

CHAPTER 10

The Economic Impacts of the Dispossession

Jordan Stanger-Ross and the Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective

Figure 10.1 Griffin Lake Road Camp, 1942. Tsunetaro Murakami with cane in hand, Peter smiling in foreground.

In the spring of 1942, the Canadian government uprooted Tsunetaro Murakami from his twenty-seven-acre farm on Salt Spring Island. Officials took him to the Griffin Lake road camp, near Revelstoke, in the interior of British Columbia. His son Peter, who worked on the mainland as a millhand but listed Salt Spring as his home, was interned with his father. At Griffin Lake, the two toiled alongside other Japanese Canadians to build provincial highways. Tsunetaro, who was almost sixty, might well have found it back-breaking labour. In a surviving photograph of the road camp, the farmer stands closed-lipped at the edge of a work crew comprised for the most part of men decades his junior, a light wooden cane clutched in his right hand. His son, Peter, smiles, seated cross-legged on the rocky foreground (figure 10.1).

A naturalized Canadian, resident in the country for more than three decades, Tsunetaro had purchased his Salt Spring Island property in two transactions in the early 1930s. He grew hay, asparagus, raspberries, and strawberries on the farm, logging its back acreage. Located on the main road to the island's central village, his farm's close proximity to a school, stores, and local churches made the land particularly valuable. Tsunetaro likely imagined soon passing the property to Peter, the sole survivor of his two children.¹

Instead, the Murakami property was badly mishandled by the Custodian of Enemy Property. It was initially leased to a Mr Jaggs, who, despite renting two separate internee-owned properties on the island, refused to pay rent to any Japanese Canadian (on the grounds of "what the Japanese had [purportedly] done to his sister"), threatened officers of the Custodian with physical assault, and stole belongings from the Murakamis when he was finally evicted.² The Custodian subsequently sold the farm without the permission of its owner to the director of the Veterans Land Act, one of hundreds of properties acquired for the benefit of returning soldiers. Stripped of his home and lands, Tsunetaro boarded a ship in exile to Japan in 1946, leaving half of his remaining estate (just over \$700) to his son who remained in Canada, still barred from the Pacific coast.³ Peter should have inherited far more.

This chapter tells the subsequent history of the dispossession of properties like the Murakami farm, tracing the history of real estate transactions following the dispossession, analyzing what happened after the lands of Japanese Canadians were sold by the Custodian of Enemy Property. This analysis can provide only a limited perspective on the legacies of the dispossession: the value of homes and property, as we have argued throughout this volume, cannot be reduced to a market of exchange. But this perspective is important. The monetary losses of Japanese Canadians give material expression to the state's disregard for their value as people, citizens, and communities. For their part, Japanese Canadians have sought since the 1940s to comprehend and express the economic impacts of the policy.⁴ Historians have not attempted an analysis of Japanese Canadian losses. This failure leaves an additional gap: the history of benefit.⁵ When Japanese Canadians lost their lands, others gained. While some scholars have gestured to this flipside of property loss, none has undertaken its study. This chapter proposes a new analysis of the dispossession in which economic losses and benefits are counted.⁶

I begin by examining the question most commonly asked about the dispossession: Did the Custodian sell Japanese Canadian-owned properties for less than market value? This question has been answered before, most notably by a postwar royal commission inquiry into Japanese Canadian losses.⁷ Using title histories assembled by Landscapes of Injustice researchers, I test the conclusions of the Bird Commission, and largely, to my surprise, corroborate its conclusions, even with respect to urban real estate that it hardly investigated. Having examined the question of market value

I then turn to the longer-run legacies of loss, which, I argue, are both quantifiable and significant. This chapter emphasizes that the most significant losses of Japanese Canadians came not by comparison with the wider market at the time of the forced sales but rather by comparison with the people who purchased their lands and benefitted over time. The costs of the loss of freedom – the freedom not to sell and, barring that, to at least reinvest – can only be appreciated within history.

