objects of attack during the period of animosity towards the Japanese during the Second World War.

The Kobayashi's first child Tsutai Anthony (Sigh) was born around the time of the house remodelling, so he was the only one of the children born at the Jack Seaton camp. He was born in April of 1915 and was delivered by Dr. Knox of Kelowna.

The baby became the darling of the camp and, according to his sisters, he was also extremely spoiled, especially by the camp bachelors. In the picture of Sigh in his crib (see appendix photo 10d) he is surrounded by toys given to him by members of the camp. In a corner of the crib one can see a beautiful and delicate china doll dressed in a traditional kimono. This doll was one of Hiro's prized possessions that she had brought from Japan. This doll was not to be touched by any of the children. However, when Sigh became very ill, his mother feared that he might die before ever having played with the cherished doll. She gave him the doll to comfort him; unfortunately Sigh smashed it. The doll was destroyed but Sigh lived!

Shortly after, they moved into the house on Camp and Davidson and started up their own orchard. They grew several varieties of berries and sold them until their fruit trees matured enough to produce. It was on this location that the family started the first independent packing house. It was also here that three more Kobayashi children were born; Caroline Aiko, Blanche Yoshiko, and Andrew Hiroshi. Hiroshi eventually took over a portion of his father's orchard in the early 1960's.

In 1924 Mr. Kobayashi bought a second plot of land overlooking Okanagan lake. This land already had a large house, one that would more comfortably fit the growing family. In addition it was within walking distance to the school for the older children. This would be the permanent residence for the Kobayashi family consisting of 7 children and their parents. It was in this house that the three youngest were born, Ruth Sachio, Allan Osamu and Susan Suzuyo (see appendix photos 112 and 9b).

Mr. Kobayashi's 24 acres of orchard kept him extremely busy. everything needed to be done either by hand or with the help of a horse. There was no mechanized machinery to help with the orcharding process. Horses were used for everything from

hauling prunings to transporting apples to the packing house.
(see appendix photo 9c)

Mrs. Kobayashi also kept extremely busy. Not only was she raising a large family, she was also a self-taught mid-wife and attended almost all the births in the Japanese community. Most times she would be the only qualified attendant there. The doctor would have been called from Kelowna, but he tended to arrive after the child had already been born. Mrs. Kobayashi not only attended the births but she acted as a nurse, taking care of the expectant mothers before and after the child was delivered. During her longer stays with the patient she would leave her children in the care of her friend, Mrs. Kanamaru who had no children of her own.

Due to Hiro's family business background in silk, she had brought a large supply of silk batts which she combined with sheep wool to make futons, a type of mattress. These futons would be used in her own house as well as being given away as gifts.

Though Hiro and Denbei adopted and adapted to the customs of the western life, they nevertheless retained and practised traditional Japanese ways of life. For example, their house was encircled by a classical Japanese garden that contained many of the flowers that Denbei had imported from Japan. Hiro was also interested in gardening and became an expert at growing flowers, especially dahlias and begonias. She also began practising Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement.

While Denbei was known for his poetry and even taught Haiku to the Japanese Literary club, Aobakai Hiro was also a poet in her own right. She tended to write in private and it wasn't discovered until after her death that she was a prolific and talented writer. An exercise book discovered by her family was found to contain years of her poetry. Even her husband of almost fifty years had no idea that she had been so talented.

In addition to orchard work, running a business, and raising a family, the Kobayashis entertained many visitors from the coast, including the Japanese Consul. They also hosted many traditional holiday celebrations and festivals at their home. Denbei and Hiro were the recognized leaders of the Japanese community in Okanagan Centre and Winfield. Denbei ran the literary club, and even founded the Koyukai, the Japanese community club.

Though church services would be held in Kelowna at the Harvey and Water Street Japanese United Church, some services were held in the Kobayashi home. The Minister would travel to Okanagan Centre to deliver his sermon. In addition to the church services, Japanese language lessons for the local children were also held in the home.

Every year the family would host two major traditional celebrations, the Hana-mi and the Japanese New Year. Denbei would order traditional foods from the coast that would be delivered by the S.S. Sicamous to Okanagan Centre. When the cherry trees blossomed on the Kobayashi property everyone would be invited to the house for the celebration of the cherry blossom, the Sakura. For the festival Hiro would make rice cakes tinted pink and wrapped in a cherry leaf. The leaf was purely ornamental but occasionally one of the unsuspecting guests would eat the rice cake, leaf and all, much to the amusement of the other guests.

New Year's day was also a big celebration at the Kobayashi house. Days ahead Hiro would begin to prepare traditional Japanese dishes, many of which were symbols of long life, good health and prosperity.

In the days of outdoor plumbing, many of the Japanese families had a traditional bathhouse. Denbei and Hiro were no exception. The three foot high square wooden tub with copper bottom was originally situated at the first house and was moved by Denbei to the house at Okanagan Centre. To heat the water a small fire would be lit under the copper bottom. They would usually light the fire around noon so the water would be hot and ready to use by the evening.

The traditional bathhouse is similar to today's hot tub. They were not used to bathe but to soak. The Kobayashi bath could comfortably fit two adults.

Although Hiro would never master the English language, she always tried her best to communicate her ideas and thoughts to her European neighbours. This lack of communication did leave her somewhat more isolated than the rest of her family, but she was, however, greatly respected and admired by her mostly "Western" neighbours.

During the forties, there were feelings of animosity between the Japanese and the rest of Canada. The displacement of the coastal Japanese was an embodiment of this distrust and it affected Hiro and Denbei personally. Their daughter Aiko had married a man from the coast and they were not permitted to stay in the Okanagan. She, her husband, and new born child were forced to move to Ontario. Hiro was greatly grieved by the turn of events and would always feel sorrow because of the distance between her and her first-born grandchild whom she could see grow up only through pictures and letters.

As Hiro grew older she retained the spirit that led her to wear western clothes and a pompadour hairstyle while still a young girl in her native Japan. She was always in fashion and was even the first of the older Japanese women to perm their hair.

Though life in her adopted land was not at all what she expected, Hiro derived great satisfaction from raising her children and grandchildren as well as becoming a respected member of the community. She loved her new home but she, as well as Denbei, dreamed of one day returning to Japan to visit old friends and family. Unfortunately it was never to happen. In May of 1954 she suffered a crippling stroke that confined her to bed. Her daughter Sachio and son-in-law Sax Koyama moved into the house to take care of her and her husband.

Hiro passed away July 18, 1960, eight years before her husband.

Mr. Kobayashi retired from farming in 1961, and transferred 10 acres of his orchard to his son Hiroshi and another 12 acres to his daughter Sachio and husband Sax. He did realize his dream and visited Japan in 1961, 1963, and 1967. He published his autobiography and a collection of Haiku poems in 1963.

Denbei Kobayashi passed away on January 4, 1968, at the age of 89. He and his wife will always be remembered as community leaders, pioneers, and people of enough strength and courage to help build and mold the community.

Their children would also go on to be respected and productive members of the Lake Country community. Their oldest son Sigh (Tsutai Anthony) became a pioneer in business and in social and political fields.

Tsutai is actually the second person to use the name Sigh: his father was the original Sigh.

The second Sigh is a charter member of the Winfield Lions Club; past president and life member of the Oyama Royal Canadian Legion; past president of the IOF court of Winfield, the Kelowna Shriners club #15, North Okanagan Liberal Association and many other organizations.

In 1930 he was the first Junior Forest Warden in Canada. He published the Lake Country's first newspaper from 1930 to 1933 while still in his teens.

From 1940 Sigh played in a dance band with Fyfe Sommerville, Bert Hoffman and Roy Enderby Jr. During later years in the 60's and 70's Elin Porter, Louis and Pauline Senger also played with Sigh.

He was a charter member and one of the organizers of the Fruit and Vegetable Workers' Union Local #8. He served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Fruit and Vegetable Workers Union for eight years.

Sigh was a founding member of the National Japanese Canadian Association in 1947. He has been honoured by his community as

citizen of the year and has received accolades from Premier Vander Zalm and Prime Minister Mulroney for his community service.

