Dear Kunio:

In answer to your question concerning my correspondence with the Custodian about our house in Vancouver, I regret to say that I have put away most of my copies of the letters I wrote as well as the replies from the Custodian, and at the moment I can't find them. The first letters I wrote were not copied, but the gist of them was this:

I asked the Custodian if, having our own agent, we couldn't sell the house through him, if we must sell? Also I gave reasons why I did not wish the property to be sold at all. This was in answer to his notification that our house was up for sale. He replied that I had to sell through the Custodian. So then I set a price, and I reminded him that there had been new improvements made on the house only the November before Pearl Harbour, and that the automatic furnace was absolutely new, and we hadn't had the winter's benefit from it except for that last winter in Vancouver, and that since it cost $400 this amount must be added onto whatever amount of the sale price.

We had further correspondence on this point, and when I said the price he sold for was only half of its market value, he answered somewhat angrily that I was a lot better off than other Japanese people whose homes were sold for even less. Then he said he forgot to include the price of the new automatic furnace (air- conditioner attached), but later he said the appraiser had included the furnace in the price, which means then that the house sold for $2250 minus $400, or $1850 approximately. The real estate value at that time was $3500 at least, for the house was in good condition.

Source: Nikkei National Museum, 2001-1-2-1-1-3-1
www.nikkeimuseum.org

We put a lot of work into that house, improving the grounds immeasurably from its original unkempt state, planting trees and shrubs etc, making the place much better in real estate value. We fixed up the inside by painting, sanding floors, new fixtures, etc, to make it quite different from its original state when we bought the place. We bought it for $2000 when real estate was at its lowest, and the former owner was glad to get rid of the house. It was in a deplorable condition. The picket fence right around the property belongs to the house too, as we put it up.

Altogether, by the time the house was sold it was of much greater worth than it had been. That is why we are so dis-satisfied with the Custodian's price. Certainly it could have sold for much more that $2250.

That is not the only complaint we have. The thing that rankles most is that the Custodian sold our home over our strong protest. If we were going to sell we wanted to sell through our own agent, and at the current market price. That appraisal made by the Custodian did not take into consideration the improvements, the automatic furnace, the current market prices. The appraisal was the amount usually assessed for taxation, more or less.

I firmly believe that if I hadn't protested as I did, we would have got even less for the place. This isn't a special case, Kunio. I think it is typical. We should get about $1500 - $2000 more for the place, not including all the other expenses incurred for no other reason than that we are of the Japanese race.

If it weren't for the season, I would spend time to look for those letters but I hope what I told is enough for your purposes.

Muriel

Source: Nikkei National Museum, 2001-1-2-1-1-3-2
www.nikkeimuseum.org