“Fair market value”

From the time that state officials sold Japanese Canadian-owned property, the prices they received have been controversial. Hundreds of Japanese Canadians immediately insisted that their property had been sold far below its worth.⁸ Their protests encouraged federal officials to create the Bird Commission, whose terms of reference made “fair market value” the focus of its analysis. Before *Landscapes of Injustice*, the two historical studies most attentive to property loss – Sunahara’s *The Politics of Racism* and Adachi’s *The Enemy That Never Was* – assessed the public and archival records of the Custodian and of the commission, both concurring that the sale prices were too low.⁹ At the same time, both Sunahara and Adachi, and other scholars, criticize the Bird Commission for using an analysis of market value to divert attention from larger questions of injustice and harm.¹⁰ Still, it matters whether officials sold farms, homes, and businesses for pennies on the dollar. Sales below market value, especially deliberately so, would seem to evidence a particularly stark form of state malfeasance. Absent detailed analysis, this kind of wrongdoing has sometimes, indeed, been assumed.

The most systematic analysis of “fair market value” to date remains the Bird Commission.¹¹ The commission’s formal mandate was to inquire into the claims of Japanese Canadian property owners that “real and personal property vested in the Custodian ... was disposed of ... for less than the fair market value thereof at the time of sale resulting in loss to the claimants.”¹² Though rightfully maligned for these limited terms of reference and its failure, even within those terms, to fully consider the material harms of the internment, the commission did take seriously the prices paid, examining sales to the director of the Veterans’ Land Act (VLA sales) with particular rigor.¹³

Operating between 1947 and 1950, the commission compiled more than 25,000 pages of transcript collected in hearings across the country, including testimony by Japanese Canadian claimants, state officials, real estate agents, and appraisers. It included 8,996 exhibits filed, among these the contents of Custodian of Enemy Property case files, which had been made available to counsel for the claimants. It considered both real estate – which will be discussed in this chapter – and other forms of personal and moveable property. Justice Bird concluded that federal bureaucrats performed their tasks unevenly. He found that 741 VLA sales (which constituted almost half of

all sales by the Custodian of Enemy Property and the majority of claims brought to the commission) “were substantially lower than the fair market value of the lands.”¹⁴ By contrast, he was most confident that urban property in Vancouver had been sold at “prices substantially equivalent to the market value,” a determination he made in considering the appraisal and sale process, the assessed values of the property sold, and expert testimony.¹⁵

In the case of the VLA sales, administrative failures had already generated public controversy, so Justice Bird was compelled to carefully examine claims in this category.¹⁶ The commission considered (1) appraisals of the farms conducted by the Soldier Settlement Board, which provided the basis for the VLA sales prices, (2) alternative appraisals of a small number of properties made by an advisory group at the time, (3) prices paid for forty-three comparable properties that the Custodian sold to other purchasers, (4) prices paid for eleven comparable properties sold by Japanese Canadians prior to their uprooting, (5) a reappraisal of the properties by Fred Clement, dean of Agriculture at UBC, and (6) a comparative analysis of the ratio between assessed values and sale prices, with forced sales to the VLA tested against hundreds of free market sales of comparable properties in the same period, compiled by Anthony Corbus (a lawyer for Japanese Canadian claimants) and reviewed by UBC economist George Drummond.¹⁷ Based on these combined methods, Justice Bird concluded that the VLA sales netted Japanese Canadians just over half of their real value: he recommended that all claimants in this category be awarded a standard supplement of an additional 80 per cent of the original sale prices, and in many individual cases the commission recommended still higher payments.¹⁸

No similarly rigorous approach was adopted for the other categories of real estate.¹⁹ Instead Justice Bird largely trusted what he regarded as sound administrative process and accepted the narrative of government officials that, when the process went awry, it was as a result of factors outside of their control. The report, in general, followed the commissioner’s conviction that “the very onerous task imposed upon the Director of the Custodian’s office at Vancouver ... was competently performed, with due regard to the interest of the owners.”²⁰ Where he found the administrative process unhampered, as in the city of Vancouver, Justice Bird concluded that Japanese Canadian-owned real estate had sold at fair market value. Where he saw minor impediments, as in rural lands sold to buyers other than the VLA, he suggested minor awards (10 per cent). Justice Bird undertook careful study and proposed significant payments only for VLA sales, where he saw serious administrative problems.

