



## CHENG YU TUNG EAST ASIAN LIBRARY

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**Susan Hidaka fonds  
Accession 2023.12**

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## Biographical note

Susan Hidaka (nee Kobayashi) was born in 1929 in Okanagan Centre, British Columbia. She was the youngest of seven children. Her father, Denbei Kobayashi (1878-1968) came to Canada and eventually began work as an orchard worker in Okanagan Centre. In 1913 he returned to Japan to marry Hiro Yanagisawa, coming to Canada together in 1914. They both became prominent members of the Japanese Canadian community in Okanagan Centre, and worked as fruit farmers.

Susan attended a one-room school in Okanagan Centre. Growing up during the war, she and her family all had to register with the RCMP. They were not interned though, as they resided so far already from the western coast. Many Japanese Canadians came to the area to work as help for the harvest, and Denbei Kobayashi helped many settle into life in the area. From 1943 to 1947 Susan attended Kelowna High School. The school was far from her family and she had to find board. She worked the last two years as a houseworker and maid, thus allowing her to obtain nicer board. With no hope for employment in the area after she graduated from high school, Susan moved to Calgary at her teacher's recommendation to attend Garbutt Business College. From there she got a job with Imperial Oil Ltd and quickly moved up in the company.

In 1957 Imperial Oil Ltd was to open a new office in Toronto. Only men were being transferred, so Susan resigned and took a long holiday in Hawaii. After her return, she went to Toronto to be hired by Imperial Oil's Public Relations Department with the help of a senior manager in Calgary.

The 1960s also saw Susan begin to work with the Japanese Canadian community in the Toronto area. She began volunteering to help with the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) project and in 1962 was elected to the Board as Secretary. Here she also met Kunio Hidaka, whom she married. The two moved to Washington D.C. in 1965 so that Kunio could study at George Washington University. Susan found employment with the Washington Hilton Hotel as an executive assistant to the Resident Manager. She worked here for only 3 years, but in that time crossed paths with many influential people, including Joan Crawford, and Ethel Kennedy.

Unsure about the future, the couple moved back to the Greater Toronto area in 1968. Susan continued her volunteer work, which included local politics, the JCCC and the planning for the Japanese Canadian Centennial. By the 80s the Redress movement was underway and though she was never interned, she felt strongly about the many injustices.

In 1985, her husband Kunio passed away suddenly. This loss led her to move back to the City of Toronto to be closer to friends and family in 1987. At the time the Momiji Seniors Centre was underway, and Susan moved in in 1994. From then, she's been an active Board member and volunteer on many committees.

References:

Kunio Hidaka fonds, 2001.1. Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre. Burnaby, BC.  
[https://nikkeimuseum.org/www/collections\\_detail.php?col\\_id=F247](https://nikkeimuseum.org/www/collections_detail.php?col_id=F247)

Oishi-Stamatiou, Ailin. "Momiji Celebrates its Volunteers for National Volunteer Week." *Nikkei Voice*, May 25, 2023. <http://nikkeivoice.ca/momiji-celebrates-its-volunteers-for-national-volunteer-week/>

Wilson, Brian. "Tales from the past: An Okanagan Haiku Master." *Vernon Morning Star*, July 29, 2019. <https://www.vernonmorningstar.com/opinion/tales-from-the-past-an-okanagan-haiku-master-3300894>

## Scope and Content

[1936]-2023

1 box

Material is comprised mostly of textual records from the founding of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, and some celebrating the success of the Momiji Seniors Centre. Some personal records from Susan Hidaka's life are also included.

### Note:

**Arrangement:** Material was not arranged in any discernible order besides some documents being held together with paperclips. Those held together have been kept together in the same file. Files were not arranged further into series due to the small amount of material. Titles, unless given in square brackets, have come from the original file or record.

**Access:** No restrictions.

**Boxes:** 1

### Related material:

Susan Hidaka collection, 2007.10. Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. Toronto, ON.  
[https://nikkeimuseum.org/www/collections\\_detail.php?col\\_id=F1801](https://nikkeimuseum.org/www/collections_detail.php?col_id=F1801)

Interview with Susan Hidaka, Sedai: The Japanese Canadian Legacy Project Collection, 2011.038. Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. Toronto, ON. <https://jccc.on.ca/sedai-catalogue/2011038/interview-susan-hidaka>

## Appendix

File number	File title	Date range
2023.12.001	[Expansion report]	August 7, 1996
2023.12.002	[Official opening remarks]	June 7, 1964

File number	File title	Date range
2023.12.003	The Future Role of the Centre	[1964]
2023.12.004	Mortgage burning ceremony	June 1, 1980
2023.12.005	Remarks by Kunio Hidaka, Acting President	May 10, 1964
2023.12.006	[Cornerstone Ceremony and board]	[196-]
2023.12.007	The Japanese Canadian Centennial	September 2002
2023.12.008	Speech by Senator Daniel K. Inouye	September 27, 1975
2023.12.009	J.C. Centennial	1977-1978
2023.12.010	Misc.	[1936]-1965
2023.12.011	[Garbutt Business College]	1947-1948
2023.12.012	My Stories	2011-2023
2023.12.013	Kunio Hidaka	September 1984
2023.12.014	Redress	1985-2002
2023.12.015	A Tribute to Wesley Mitsumori Fujiwara	2000
2023.12.016	[George Yamada]	1991-2002
2023.12.017	[Nipponia Home]	1978
2023.12.018	NAJC Seniors Committee	1996
2023.12.019	Momiji Health Care Society	1994-2022
2023.12.020	<i>Working Together</i> newsletter	January 1975
2023.12.021	[Roger Obata]	December 4, 1993
2023.12.022	[Momiji Newsletters]	2001-2002
2023.12.023	Susan Hidaka's Life Story	2015