1949 was the first year Japanese, Chinese, East Indian, Native Indians, and African Canadians were allowed to vote both federally and provincially. Sigh had voted previously in 1947 because he was a member of the Canadian Army serving during World War II. Sigh served with the Canadian Intelligence Corps in Vancouver and was an instructor of the RCEME (reserves) in Vernon for five years after the war.

Sigh is now a retired electrician after having operated his electrical business since 1937. Sigh and his wife Evelyn were married in Kelowna in 1966 and celebrated their 25th anniversary in June of 1991.

The other Kobayashi children have also married and started their own families. Some, such as Sachio Koyama and Blanche Yoshiko Mende, still live in Winfield. The rest of their siblings have moved to various parts of the country.

KOYAMA, EIJIRO

Eijiro Koyama was the eldest of three children. He was born in 1871 in Matusubara Shigaken Japan. In 1889, he left Shigaken Japan, on the ocean liner, Empress of Japan. It took approximately three weeks for the ship to arrive in Canada. for several months he stayed and worked in Vancouver.

In 1900 Eijiro took a job on a commercial fishing boat on the Skeena River. He worked there for approximately a year and later joined a CPR work crew. He worked in and around the Skeena River area till around 1902.

In the latter part of 1903 he came to the Coldstream Ranch in Vernon and was hired as a foreman. As foreman he oversaw the work of 40 - 50 men and helped to organize the ranch's tree nursery. From this nursery would come a lot of the early plantings of the orchards around the Vernon district.

In 1908 Eijiro received his Canadian citizenship and naturalization papers. At this time he was still in the employ of the Coldstream Ranch.

In 1913 he returned to Japan to marry Fumi Fujioka and upon their return to Vancouver they were met by the Coldstream's Manager who drove them all the way from the coast to Vernon in a brand new car. Imagine travelling in a less than comfortable 1913 automobile all the way from Vancouver to Coldstream on steep, crooked, narrow and gravelly roads that were marked with potholes and various other hazards.

In 1914 the Koyama's first child Kimmie was born. Later in 1915 the couple would be blessed with their second child Seichi who would eventually go into the ministry and return to Japan.

In the spring of 1916 Eijiro and a few other workers got together and purchased 20 acres of land on the flats next to W.R. Powley (Lodge Road). This land was purchased from Mr. Sid Edwards who would later retire to New Zealand.

In order to make the move from Vernon to Winfield, Mr. Koyama borrowed a team of horses named Nip and Tuck from Mr. Powley. It took two days with several stops before they arrived at their newly purchased land.

The land was all brush and so for the first year the men concentrated on clearing it. With all the work being done by hand the job took several long months to clear even a small portion.

By 1917 enough of the land was cleared that strawberry fields could be planted. When more of the land opened up, Mr. Koyama set up a dairy farm which he operated till 1948.

In 1920 Kimmie Koyama was sent to live with relatives in Japan. This was done so she could receive a traditional education. The practice of sending the oldest offspring to live with relatives back in Japan was not unusual as the families tended to want their children to be trained and educated in the more traditional arts at Japanese schools. In addition the family had grown from four to eight. It was economically necessary to send at least one of the children to relatives.

In 1930 Mrs. Koyama died of pneumonia a few weeks after the birth of her tenth child, Masae. Masae died later that same year in a house fire at her aunt and uncle's home. Both are buried in the old cemetery on Cemetery Road in Winfield.

Mr. Koyama was left with eight children to raise and during the hungry thirties it was no easy task to bring up a large family and work at the same time. He took up the responsibilities of both mother and father but eventually he sent to Japan for his eldest daughter, Kimmie, who at age 16 was old enough to take over the running of the household. Unfortunately there was a small language barrier as Kimmie had spoken only Japanese since her departure at the age of six. Her siblings spoke mainly English with a smattering of Japanese. The family eventually overcame the difficulty and the house began to run smoothly again.

In 1948 Mr. Koyama retired to Mayne Island. Upon retiring he handed over his land to his daughter Kimmie and her husband Sam Takenaka. The couple still live on the farm. Mr. Koyama

passed away in Vancouver in 1956.

The rest of Mr. Koyama's children have since moved to various parts of Canada and the world. Siech is presently in Japan. Sax Koyama married Sachio Kobayashi and they lived in Okanagan Centre. Sax drowned in a boating accident in January of 1988. Harue (Taguchi) lives in Vancouver, B. C. Jean married Matt Kobayashi, son of Kizo and they still reside in Okanagan Centre. Motoy Koyama married Michi Taiji and lives in Quesnel, B. C. along with Kadi Koyama. Mary (Itami) moved to Hawaii. Ted Koyama, Sax's twin brother, with his wife Kay and family, live in Toronto.

KOYAMA, TAROKICHI

Tarokichi Koyama (Taro) was born April 12, 1889 in Matusbara Shiga Ken, Japan. His wife Fusa Teramura was born in Yokaichi Shiga Ken, Japan, March 15, 1900. They were married in April of 1924 and immediately moved to Canada to start their new life. The couple travelled on passenger ship to Victoria and Vancouver and then transferred to train to make the trip to Okanagan Landing, where they had to shift yet again to a third mode of transportation, the steamship S.S. Sicamous. On the steamship the couple travelled to Okanagan Centre where they met the groom's brother Eijiro who had settled there several years before.

Here the couple worked in the local orchards and kept their own vegetable garden, making extra income by selling a portion of their produce.

In 1925 Tarokichi received the position of manager of the Harvey Orchard. It was also in this same year their first child Koichi (Ken) was born. In 1927 the first daughter Yoshi was born followed in 1929 by her sister Teruyo. Paul, the youngest son arrived in 1931.

The family continued to live and work on the orchard until 1935 when they moved to the Aberdeen Orchard on Glenmore Road. Taro and his wife worked for Mr. Aberdeen for approximately two seasons.

From Aberdeen's orchard the Koyama family moved to their own farm on Lodge Road. Here Fusa kept a large vegetable garden, from which she sold her produce. Mr. Koyama started work at the Okanagan Valley Land Company offices.

In 1948 the family moved again, this time to their final family home, an orchard on Bond Road.

Mr. Koyama passed away in December of 1949 only a year after purchasing his orchard. Fusa died 42 years later in June of 1987.

Their children grew up and moved from the family home. Koichi (Ken) Koyama retired to the Ellison District in Kelowna. Yoshi moved to Scarborough, Ontario. Paul works in the lumber industry in Armstrong and resides in Vernon. Teruyo is the only one of the sons that still lives in Winfield.

THE TANAKA FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Shirotsuke Tanaka emigrated to Canada August 21, 1927. The family lived in Vancouver until 1930, when they moved to Winfield, B. C. The Tanaka family had a vegetable farm on the Justin McCarthy property, growing tomatoes, onions, cabbages and carrots. The present property is now the Aspen Grove Golf course. All the children attended Winfield Elementary School. Sigh, the oldest son worked in the orchards for the Okanagan Valley Land Company.

In the fall of 1948 the Tanakas moved to Westbank, B.C. on the shores of Okanagan Lake. They had a mixed farm of fruit and vegetables.

Yosh the eldest daughter married and moved to Namu, B.C. She lived there for 12 years and presently lives in Vancouver, BC. Ayako married and moved to Vancouver. Umeno married and moved to Richmond. Hideo moved to Vancouver and later transferred to Vernon. Yoshio (Danny) moved to Vancouver, where he presently resides.

Mr. and Mrs. Shirotsuke Tanaka passed away in the early 1970's.

The information on the following families is brief as none of them remain in the immediate area of Lake Country and their families' whereabouts are unknown. The information that is shown here was gathered by interviews with those that remember them from information gathered by the Lake Country Museum from the graveyard that several of the families members are buried in.

ABE

AIZAWA

CHIBA

All were bachelors who worked at the Rainbow Ranche. They left sometime in the 30's and 40's.