Justice Bird’s perspective on the Custodian of Enemy Property is not supported by the larger body of research reported in this book, which finds instead that the Vancouver office was directed by a thinly veiled racist, could have done much more to protect the property of Japanese Canadians, and played an active role in making the destructive decision to force sales without consent.²¹ Rather than a well-intentioned

state agency suffering at the mercy of external circumstances, we see the Custodian as unprepared and improvisatory but very much complicit in the harms of the dispossession.²² Our analysis is thus much closer to that of Thomas Shoyama, a Japanese Canadian leader of the time, who, in his 1948 brief for the Bird Commission, described the Office of the Custodian as:

Caught unprepared ... [by a task] of such magnitude and complexity that it was not able to find personnel capable of realizing all the programme entailed ... [and] unable to formulate policies and procedures adequate to cope with the problems as they arose. As a consequence, there was unnecessary suffering and hardship on the part of the people and loss of economic resources on a large scale.²³

With access to the internal documents of the Custodian, historians can observe that the government lacked not only the capacity but also the will to adequately protect the property of Japanese Canadians. Even without such proof, Shoyama offered a precise analysis: the realities of the Custodian's activity mean that all of it, not just the VLA sales, should be subjected to rigorous testing, a task at which the Bird Commission fell short.

Not trusting, as Justice Bird did, the Office of the Custodian to have sought fair outcomes for Japanese Canadians in cases other than the VLA sales, our project conducted comparative analysis of the real estate market in the Powell Street neighbourhood, comparing sales by the Custodian to free market sales in the same area. Here Justice Bird claimed that sound administrative process meant that Japanese Canadian-owned properties sold at market value. What would analysis show? We also compared the Custodian's VLA sales with a sample of free market rural sales, replicating a key category of evidence considered by the Bird Commission, but analysing differently.

In both cases, our analyses largely confirmed the conclusions of the Bird Commission with respect to market value. Take, to begin, the Powell Street neighbourhood, where no prior comparative analysis has been conducted. The neighbourhood had been home to Japanese Canadians since the start of the twentieth century: a bustling area of stores, boarding houses, restaurants, schools, and modest houses. Japanese Canadians owned diverse property there, ranging from the large and iconic Tamura building to small and even dilapidated structures.²⁴

Japanese Canadians were never alone in the neighbourhood, as either residents or property owners. They owned 122 (39 per cent) of the 312 properties that sold between 1942, when the Custodian assumed control of their real estate, and 1949, when restrictions were finally lifted.²⁵ The prices paid by purchasers in the 122 forced sales were lower than those paid in 190 free market transactions over the same period.²⁶ The free market sales in the neighbourhood netted an average price of \$149 per square metre

