Life in Sutebusuton: 
*Japanese Canadians in Steveston*

**Teacher’s Guide**

Explore life for Japanese Canadians in the early 1900’s through the Murakami family. Students will explore the Murakami house, handle artefacts, discover what brought the Murakami family to Steveston, and why they were forced to leave in 1942.

Recommended for Grades 5 - 6

Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site
5180 Westwater Drive
Richmond BC, V7E 6P3
Visitor Services Associate
Phone: 604-238-8037
Fax: 604-238-8040
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## Table of Contents

- **About the Program**
  1. Program Description.................................................................3
  2. Program Outline...........................................................................3
  3. Learning Objectives.................................................................4
  4. Curriculum connections (by grade)...........................................4

- **General Information..................................................................5

- **Getting Here.............................................................................6

- **Sample Name Tags....................................................................7

- **Setting the Context for the Field Trip**
  1. Background Information..........................................................8
  2. Japanese Canadian Timeline.....................................................9-11
  3. Useful References.......................................................................12
  4. Children’s Books.......................................................................13-14

- **Classroom Activities**
  1. Looking At Objects.................................................................15
  2. What Am I?.................................................................................16
  3. Where Are We?.........................................................................17
  4. Life in Sutebusuton Word Search..............................................18
  5. Life in Sutebusuton Word Search Answer Key..........................19
  6. Post-Visit Activities.................................................................20
  7. My Trip To Britannia Shipyards...............................................21
Program Description

Life in Sutebusuton is a 90-minute program that examines the history of the Japanese-Canadian community in Richmond through the experience of the Murakami family in Steveston. This program takes place at Britannia Shipyard in the Murakami House and Murakami Boat Works.

Murakami House - The house was built in 1885 on piles over the marsh. The Murakami family - ten children, mom and dad, lived in the residence from the early 1930's to 1942. The refurbished home and boat works opened in May 1998 as the official Murakami Visitor Centre. The Murakami family has provided valuable information and artefacts enabling us to share their story.

Murakami Boat Works - It was literally only a step from home to boat works. The family built 1-2 gillnet fishing boats per winter and fished in the summer. At launching time, temporary tracks were placed over the boardwalk to roll the boat out. A hand-operated capstan moved the cradle on these tracks that are called "the ways".

Program Outline

- Introduce students to the Murakami family through role-play.
- Explore Japanese-Canadian culture through an object hunt.
- Play Fuku Warai, a game that children play for Japanese New Year.
Learning Objectives

- To understand the unique experience of Japanese-Canadians in Richmond & Steveston in the early 1900s
- To develop awareness about Japanese-Canadian culture and the changes over time
- To enhance observational and analytical skills through object-based investigation

Curriculum Connections

Grade 5

Skills and Processes of Social Studies
- A1 apply critical thinking skills – including hypothesizing, comparing, imagining, inferring, identifying patterns, and summarizing – to a range of problems and issues.
- A3 gather a body of information from a variety of primary and secondary sources

Identity, Society, and Culture
- B2 assess why immigrants came to Canada, the individual challenges they faced, and their contributions to Canada.
- B3 describe the contributions of significant individuals to the development of Canada’s identity.

Grade 6

Skills and Processes of Social Studies
- A1 apply critical thinking skills – including comparing, classifying, inferring, imagining, verifying, identifying relationships, summarizing, and drawing conclusions – to a range of problems and issues.

Identity, Society, and Culture
- B1 assess diverse concepts of Canadian identity
- B2 compare Canadian society with the society of another country
- B3 relate a society’s artistic expression to its culture

Economy and Technology
- D1 describe the importance of trade for BC and Canada
- D2 analyze the significance of communications technologies in Canada
- D3 evaluate effects of technology on lifestyles and environments
General Information

Location
Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site
5180 Westwater Drive, Richmond
[east of Steveston Village along the Fraser River]

Directions
From Richmond: Follow Railway Avenue south until you reach the Britannia Shipyard.

From outside Richmond:
From Highway 99, take the Steveston Highway exit (north end of George Massey Tunnel). Continue west on Steveston Highway. Turn left on Railway Avenue and follow signs to the Britannia Shipyard.

Cost
$4.00 per student including tax. Please arrive 10 minutes before the start of your program to process payment. Cheques should be made payable to the City of Richmond. A receipt will be mailed within a week of your visit.

Preparing for your visit
Please arrange with the School Programs Coordinator if you would like to visit the site before the day of the fieldtrip. Cooperative learning is an important part of the program. Pre-arranging your class into FOUR GROUPS is greatly appreciated.

Supervision
We encourage a minimum ratio of 1 adult chaperone for every 5 students. Adults are encouraged to help supervise the group and participate in the program as needed. Adult chaperones do not need to pay.

