

Powell Street Neighbourhood Before the Uprooting Interview

Nancy Morishita's Home on Cordova

Nancy Morishita (b. 1920s) describes the home that she grew up in in the Powell Street neighbourhood. She describes the house in detail, walking to school, and spending whole Saturdays at the movie theatre.

Excerpt from Landscapes of Injustice oral history interview with Nancy Morishita.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA

Do you remember that house, on Jackson?

NANCY MORISHITA

Yeah. After the war, I came back and went to see the different places I lived there. So that house is still standing there, but it's not there now.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA

But that house you moved out of to a bigger one on Cordova?

NANCY MORISHITA

Yeah.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA

How old were you when you moved to Cordova Street?

NANCY MORISHITA

I think I was only about one years old, two years old.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA

Oh, gosh.

NANCY MORISHITA

Maybe two because there's pictures of me standing. Pictures of me sitting on the porch of Jackson Street. And then we moved. So I must have been two years old when we moved to Cordova Street. 466 Cordova Street.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA
466 Cordova Street?

NANCY MORISHITA
Just around the corner.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA
Okay.

NANCY MORISHITA
Third house from the corner.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA
Can you remember enough to walk me through the rooms in that house? It sounds like there were a lot of people living there?

NANCY MORISHITA
Well, the house on Cordova, you have to go up some steps, about ten steps, and there's a small hallway. And then there's another hallway, and then stairs going upstairs. On the left is a living room, dining room, and the kitchen at the back. So the hallway that you enter from the front door, goes to the back. And there's right by the left was a stove, and over to the right was a kitchen area. You know, the sink and the cupboards and everything. And way off to the side, next to the dining room, was a kitchen table, and everybody ate there. Great big table. And to the back there's a small room with a fridge. An ice box, not a fridge, an ice box. And then behind that room is another room, like a playroom, a sitting room where people did their ironing and tidying up their clothes and everything. And the back door – to the left of the ice box area, was a back door. And then the back was three cars. Two panel store cars, and one Dodge Desoto, you know.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA
Wow, three cars. Did they all belong to your family?

NANCY MORISHITA
Yeah. Two is a more of a panel truck for delivering goods. And the third space, maybe the car was in the front but I'm not sure, but that was a Dodge Desoto that they bought 1939 or something.

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA

Do you have any memories that you can share of things that happened in that house?

NANCY MORISHITA

Eh?

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA

What do you remember about being in that house? Any stories?

NANCY MORISHITA

Yeah, of all the people. [Laughs.]

CAROLYN NAKAGAWA

What was a typical day like?

NANCY MORISHITA

Well I had to go to school, which is Strathcona School. Which is – go to the corner and up to Hastings Street, and then one block to the Strathcona School. That's for English school. And they called in Japanese School after, about four o'clock I think we had to go there to Japanese School on Alexander Street. Which was – our house was right in front of the Powell Grounds. So I had to walk one block past the Powell Grounds and then another block past Powell Street to Alexander Street. And there was a Japanese School. So that was about two blocks. Go there from about four-thirty to five-thirty or something, everyday. So that's my school days – school hours. [Laughs.] And then we used to go to Main Street, which is about three or four blocks, three blocks, hmm ... [Pause] Gore Avenue, Dunlevy, Dunlevy, Gore Avenue, and Main Street. About three blocks. There used to be a movie theater called Star. We used to go Saturday. Spent all day in the movie theater, I think we only paid about five cents or something. Spend the whole day at a movie theater, that's all I can remember.