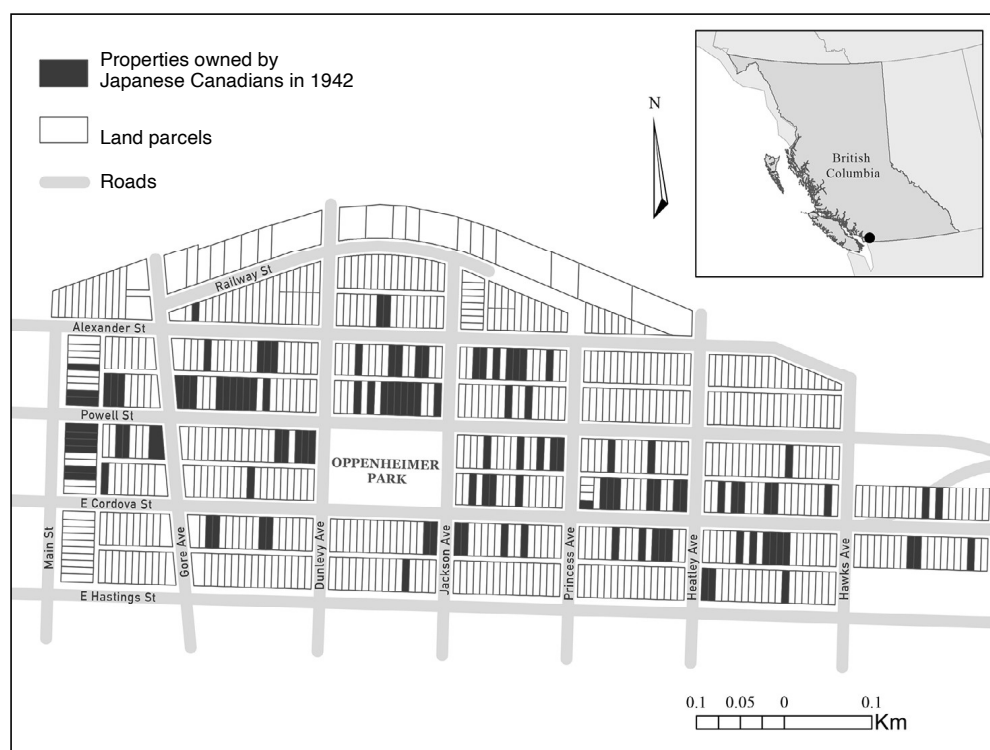


Figure 10.2 The Powell Street Neighbourhood Study Area. Researchers collected data for all properties in a twenty-three-square-block area, within which Japanese Canadians comprised at least 40 per cent of the residential population in 1941.

of land (prices in 2018 dollars), whereas forced sales by the Custodian generated an average price of \$135, seemingly a discount of just over 9 per cent.²⁷ But this straight-forward comparison overlooks pertinent information about the value of the lands in question: even before the state seizure of Japanese Canadian-owned real estate, their lands tended to sell for less. Indeed, at prior dates we see a much larger gap between the prices of the properties in question. Japanese Canadians had paid an average of \$248 per square metre to buy their properties, whereas other purchasers had paid an average of \$456.²⁸ Taking into account these prior prices, analyses revealed no material disadvantage for having the Custodian of Enemy Property as the seller, as against selling in the free market.²⁹ Our analyses support Justice Bird's conclusion that the Custodian sold Vancouver properties for market value at the time of sale.

Another approach to the question of "fair market value" may be useful in testing this observation. Real estate market data permit not only analysis of earlier transactions – those exchanges antecedent to internment era sales – but also subsequent ones. We are able to ask what happened to properties after their sales by the Custodian and, by comparison, what happened to properties sold within the free market.³⁰ If sales by