ITO, YOSHITO

Mr. Ito owned and operated an orchard on Okanagan Centre Road in Winfield and was a close friend of the D. Kobayashi family. he was killed transporting fruit to the Vernon Fruit Union in Winfield. He was driving a Democrat, a type of wagon, when the horse shied and he fell from his seat. There are two versions of what happened next: one was that he was kicked in the head by the spooked horse; the other concludes that he was impaled on a piece of metal sticking out of the wagon's frame. In any case he died as a result of the injuries sustained in the accident. He was buried in the cemetery on Cemetery Road in Winfield. It is believed that his family may have returned to Japan. (see appendix photo 11b)

KANAMARU, KANETARO

He and his wife worked for the Rainbow Ranche and belonged to the Untied Church. In fact it was their flat bed truck that the Japanese workers used to travel to and from the Church in Kelowna.

KAWANO, MEL

Mr. Kawano was born and brought up at the Coldstream Ranch in Vernon. When he was sixteen he left to go to Vancouver where he found employment. He moved back just before the forced removal of the Japanese occurred during World War II. He married Meiko Kobayashi in 1943. He bought property from the Rainbow Ranche along with Matt Kobayashi. They had adjoining farms where they first grew vegetables, alter adding orchards. they moved to Okanagan Centre about 1945.

Mel was active in many areas, the Water Board, Fire District, Tree Fruits and more. He passed away in 1983.

Mel and Meiko had seven children all of whom have moved from Lake Country. Amy is in Vancouver, Don in Vancouver, Roger in Victoria, Barbara in Kelowna, Roy at Port McNeil on Vancouver Island, Mona in Calgary and Ellen in Vancouver.

KIRUSHIMA, ISAMU

Mr. Kirushima was a member of the Haiku Club and worked at the Rainbow Ranche.

KOIDE, S.

Mr. Koide worked for the Rainbow Ranche and was probably a bachelor. He was also a member of the Haiku club in the early 1920's.

MORI, GEORGE

Mr. Mori and his wife worked at the Rainbow Ranche as cooks and orchard workers. They also worked at some of the seasonal job as at the packing house. Mr. Mori was a member of the Rainbow's baseball team. It is known that they had a daughter, Mabel, who died at the age of 4 in 1928 and is buried in the cemetery on Cemetery Road in Winfield.

NAKATANI, ESUMATSU

Mr. Nakatani had a farm on Lodge Road in Winfield. The Nakatani's had two daughters, Mary and Ruth.

NAGO, OTOKICHI

Mr. Nago worked for Tom Duggan on Camp Road and was presumably a bachelor. He is also buried in the old cemetery but with no marker or gravestone.

NIHARA, JACK

Jack was a bachelor and a first World War veteran who made his living selling fish he caught in Okanagan Lake. He sold the fish to the local butcher and general store in Okanagan Centre and Kelowna.

He eventually moved to Lumby and became president of the Lumby Legion.

NISHIEKE

Nothing is really known about the family except that they had a four-year-old daughter named Hatsue who died while they lived in Okanagan Centre. It is very probable that they were seasonal workers for the Okanagan Valley Land Company.

OHASHI,

The family worked a farm with the Tsuji family on Woodsdale Road.

SAWA,

There was a father and his son named Sawa who worked for the Rainbow Ranche. The father worked as crew foreman. It is believed that they may have moved back to Japan.

SHISHIDO, E.

Before coming to Canada in 1908, Mr. Shishido moved to Hawaii and lived there for a few years. When he first came to the Okanagan he farmed in Rutland. The family moved to Winfield in about 1920, where they lived on the Koyama farm for a few years before moving to land on Okanagan Centre Road. The property is now owned by the Mendes. The Shishido's grew tomatoes where the Winfield Mobile Home Park is now, as well as on the triangle where the Seven-Eleven and Gerry Bolton's service station are located.

The Shishido's had two children: Chiyako who now lives in Toronto and Hiroshi who is living in Calgary.

TABUCHI, MAGOTARO

Mr. Tabuchi worked for Mr. Powley on growing onions in the area now known as Pheasant Call Subdivision and also on the hayland area across from Meadow Road. Mr. S. Kobayashi remembers him as a maker of home brew.

Mr. Tabuchi was married and a practising Buddhist. From his head stone it was concluded that he was buried with a traditional Buddhist ceremony. He was 51 years old at the time of his death.

TODA, T.

Mr. Toda died in a logging accident in Carrs Landing. He and his wife had worked on the Rainbow Ranche and for the Okanagan Valley Land Company. His daughter now resides in New Mexico in the U.S.A. (see photo lld)

TSUJI

The Tsuji family farmed with the Ohashi family on Woodsdale Road.

YABE,

The Yabe family lived and worked on the Rainbow Ranche.

RIYOMON & TOMECHIYO TERAMURA

Riyomon Teramura was born on November 28, 1901 in Shiga-Ken, Honshu, Japan. In 1929, he married Tomechiyo Hikida, who was born on January 20, 1907 in Shiga-Ken. Shortly after their marriage, Riyomon left Tomechiyo in Japan with his parents while he journeyed to Canada. Riyomon arrived in Winfield on May 18, 1930. He worked at Vernon Orchards for a few years, at Winfield Irrigation for a short period, then at Teijiro and Fusa Ohashi's farm. In 1935, Riyomon returned to Japan to bring Tomechiyo back to Canada with him. The Teramuras eventually had four children; Hanako (Ruby, Roy, Harry, and Betty. Riyomon and Tomechiyo both worked at Teijiro Ohashi's farm for approximately five years, then grew vegetables on farm property, located on Woodsdale Road, which they rented from George Reiswig. They then purchased the Ohashi farm on Woodsdale Road in 1952 and farmed there until they both passed away in 1975. This property, opposite the Woodsdale School, was sold in 1977 and is now a subdivision of new homes.

ASAJIRO & TATSU TSUJI

Asajiro tsuji, born in 1894, and his wife Tatsu came to Canada from Siga-Ken, Honshu, Japan. They lived in the Winfield area for a few years, working as farmers. The Tsujis had two children, Ayako and Sadao. The Tsujuis moved to Vernon, buying a farm on Old Kamloops road. Asajiro passed away in 1966. In 1968, Tatsu and Sadao returned to Winfield for approximately two years while Sadao attended Okanagan College, then they moved to Kamloops. They have all since passed away; Tatsu in 1972, Ayako in 1978, and Sadao in 1984.

TEIJIRO & FUSA OHASHI

Teijiro and Fusa Ohashi were born in Shiga-Ken, Honshu, Japan. They moved to Winfield and farmed on property which is located opposite the Woodsdale School. Fusa passed away, and the property was sold in 1952 to Riyomon and Tomechiyo Teramura. Riyomon was Teijiro's younger half-brother. After selling the farm, Teijiro worked in Kelowna for a few years, then returned to Japan and has since passed away.

If you have any information about these or any other Japanese family of Lake Country that may have been omitted, Please write to:

Lake Country Heritage and Cultural Society
Box 25
Winfield, B.C.
V0H 2C0

PHOTO APPENDIX

- 1a. Rainbow ranche, Japanese baseball team, the Centres.
- 1b. Kendo exhibition at the Rainbow
- 1c. Kendo exhibition at the Rainbow
- 1d. Workers at the Rainbow Ranche

- 2. Rainbow Ranche, worker Photo 1945, formal
- 3. Rainbow Ranche, worker Photo 1945, informal
- 4. Japanese United Church - Harvey and Water Street
- 5. Hikichi family picnic, rainbow ranche
- 6. Hikichi boys.

PHOTOS DONATED BY HIKICHI FAMILY

- 7a. Abokai - Haiku club
to l to r : T. Toda, Aizawa, Isamu Kirushima, Sawa
Bottom l to r : E. Koyama, H. Oka, D. Kobayashi,
Y. Ito, S. Koide.
- 7b. Workers at Jack Seaton Park Camp
- 7c. Japanese Consul visit, Goldie home
- 7d. Japanese Consul visit, Goldie home

PHOTOS DONATED BY SACHIO KOYAMA

- 8a. Sam Takenaka with friends, a few months before coming to Canada
- 8b. Sam and Kimmie takenaka 1993
- 8c. Takanaka family at Sam's 88th birthday celebration.

