

Audio Clip 2

Dispossession in Chemainus

Dispossession in Chemainus was a process ridden with inefficiency, uncertainty, and confusion, devoid of fairness, empathy, or justice.

1. Homes in Chemainus were sold below the value set by the owner. The costs of appraisal, advertising, and title registration were charged to the owner.

Case File 5201

Chiyoki Yoshida owned a house and 53 acres on River Road

The value set by Mr. Yoshida and filed with the Custodian was; \$2,070.

The assessment value by the municipality was; \$1,670.00.

The appraised value for the Custodian was; \$964.00

The sale price to the Director Soldier Settlement and Veterans Land Act was; \$945.00

After expenses were deducted, Mr. Yoshida received \$899.32

2.The owners had no voice.

On October 12, 1948 Takateru Takarabe wrote to the Custodian:

“.. I understand that this cheque you have sent me, is the cheque for the house and properties of Crofton that the Custodian sold. I have written time and again that I didn’t want my house and properties sold. I wanted them to be taken care of. Therefore, I want them back instead of this cheque.”

3. Deterioration of the buildings, acts of vandalism and theft of fixtures further reduced the sale value.

Case file 673 Kijiro Nakahara..... Letter of September 6, 1944,... from the appraiser to the Custodian

“On re-examining #705, I find it in a far worse condition than it was a month ago. Windows have been removed from within, lumber has been taken and electrical and other fixtures removed.”

4. People living on mill property received no compensation for the loss of their houses.

Case Files 6588 and 11583-- Torizo Yamashita—Custodian Memorandum--- July 3, 1946.

“This man signed a declaration to the Custodian on July 20, 1942, in which he reported that he owned a house at Chemainus on land owned by the Victoria Lumber Company. However, this man had no equity in this house and it was later torn down by the Victoria Lumber Company.”

However, under the lease agreement with the company Mr. Yamashita retained equity in the building. This equity was recorded and filed with the Custodian, but ignored

5. There was no systematic inventory of personal possessions left behind to confirm content, value or even where they were stored.

Case File 5495 Manzo Nishimura----- internal memorandum----- October 21, 1947

“...it is assumed that no inventory was taken of the chattels left in the other houses or cabins on the property. Possibly, Nishimura’s goods were stolen during break-ins on the premises or perhaps, due to insufficient identification, they were sold and proceeds credited in error to another person. From the information on file, the goods must be considered missing.”

6. The Custodian failed in the basic duty of care as theft and vandalism were common.

Case File 673 Kijiro Nakahara-- Letter of October 8, 1943,----- Officer F. J. Clunk Provincial Police, Chemainus Detachment, to Custodian

“...on entering the premises of Kijiro Nakahara where the effects of the above-named are stored, found the box #4 opened and nothing therein except four very small dishes. Near the box on the floor were also several dishes. Nothing else could be found on the premises that could have been in that particular box, and it is assumed that they have been stolen.”

7. Although the Custodian was responsible for due care, the losses were expected to be absorbed by the owner alone.

Case File 6588 Torizo Yamashita----- Custodian Memorandum

...”There were most probably some thefts from this property, which with others, was situated in a small rather isolated group known as Chinatown. ...” “As the value declared by the wife only totaled \$108.00 it seems there was little loss suffered here.”

8. The Custodian determined what was worthless and to be discarded.

Case File 6673 Chiyoki Yoshida ----- internal memo from Custodian----- January, 18,1947

“----the items unaccounted for do not appear to be of much value. Custodian Agent in this district, Chemainus, discarded large quantities of chattels as of no sale value.”

9. Possessions were sold by auction below values recorded by the owner. The owner had to cover costs of the auction, advertising and shipping.

On February 4, 1946, Manzo Nishimura wrote to the Custodian

“Please find enclosed a copy of list of goods left by me in Chemainus at the time of evacuation. The goods stored in House #5 under lock and key and the key was deposited with the Chemainus Police at that time. I am writing to inquire what has become of my chattels.”

The value of goods was recorded as \$351.50

The Custodian replied:

“We have no record that any of these chattles were shipped. We have no record that any of these articles were removed from House #5.”

Seven and a half years after they were entrusted to the Custodian, some of those items identified as belonging to Mr. Nishimura were finally accounted for in a letter of November 29, 1949, from the Custodian to Mr. Nishimura;

“Enclosed is Custodian cheque for the sum of \$31.60, which is the net proceeds of the sale of some goods now identified as being your property. The goods were a typewriter, a barber chair, a stand, some pictures, and miscellaneous items. Kindly acknowledge receipt of the enclosed cheque.”

His set of encyclopedias valued at \$39.50 were sold earlier for \$9.50 and after administrative charges of \$2.47 he received \$7.03.

10. There was endless confusion over ownership of the chattels and who to credit for the sale.

Case file 9599 Chozo Nishimura----- Chattel Summary----- February 18, 1947

“In regard to the goods sold and credited to Nishimura, the typewriter sold for \$37.50 at Chemainus Auction #1 probably was not his. ...” Some of the other goods are probably wrongly credited as well.”

11. Being held in detention, with uncertain income, did not relieve the interned from the burden of repaying pre-war debts.

Case File 7998 Mitsuyuki Sakata.----- General Summary----- 4th September 1947.

“A claim of \$47.65 filed (Aug. 5/42) against this evacuee by the T. Eaton Company was confirmed by the evacuee’s father who requested that payment be made from his account.”