Photographs
We may take photographs for promotional purposes and ask parents to sign a waiver in advance. Please advise the programmer if any students cannot have their photographs taken and make sure they are identifiable.

Cancellation Policy
Cancellations require two weeks’ notice for a full refund. We will charge 50% of the fee for cancellations made under two weeks & 100% of the fee for failure to attend the program without notice.

Contacts
Visitor Services Associate
Phone: 604-238-8037
Fax: 604-238-8040
Email: Britannia@richmond.ca

Length and Time
Programs are 90 minutes and can accommodate a single class of a maximum of 30 students. Please confirm the day and time of your program a week before your scheduled visit.

Parking
Two free lots are available. Paved lot west of the Shipyard and a gravel lot to the east of the Shipyard.
Sample Name Tags

Name: ______________________
School: ____________________
Grade: ________________

Name: ______________________
School: ____________________
Grade: ________________

Name: ______________________
School: ____________________
Grade: ________________

Name: ______________________
School: ____________________
Grade: ________________
Background Information

The community of Steveston was built on back of the fishing industry, as exemplified by the numerous of salmon canneries that once prospered along the waterfront. It is also an exciting tourist destination. Tourism truly flourished with the completion of the British Columbia Electric Railway.

Manzo Nagano was the first confirmed Japanese arrival in 1877. Japanese immigration picked up fairly quickly after that. Many hoped to make their fortunes and retire to Japan but changes in immigration laws in 1908 prompted Japanese immigrants to send for their wives or picture brides and start building families. As their children grew up and adapted to life in Canada, the Japanese Canadian community strengthened and the hope of returning to Japan faded.

In the early 1900s, the largest Japanese community in the province was known as Japantown, an area around Powell Street that rivalled Chinatown in size before World War II. Many Japanese residents, however, worked as fishermen for the canneries on Lulu Island. As the number of canneries grew, an increasing population of cannery workers, fishermen, and other labourers congregated along the water and Steveston sprang up as a salmon canning village. By World War II, Steveston was home to the second largest Japanese community in B.C. Japanese fishermen sold their catches to the fishing company, while their wives generally worked on the canning lines. Children attended public school during the day and Japanese language classes after school.

The attack on Pearl Harbour and the Canadian government’s decision to declare war on Japan dramatically changed the lives of Japanese Canadians. On February 24th, 1942, the government ordered the expulsion of all persons of Japanese origin from the West Coast and their property – including fishing boats, houses, farms, and personal belongings – were disposed of. Many were born in Canada and had never even set foot in Japan. By November 1942, approximately 21,000 Japanese Canadians had been uprooted from their homes and relocated across Canada and approximately $11,500,000 worth of Japanese properties were sold for $5,373,317 by 1947.

Before the end of the war, many Japanese Canadians were encouraged to repatriate or settle in other parts of Canada. On April 1st, 1949, four years after the war was over, all restrictions were lifted and Japanese Canadians were given full citizenship rights, including the right to vote and the right to return to the West Coast but there was no home to return to. The Japanese Canadian community in B.C. was virtually destroyed.

Japanese Canadian Timeline

1877 Arrival of Manzo Nagano, first Japanese person known to settle in Canada.

1895 British Columbia Government denies franchise to citizens of Asiatic origin.

1907 Anti-Asiatic Riot in Vancouver led by the Asiatic Exclusion League. (see http://www.anniversaries07.ca for additional resources)

1908 Hayashi-Lemieux Gentlemen’s Agreement: Japan voluntarily agreed to restrict the number of passports issued to male labourers and domestic servants to an annual maximum of 400.

1916-17 200 Japanese Canadians volunteers for service with the Canadian army in France (WWI). 54 are killed and 92 are wounded.

1919 Japanese fishermen control nearly half of the fishing licenses (3267). Department of Fisheries reduces number of licenses issued to “other than white residents, British subjects and Canadian Indians”. By 1925 close to 1000 licenses stripped from Japanese Canadians.

1920 Japanese Labour union (eventually, the Camp and Mill Workers’ Union) formed under Etsu Suzuki.

1923 Gentlemen’s Agreement: Number of Japanese male immigrants (same categories as in 1908) not to exceed 150 annually.

1924 The Labour Union newspaper, “The Daily People (Minshu)” begins publication.

1928 Gentlemen’s Agreement amendment: Wives and children included in annual quota (150).

1931 Surviving veterans are given the right to vote.

1936 Delegation from Japanese Canadian Citizens League goes to Ottawa to plead for franchise. They are unsuccessful.

1941 (March 4) Registration of all Japanese Canadians.

1941 (August 12) Japanese Canadians are required to carry registration cards that have their thumbprint and photo.

1941 (December 7) Japan attacks Pearl Harbour.

1941 (December 8) 1200 Japanese Canadian fishing boats are impounded. Japanese language newspapers and schools close.