PHOTOS DONATED BY TAKENAKA FAMILY

- 9a. Hockey team at Jack Seaton Park
- 9b. Oiko Kobayashi, Hiro Kobayashi, Mrs. K. Kobayashi and Sigh Kobayashi.
- 9c. Workers at Kobayashi orchard
- 10a. Mrs. Hiro (d) Kobayashi
- 10b. Mr. Denbei Kobayashi
- 10c. Local children in front of Kobayashi home
- 10d. Sigh Kobayashi (Tsuni Anthony) in crib surrounded by toys

- 11a. Mrs. D. Kobayashi sitting and Mrs. Ito
- 11b. Ito family
- 11c. D. Kobayashi family in front of their home
- 11d. Toda family

12. Hiro Yanagisawa (Kobayashi) and sister Yameno circa 1910

PHOTOS FROM SACHIO KOYAMA

13. left to right

Mr. Hikichi, Mr. Kawano, Mrs. Hikichi, Sam Hikichi
Jack Hikichi, Denbie Kobayashi.
sitting: Mr. Aba, Mrs. Kawano, ? , Mits Hikichi.

14. The twins, Sax and Ted Koyama with Sam Hikichi in the middle.

PHOTOS DONATED BY HIKICHI FAMILY

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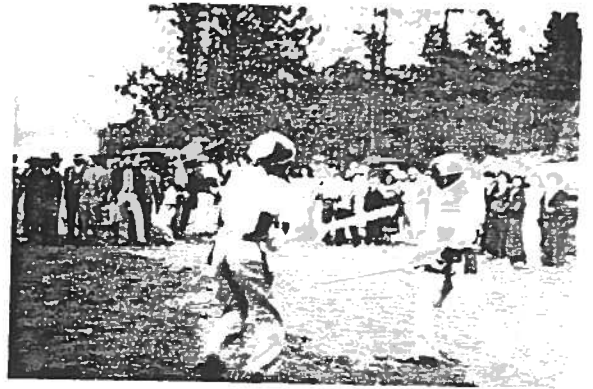
Nakayama, Reverend

"Japanese Canadian Poet and Farmer: Mr. Denbei Kobayashi"