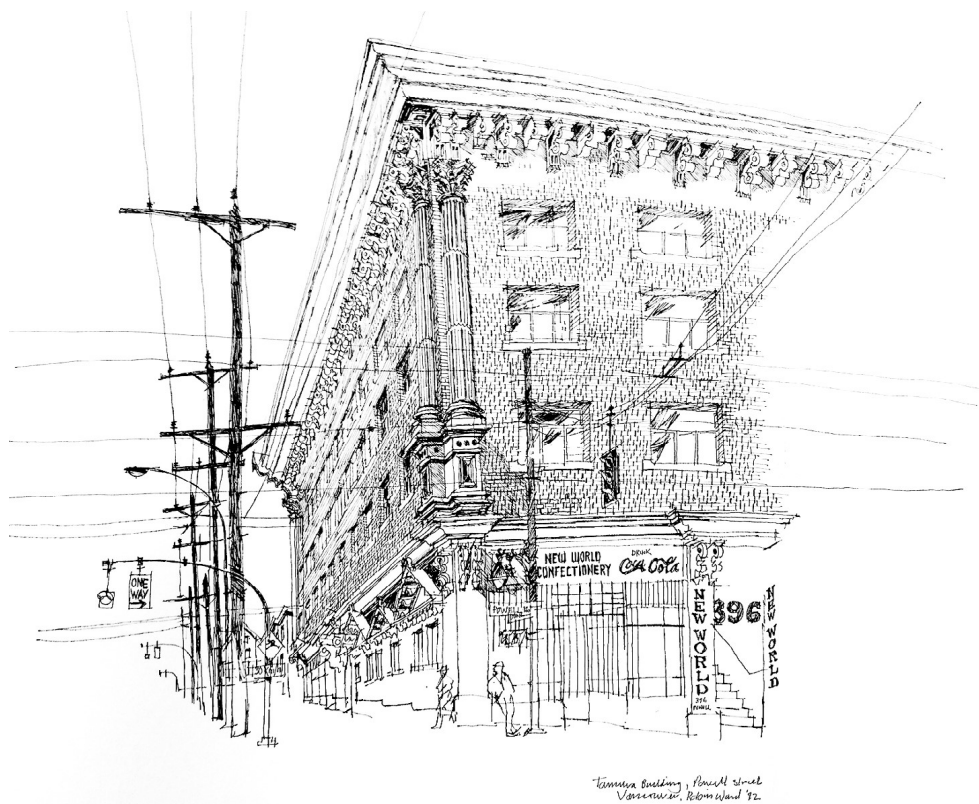


Figure 10.3 Tamura Building on Powell Street. Japanese Canadians owned diverse kinds of real estate in the neighbourhood. This iconic building was commissioned by Shinkichi Tamura in 1912 and later depicted by artist Robin Ward. With the New World Hotel above and commerce at street level, the Tamura building was perhaps the most expensive Japanese Canadian-owned property in the city.

the Custodian were significantly below market value, then we might expect to see particular subsequent advantage to those purchasers. We might see people who bought low from the Custodian holding properties for just a short period of time and flipping them for gain or, failing that, to at least have made particular windfall profits when they did sell.

Analysis of the real estate market in the Powell Street area, however, reveals no such evidence. Buyers from the Custodian, in short, gained no special advantage over other purchasers, that is, people who bought during the same period of time but in free market transactions.³¹ For the properties on which subsequent sale data are available (118 lots sold by the Custodian and 179 comparison lots) no statistically significant differences could be discerned between people who bought from the Custodian and those who bought from other sellers. The timing of resale provides little evidence of “flipping.” All purchasers resold on a wide range of subsequent dates: a small number held

their properties for a just a few months before reselling, others held onto their properties for decades. On average, purchasers from the Custodian tended to sell somewhat sooner – just over eight years after their initial purchase, as against almost ten years for other buyers. With so much variability among resale dates, however, this mean difference was not statistically significant. When buyers from the Custodian did sell, almost all made substantial profits, gaining an average \$185 (2018) per square metre in value. In a span of eight years, on average, they more than doubled their initial investments. But such gains were not particular to them; their free market counterparts also profited, selling for \$304 (2018) more per square metre than they had paid, tripling their initial investments. The difference between gains achieved by the two sets of buyers (again, due to great internal variability) is not statistically significant.

Purchasers from the Custodian in Powell Street benefited greatly from their investments but not because they had gained a special advantage over other buyers. Instead, they did well because they bought at an advantageous time for all purchasers – a point to which I will return below. For the moment, however, observe that the real estate data do not allow us to sharply distinguish buyers from the Custodian from those in the free market in the Powell Street neighbourhood.

An important caveat is necessary. The Custodian of Enemy Property sales comprised a large proportion of the market in the neighbourhood in 1940s, so we must assume that those sales impacted the prices of other nearby properties. A comparison with price trends in the wider city, which is beyond the scope of this analysis, might yield different conclusions. However, that approach would require its own caveats because the East End neighbourhood had always been distinctive within Vancouver, as it remains to this day. Extrapolation from the wider city to a marginalized neighbourhood could yield only tentative conclusions. The presumed impact of custodial sales on the local market means that unequivocal conclusions cannot be reached. Nonetheless, the fact remains: contrary to my expectations when I began this work, there is no conclusive evidence here for disputing Justice Bird's conclusions about the sale of Vancouver properties.