1942 (January 16) Removal begins of Japanese immigrant males from coastal areas.
1942 (February 24) All male Japanese Canadian citizens between the ages of 18 and 45 ordered to be removed from 100 mile wide zone along the coast of BC.


1942 (March 4) Japanese Canadians ordered to turn over property and belongings to Custodian of Enemy Alien Property as a “protective measure only”.

1942 (March 16) First arrivals at Vancouver’s Hastings Park pooling centre. All Japanese Canadian mail censored from this date.

1942 (April 21) First arrivals at detention camp in Greenwood, BC.

1942 (May 21) First arrival at camps at Kaslo, New Denver, Slocan, Sandon and Tashme, BC.

1942 (June 29) Director of Soldier Settlement given authority to buy or lease confiscated Japanese Canadian farms. 572 farms turned over without consulting owners.

1943 (January 19) Federal cabinet order in council grants Custodian of Enemy Alien Property the right to dispose of Japanese Canadians’ property without owners’ consent.

1945 (April 13) Beginning of intimidation campaign towards Japanese Canadians living in BC to move to Eastern Canada to be deported to Japan.

1945 (September 2) Japan surrenders after atomic bombs are dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (WWII).

1946 (May 31) “Repatriation” begins. 3964 go to Japan, many of whom are Canadian citizens.

1946 (January 24) Federal cabinet order in council on deportation of Japanese Canadians repealed after protests by churches, academics, journalists and politicians.

1948 (June 15) Federal franchise extended to all Japanese Canadians.

1949 (April 1) Removal of last restrictions. Japanese Canadians are free to move anywhere in Canada.

1967 Canadian government announced new immigration regulations: a point system for selection. It no longer used race as a category.

1988 (September 22) Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announces the Canadian Government's formal apology for the wrongful incarceration, seizure of property and the disenfranchise of thousands of Canadians of Japanese ancestry. A redress settlement was also announced which included individual

Useful References

Books (Available through the Richmond Public Library)


Videos/DVDs (Available through the Richmond Public Library)


Internet

- *Asahi: Canadian Baseball Legends*, Virtual Museum of Canada
  
  [http://virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Asahi/](http://virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Asahi/)

- *Japanese Canadian History*.
  
  [http://www.japanesecanadianhistory.net](http://www.japanesecanadianhistory.net)

  
  [http://www.virtualmuseum.ca](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca)
Children’s Books

Japanese Children’s Favorite Stories
Florence Sakade. Illustrations by Yoshisuke Kurosaki.
Playful goblins with long noses, magic tea kettles and a delightfully brave hero who just happens to be one inch tall—these are some of the wonderful characters you’ll meet in this collection of the 20 best-loved Japanese children’s stories. Drawn from folklore and passed down for generations, these classic tales speak of the virtues of hard work, humility, kindness and good humor—“Once upon a time . . .” has never sounded so inviting.

Japanese Children’s Favorite Stories, Book Two
Compiled by Florence Sakade, Illustrated by Yoshio Hayashi.
Singing turtles, flying farmers and a dragon who cries—these are just some of the magical characters you’ll meet in this delightful collection of children’s stories. This beautifully illustrated book follows Tuttle’s classic and immensely popular Japanese Children’s Favorite Stories, bringing together a wonderful mix of well-loved, traditional folktales and contemporary favorites. With sparkling illustrations on almost every page and the promise that goodwill and kindness will always carry the day, readers are sure to find much to love in these stories.

The Reunion
Jacqueline Pearce. Cover art by Darcy Novakowski
Shannon is excited about spending a week at her friend Rina’s house, but she’s a little nervous too. Rina seems to be able to do everything better than she can and her home is chaotic compared to Shannon’s own. When things fall apart, Rina’s grandmother is there to tell them a story from her past, early in the Second World War. The story is about a rift between her and her childhood friend, Mitsu, a rift that could never be healed because Mitsu and her family were taken away from the small town of Paldi and interned with other Japanese Canadians. Rina’s grandmother, Jas, never saw Mitsu again. That is, not until Shannon and Rina find a handful of forgotten beads in the bottom of a cardboard box.

Caged Eagles
Eric Walters
During World War II, Tadashi Fukushima and his family are forced by government edict to abandon their home and, along with other Japanese-Canadians, journey to an internment center where they await an uncertain fate. For Tadashi, fourteen, detention becomes both an adventure and a dilemma as he tries to understand the undercurrents of racism and injustice that have overtaken his life.
The Sakura Tree
Carolyn McTighe, paintings by Karen Brownlee
Three so-called “picture brides” who immigrate to Canada in the early 20th century, three girls sent away by a father who wishes for them a more prosperous life. As they left, each takes with her one item that will remind her of their home. One brings a kimono, another a violin, but Haruko brings three seeds of the sakura tree. The sisters arrive on the shores of B.C., where their husbands await. She plants the sakura seeds, which grow into a resplendent tree. One spring, the blossoms swirl away in the wind, and are carried to the doorsteps of the other two sisters. The blossoms remind the sisters of Haruko and their Japanese home. Following the trail of the blossoms, they find Haruko’s home and the three are reunited under the sakura trees.