Okanagan Heritage Society Report, Vol.47; Pg. 99-103



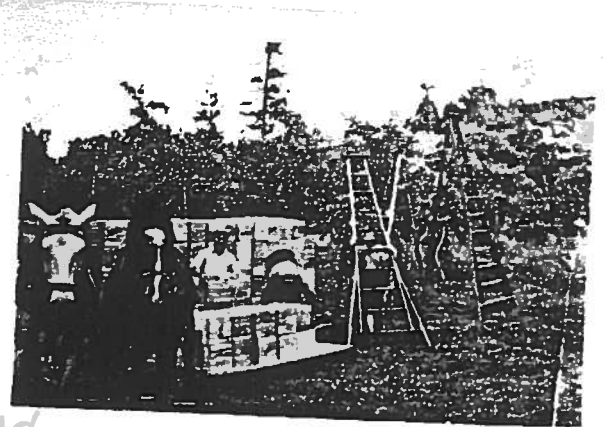
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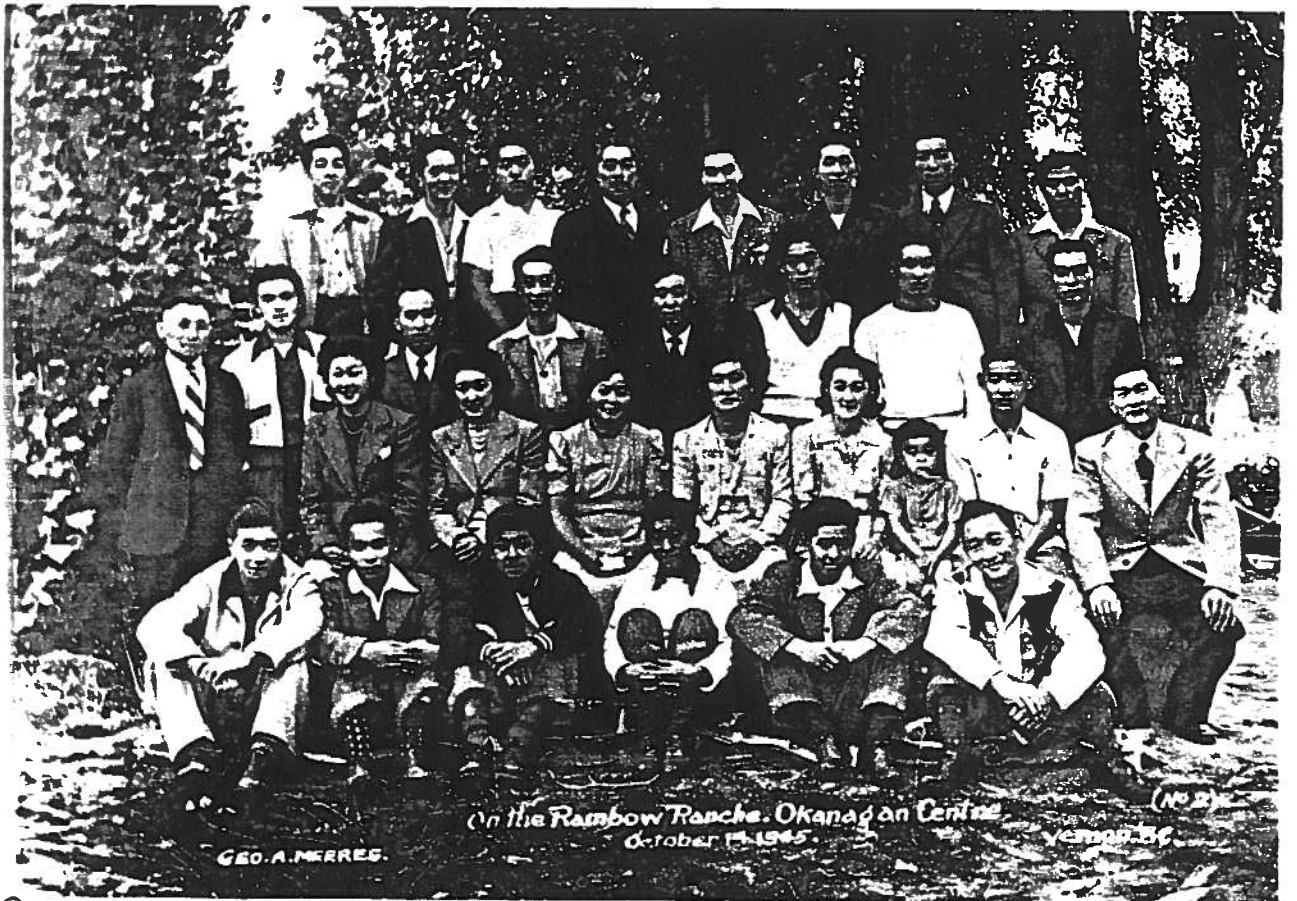
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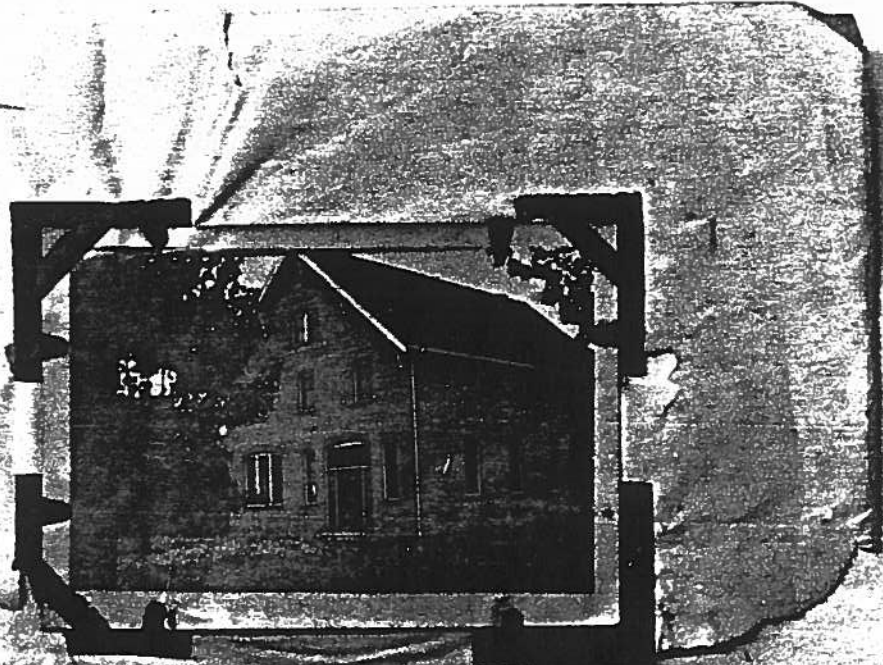
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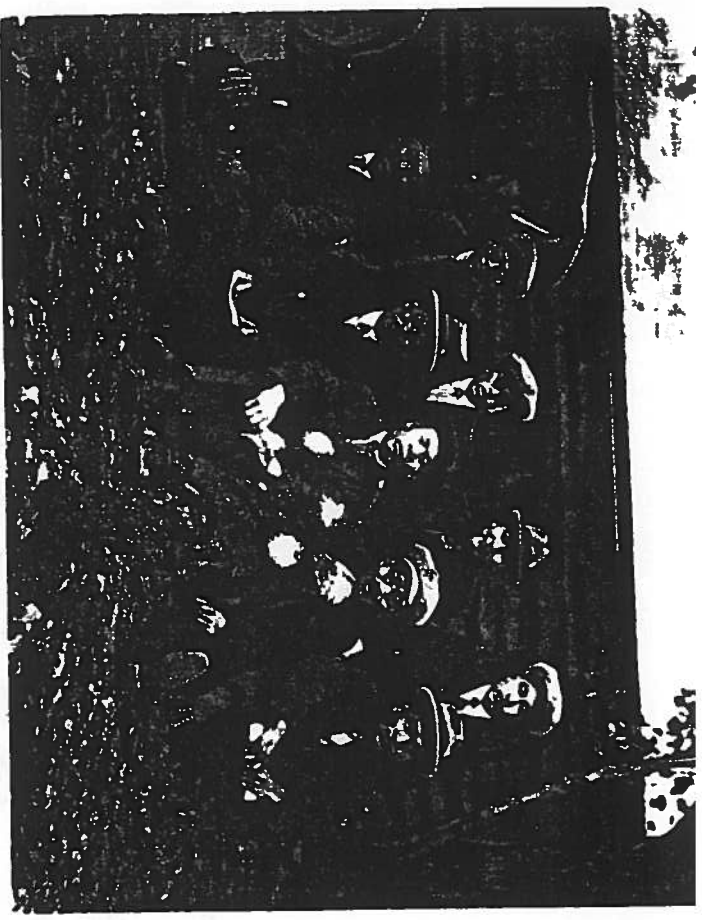
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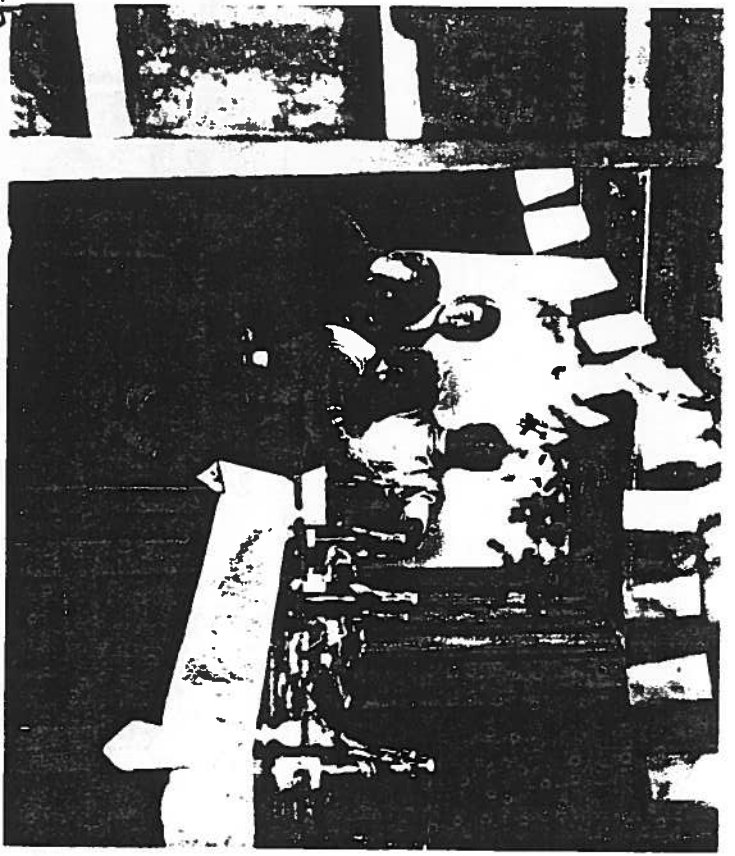
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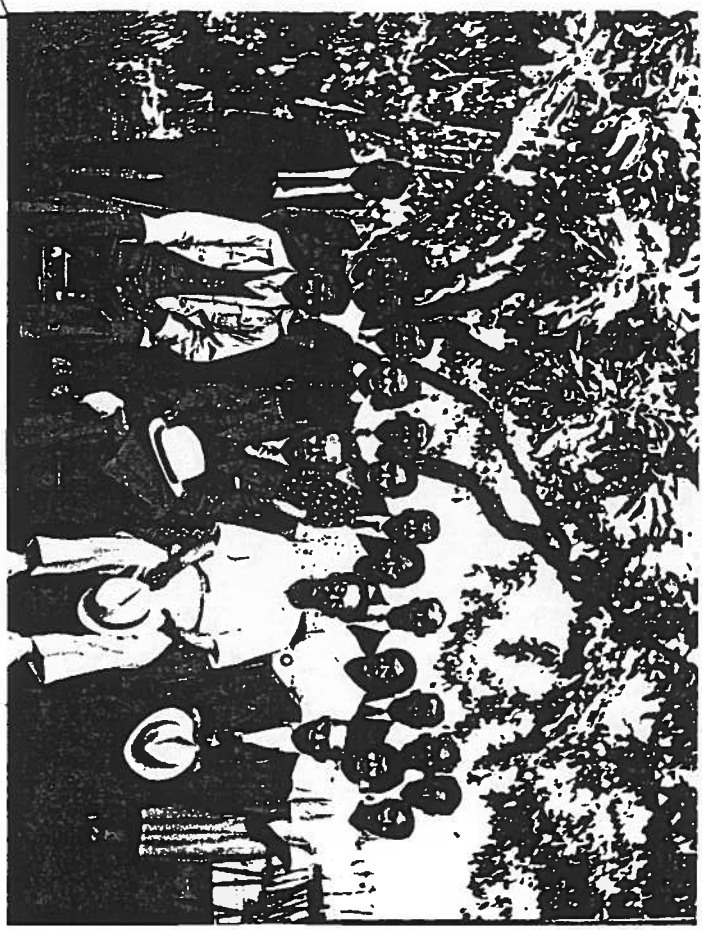
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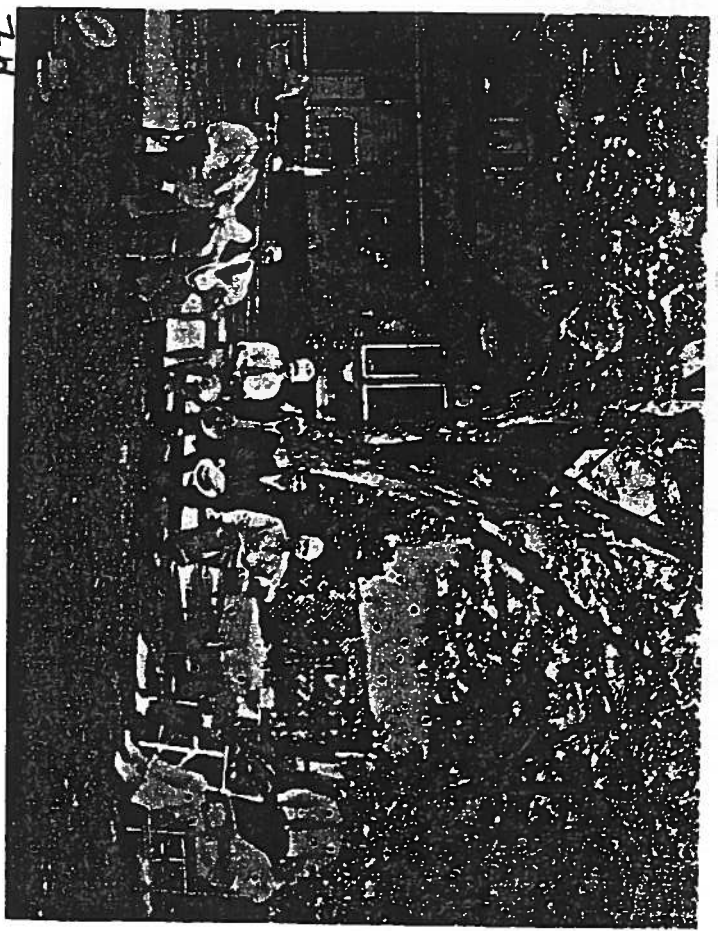
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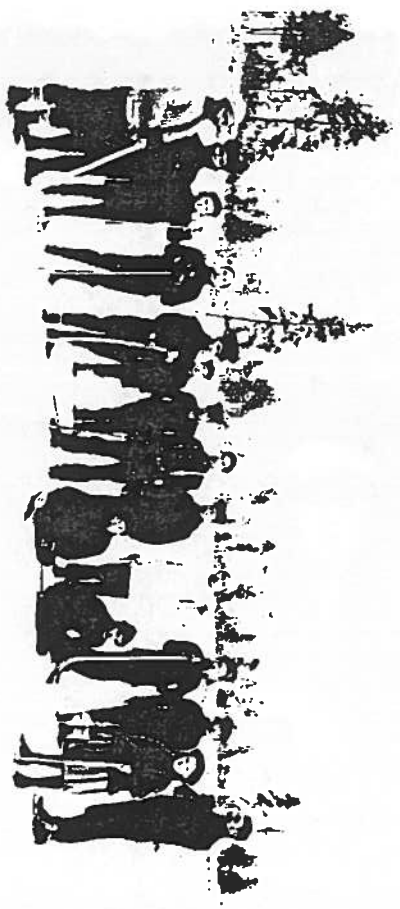