As in the case of the Powell Street neighbourhood, retrospective analyses of VLA sales in an important area of Japanese Canadian rural settlement, Maple Ridge, largely corroborate the conclusions of the Bird Commission. Japanese immigrants began farming in the Maple Ridge area in the first years of the twentieth century, pioneering berry cultivation, especially of strawberries. In 1906 Jiro Inouye, an immigrant from Saga prefecture, bought twenty acres in the area becoming the first Japanese Canadian to own farmland. Over the next generation, more than one hundred fellow immigrants and their children followed him to Maple Ridge, as moist alluvial soil and the Canadian Pacific Railway line on the north flank of the Fraser River made it ideal for growing, processing, and moving berries to a mass market. In 1942 Japanese Canadian farmers – organized together into a mutual association – occupied an important

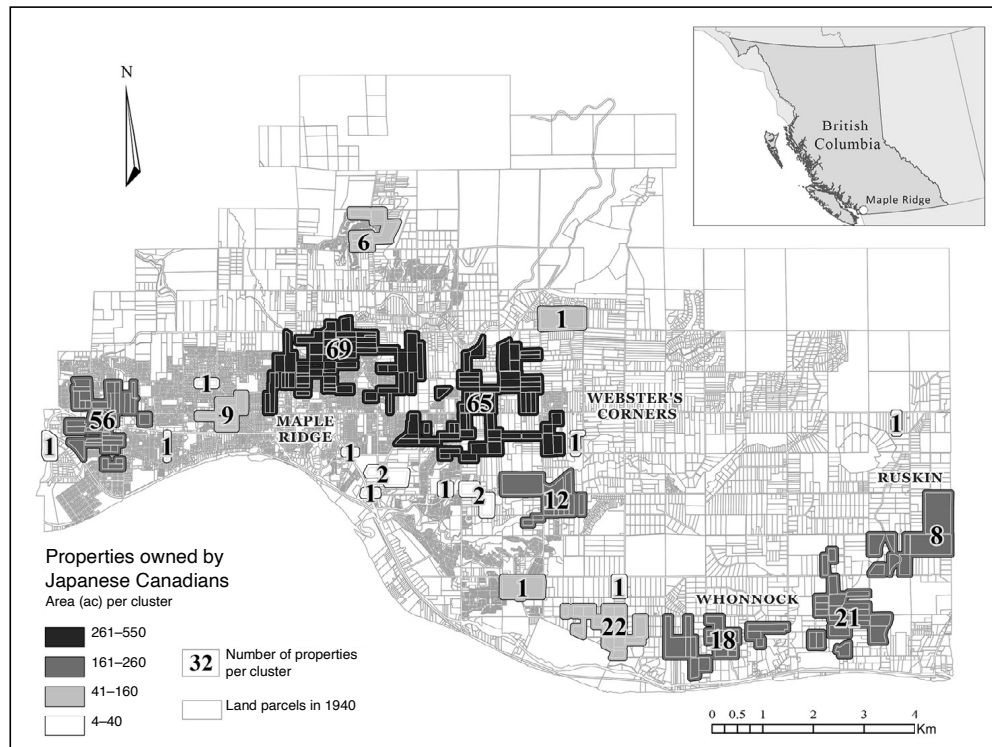


Figure 10.4 Maple Ridge Farms. The first site of Japanese Canadian farming, Maple Ridge was also the most popular among members of the community. Japanese Canadian-owned farms are highlighted, with darker shading indicating a larger acreage in a given grouping of Japanese Canadian-owned farms. The numbers indicate the count of Japanese Canadian farmers in each grouping. Our data come from two clusters on this map, the one indicating sixty-nine Japanese Canadian-owned properties in centre and the one indicating twenty-two Japanese Canadian-owned properties to the southeast.

position in the market and owned hundreds of valuable parcels of land in Maple Ridge.³² Even as the farmers packed their belongings to internment, agents of the Soldier Settlement Board began to circle the farms, planning their acquisition for soldiers returning from war. In 1944, when the director of the Veterans Land Act acquired virtually all of the Japanese Canadian-owned farms in Maple Ridge and elsewhere in the lower mainland, he did so, Justice Bird concluded, at prices far below “fair market value.” The commission recommended that all claimants in this category be awarded significant supplements to the original sale prices. Our analyses in Maple Ridge support the commission’s course of action.