A Child in Prison Camp
Shizuye Takashima
When Shizuye Takashima was 11 years old, her entire world changed forever. As a Japanese-Canadian in 1941, she was among thousands of people forced from their homes and sent to live in internment camps in the Canadian Rockies. Although none had been convicted of any crime, they were considered the enemy because the country was at war with Japan. In this true story of sadness and joy, Shichan recalls her life in the days leading up to her family’s forced movement to the camp, her fear, anger, and frustration as the war drags on, and the surprising joys in the camp: a Kabuki play, holiday celebrations, and the ever-present beauty of the stars.

Salmon Canning on the Fraser River in the 1890s
Mitsuo Yesaki & Sakuya Nishimura. Illustrated by Duke Yesaki
This book describes how salmon were caught and processed in the canneries on the Fraser River in the 1890s. Caucasian and Japanese fishermen caught sockeye salmon in gillnets fished from Columbia River boats. Steam tugboats collected and transported the catch in fish barges to the salmon canneries. In the canneries, salmon were processed in mass production assembly lines, consisting of a series of tables, tanks and manually operated machines. This book also discusses the role of Chinese and First Nations in the industry. (Japanese version available)

Naomi’s Tree
Joy Kogawa. Illustrated by Ruth Ohi
A young couple leaves Japan for the coast of Canada, bringing a cherry seed to plant in their new garden. During the years that follow, the little cherry tree watches over the family as the couple have children, and then grandchildren. Young Naomi makes the cherry tree her special friend, and the tree’s branches shelter her as she plays. But one day, war breaks out between the two countries, and the family is sent to an internment camp away from the coast. Based on the World War II story of Naomi and Stephen in Naomi’s Road, Naomi’s Tree is a poetic story about enduring love and its almost mystical power to heal the spirit.
Looking at Objects

During the program, your class will have the opportunity to examine some fascinating objects from the past. The following activity is designed to ensure a more meaningful experience by introducing the concept of **in-depth object analysis**.

**Why learn with objects?**
- An opportunity for children to use all their senses to explore their world.
- Encourages children to learn through discussion and interaction.
- Emphasizes discovery and reasoning rather than “the right answer”.

**Instructions**

Ask students to choose an object from home, one that other children might not be able to easily identify. For example, this could be a cultural object. Now analyze their object using the worksheet provided.

Prompt as necessary to use all their senses in coming up with adjectives & questions about their object.

After the activity, ask students:
- 3 – things they found out
- 2 – questions they still have
- 1 – object they would like to analyze next time

Explain that during the program, they will have the chance to handle some very important objects. They will be asked to analyze their objects using a similar process.

**Extension/Challenge**

- Now imagine that you are the object and write a story of your life.
- Create a “Who Am I” based on the adjectives you came up with. See if your classmates can guess what your object is.
* WHAT AM I? *

Write down 10 adjectives or descriptive phrases that come to your mind when you look at this object.

Write down 5 questions that come to your mind as you look at the object.

I think that this object is ____________________________

because:

1. __________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________

4. __________________________________________________

5. __________________________________________________
Where are we?

Label the following places on the map using a black pen.

Britannia Shipyards
City of Richmond
Vancouver

New Westminster
Lulu Island
Fraser River
What am I?

What am I?

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SUTEBUSUTON
NIKKEI
SHIYARD
CANNERY

OTEDAMA
FUROSHIKI
SUDARE
DARUMA

SAKE
GILLNETTER
BOATHOUSE
FISHERMAN
. Answer Key .

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  . Daruma .
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SUTEBUSUTON  OTEDAMA  SAKE
NIKKEI  FUROSHIKI  GILLNETTER
SHIYARD  SUDARE  BOATHOUSE
CANNERY  DARUMA  FISHERMAN

Gillnetter
Post-Visit Activities

1. **Write a letter to Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site**

   We love to receive letters & drawings from children who visit Britannia. It is especially rewarding for us to hear what their favourite activity was or perhaps what they learned. A letter template has been provided for your convenience.

2. **Families who have lived in Richmond**

   Now that you have learned about one important family who lived in Richmond, let’s think about some other families who have made important contributions to our community. One example is the London Family, who you can learn more about on another field trip, “Food for Thought: Life at London Farm”.

3. **A Day in the Life**

   Write a story about a day in the life of one of the Murakami children. Use what you learned on the fieldtrip and add any other information you might know about Japanese Canadians in Richmond.
MY TRIP TO BRITANNIA SHIPYARDS

By: ________________________________

By: ________________________________