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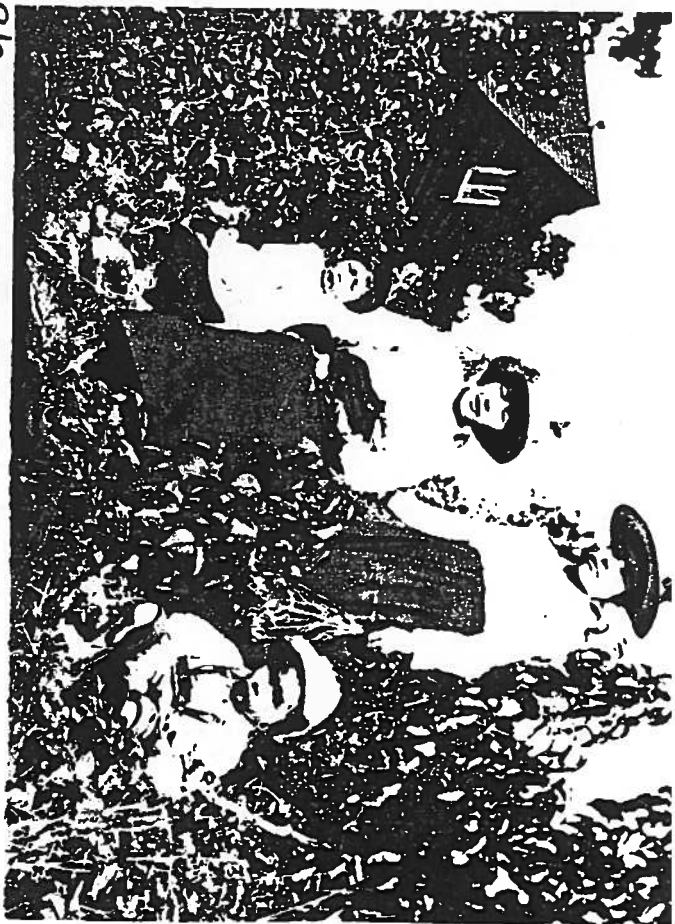


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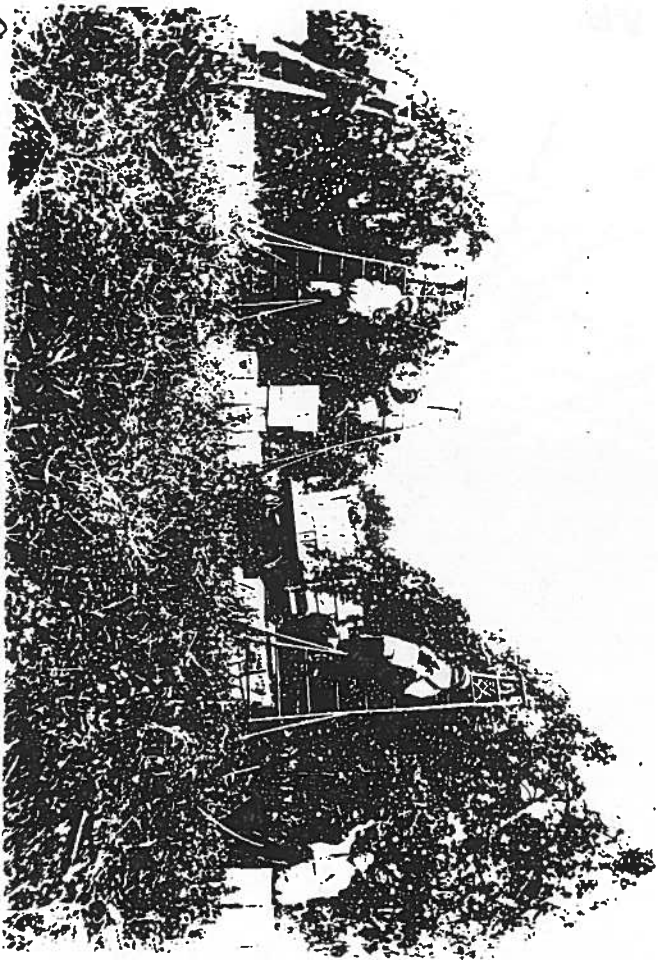