The market in Maple Ridge bore little resemblance to its urban counterpart. Large farm properties – averaging more than 7.5 acres (the largest among them almost sixty acres) – changed hands in the 1940s for much lower prices per square metre than land in the city, just as they had in decades prior. The number of transactions in this

analysis is much smaller than the Powell Street neighbourhood: in this case I contrast fifty-three sales by the Custodian against thirty-five comparison sales between 1942 and 1949.³³ Nonetheless, the difference between the Custodian and the free market was more evident in Maple Ridge than in Powell Street. Other vendors sold their farms for an average price of \$3.60 per square metre of land. The Custodian sold for a fraction of this price, netting only 40 cents, just over 10 per cent of the free market sale price per acreage.

As in the case of the Powell Street neighbourhood, it is important to take into consideration prior land prices, and, as in the city, Japanese Canadians had tended to purchase more affordable real estate. They had paid an average of just 30 cents per square metre when they bought their farms whereas the comparison properties had been purchased for an average of \$1.43 per square metre (prices in 2018 dollars). But here an important difference seems to emerge, confirming the analysis of the Bird Commission. The sellers in the comparison sample, who had bought their land within a very similar timeframe to Japanese Canadians and then sold in the 1940s, saw much greater gains, with prices rising, on average, by 150 per cent.³⁴ In his testimony to the Bird Commission, UBC's dean of agriculture explained that the market for lower mainland farms was strong and improving in this period: "Prices had begun to advance about 1939," he testified, "but the prospects picked up materially in '41 and very materially in '42 and '43."³⁵ Records of the federal government offer further confirmation of this price trend, with one Soldier Settlement Board official urging a hasty purchase from the Custodian because "I do not look forward with any pleasure to the prices that will have to be paid," at later dates in the bull market.³⁶

Forced to sell, Japanese Canadians did not benefit appropriately from rising land prices. Instead, based upon what the Bird Commission found to be demonstrably flawed assessments by the Soldier Settlement Board, Japanese Canadians in Maple Ridge earned only 33 per cent more (40 cents per square metre) when their farms sold than what they had paid upon purchase (30 cents). Had the sale of their properties reflected the wider market of exchange, they might have been expected to earn approximately 75 cents per square metre, almost twice what they had received from the VLA. Justice Bird's standard recommended adjustment, applied to the average sale price of the sample properties in this analysis, would have brought them close to 72 cents per square metre.³⁷

Many of the Japanese Canadian owners of our sample of fifty-three properties received significantly more than the standard recommended awards from the Bird Commission, perhaps reflecting adjustments for inflation in the intervening years, the recognition that prices were continuing to rise in real dollar terms, and/or acknowledgment that in some cases the government's appraisals of the properties contained errors. For example Kankichi Onagi, who purchased a Maple Ridge farm in 1924, received an award of 110 per cent (\$810 for a property sold to the VLA for \$736). Saul

Cherniack, his legal representative at a commission hearing in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1948, argued that the Soldier Settlement Board appraisal had undercounted the cleared acreage and fruit trees on the farm and misdated the farmhouse.³⁸ The commission heard the claim of Sakiye Takasaki, another owner in our sample, at New Denver in June 1948. The Takasakis, who had also farmed in Maple Ridge since the 1920s, argued that the Soldier Settlement Board had undervalued their fruit trees, overlooked two structures on the property, over-estimated the age of the buildings on the farm, and mischaracterized the quality of its soil. Takasaki, whose lands had been forcibly sold for a total of \$1,433 in 1944 was awarded \$2,176, or 152 per cent of the original sale price.³⁹ In both instances, Japanese Canadians estimated their farms as worth far more than they received, even including the award amounts. They described their investments of labour and insisted they would not have sold by choice. The Bird Commission did not compensate them for their loss of autonomy, a loss that had, as I will argue below, quantifiable material consequences. And yet, narrowing our view to contemplate the market at the time of the sales, our comparative analyses reinforce the claims of Justice Bird that he had accurately assessed “fair market value” and made appropriate awards in this respect.