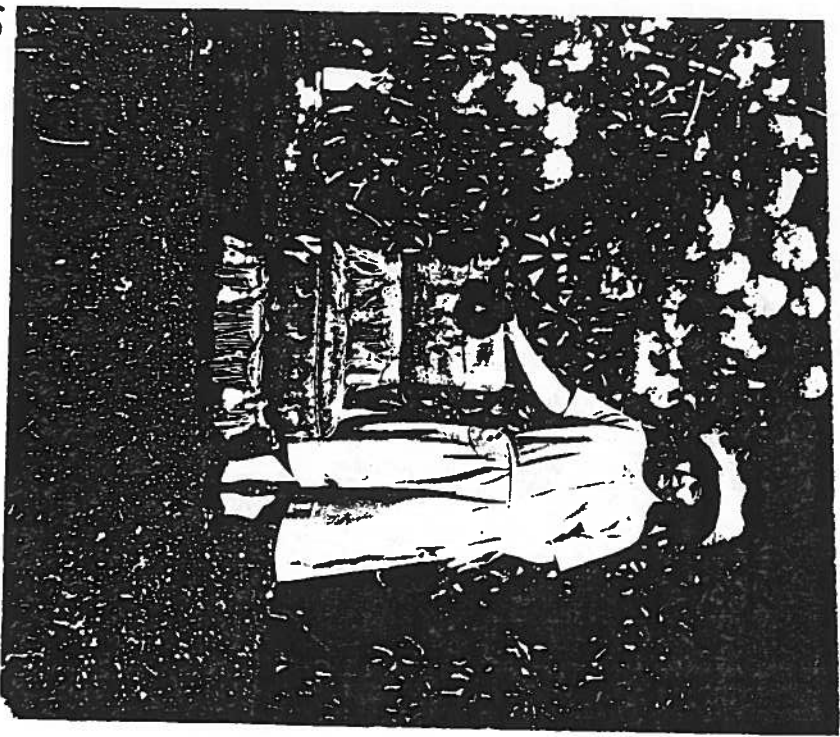
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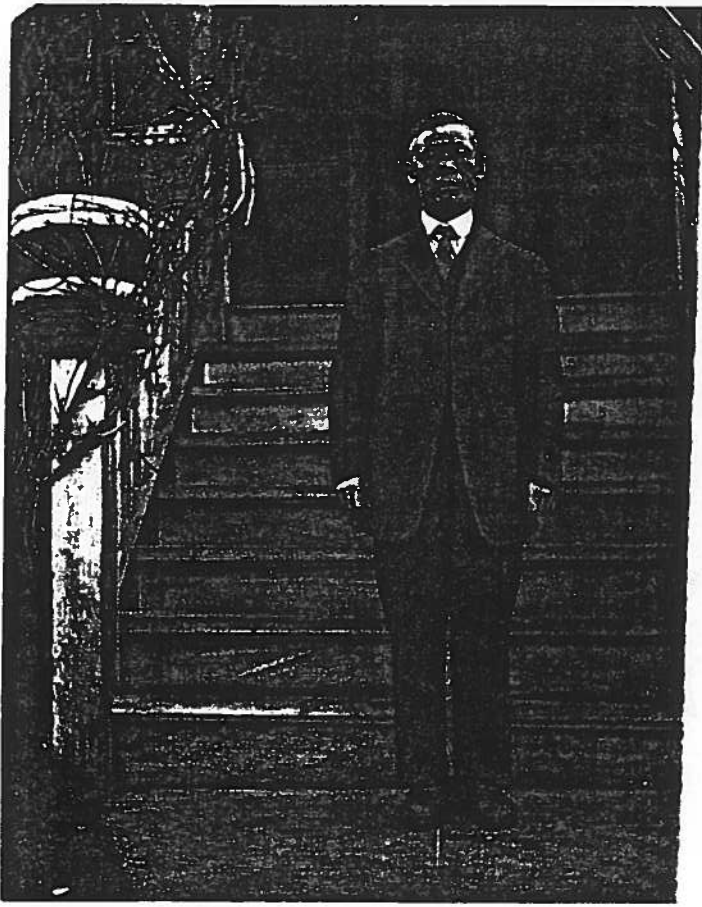


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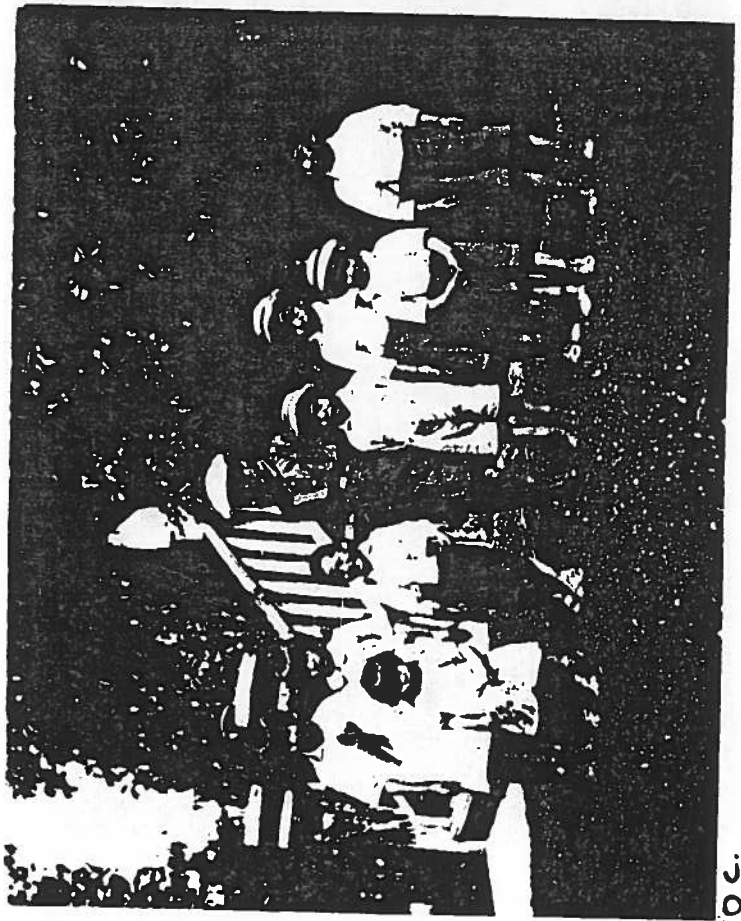


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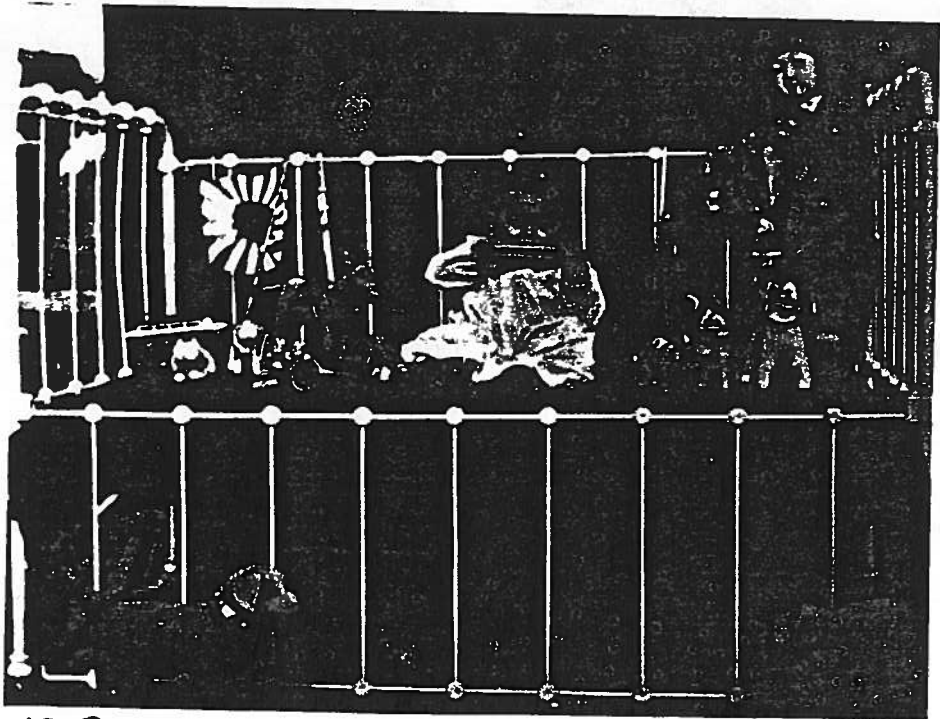
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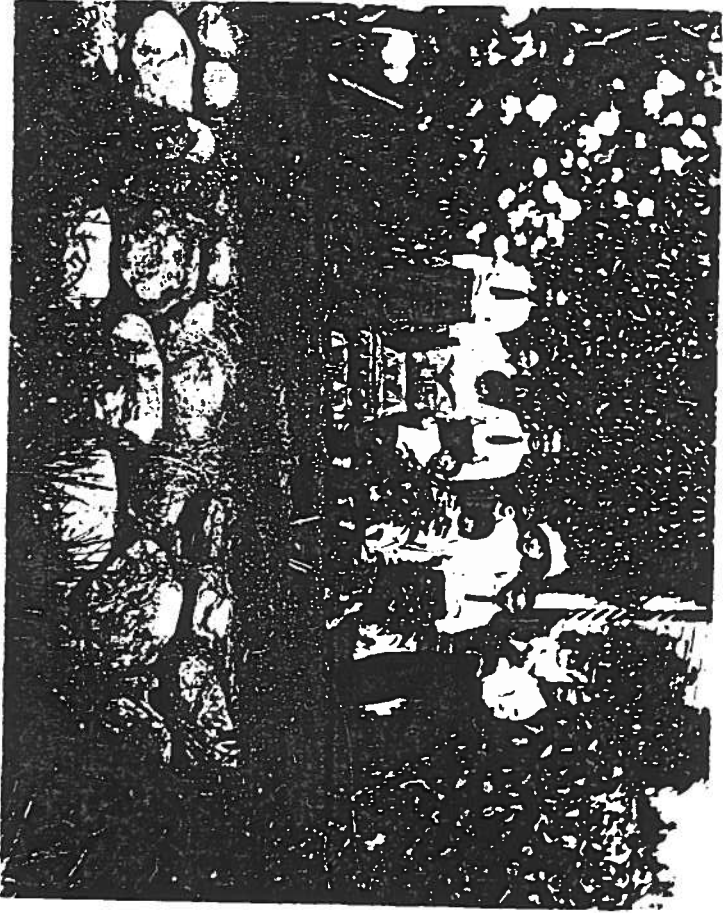
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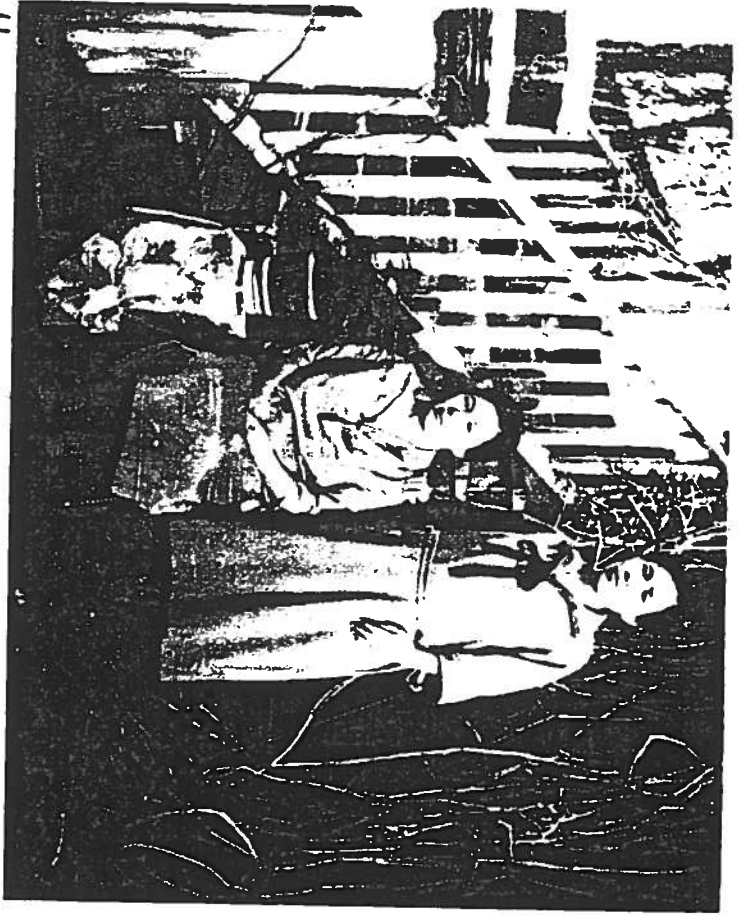
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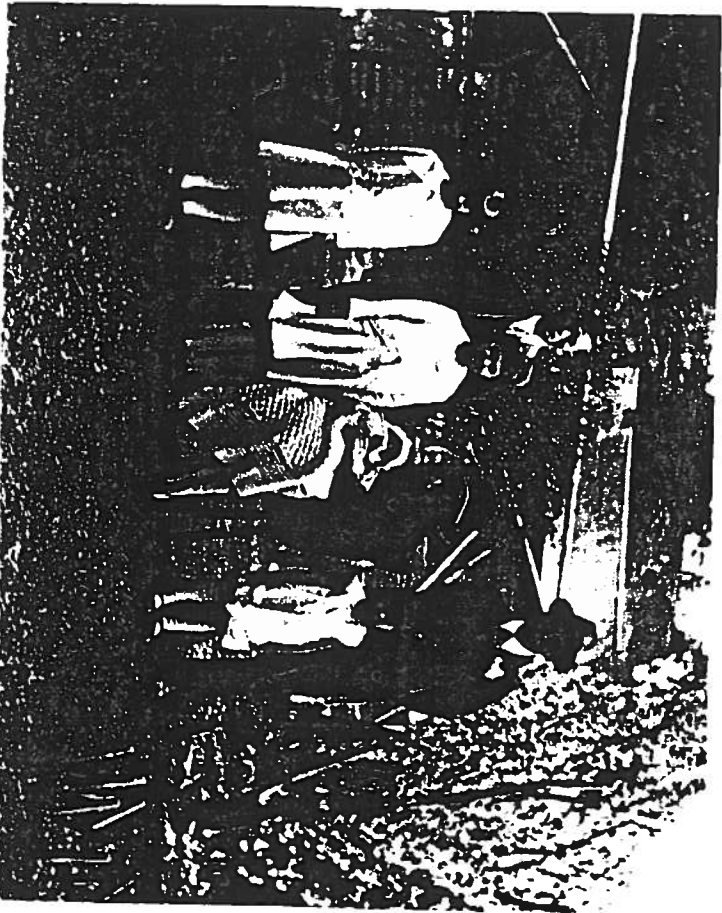
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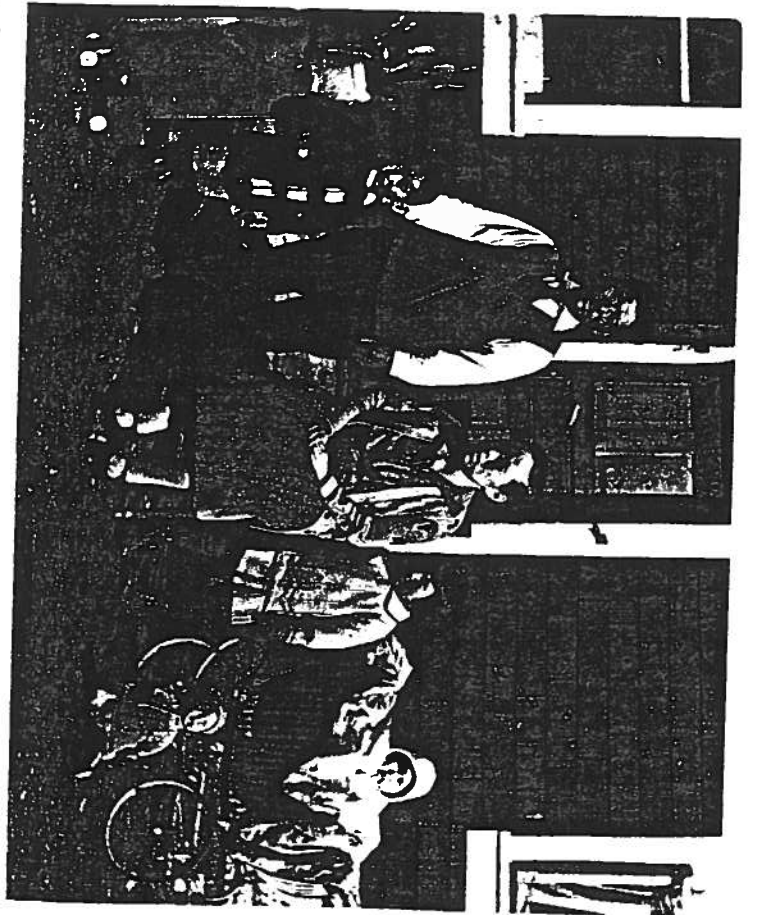
11.a.



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11.b.





12. Hiro Yanagisawa, left, and her sister Yomeno about 1910.



13