The process by which the Bird Commission came to be defined by market value at the time of sale – rather than the broader economic impacts of the uprooting and internment – have been detailed elsewhere.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, it is important to note that, despite its limitations, the question of “fair market value” at the time of sale is necessary to an assessment of the material harms of the dispossession. Our data suggest that the commission was competent in this task. Further analysis would be necessary to determine whether other urban markets and other rural sales were accurately portrayed. However, the two categories analyzed here cover the majority of the sales and provide no grounds for disputing the commission’s conclusions in respect to securing the “fair market value” of seized real estate for its dispossessed owners.

Where the commission erred, and erred gravely, was in declaring this analysis sufficient to capture the whole story of material loss. Clearly this was not the case. Shoyama’s brief for the commission, for example, suggested that valuations of property include analysis of “earning value assuming the parcel is to be developed to the highest usefulness possible in its location,” along with other future-oriented factors normally taken into consideration by potential investors in land.⁴¹ That the commission ignored such considerations means that it cannot have the final say on material losses.

Choice, opportunity, and loss

We can only understand the losses suffered by Japanese Canadians by going beyond the market at the time of sale. Take, for example, Tsunetaro Murakami’s farm on Salt Spring Island. In 1944, when the Custodian sold the property to the director of the

Veterans' Land Act, it was comprised of two separate lots. The first, 1.7 acres nearest the main road, was forcibly sold for \$174 (the funds, minus a \$3 registration fee, were credited to Tsunetaro's account with the Custodian).⁴² The small plot would soon be worth much more. In 1963, when Donald and Edna Francis McLeod completed their lease payments to the Veterans' Land Act and assumed title for the farm, it was valued at \$15,000. Another decade passed, and, following the death of her husband, Edna sold the property for \$52,500.⁴³ Consider these exchanges in "real" dollars, compensating for inflation. In 1944, Tsunetaro had received just over the equivalent of \$2,500 in 2018 currency, whereas Edna sold for more than \$220,000 (2018). The price of the property had increased almost one-hundred-fold, or an astounding 9,000 per cent, in one generation.⁴⁴

An even more dramatic story unfolded on the other parcel, the twenty-five-acre lot comprising most of the farm. In 1944, the Custodian sold it for \$988.⁴⁵ After a small rebate on his property insurance and payment of the \$3 fee, Tsunetaro received \$986, or the equivalent of \$14,465 (2018). By the 1970s, this area had been subdivided into thirty-three separate properties, with a small roadway, including two culs-de-sac (figure 10.5). In the time since Tsunetaro's dispossession, those thirty-three lots had been repeatedly exchanged. Indeed, the bits and pieces of land that once comprised his farm had changed hands in more than one hundred separate transactions. As rural land became subdivided, its value skyrocketed. Between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s, each of the thirty-three properties sold at least once and some as many as six times.

What was the former farm worth, a generation later? A precise value is difficult to ascribe because as the property splintered it branched into many separate histories of exchange, with each property changing hands at the preferences of its various owners. Using 1976 as an outer benchmark – thirty years after Tsunetaro's departure for Japan and a date by which his son Peter might have contemplated his own retirement – we can query the value of each parcel at its most recent sale. Taking this approach, twenty-nine separate transactions between 1967 and 1976 provide a rough value of the farm one generation after dispossession. The raw sum: \$571,150. Converting each transaction to 2018 dollars, the total value of the lands comprising the back lot of the farm was \$2,759,904. Counting Tsunetaro's smaller roadside lot as well, the total value of the 1944 farm was almost a full \$3 million. Had Peter retained but one subdivided lot of the farm that should have been his inheritance, for example a 0.4-acre house plot at the turnoff for what became Fairview Road, he might have possessed a property worth a quarter of a million dollars. Instead, a massive profit on that particular lot was reaped by Mervyn Gardner (the son of a prominent island family and a leading member of Salt Spring Island Credit Union) and his wife Edith, who purchased the lot in 1973 for \$5,500 (equivalent to \$30,092 in 2018) and then sold two years later for almost ten times the price, possibly having developed it in the interim.⁴⁶

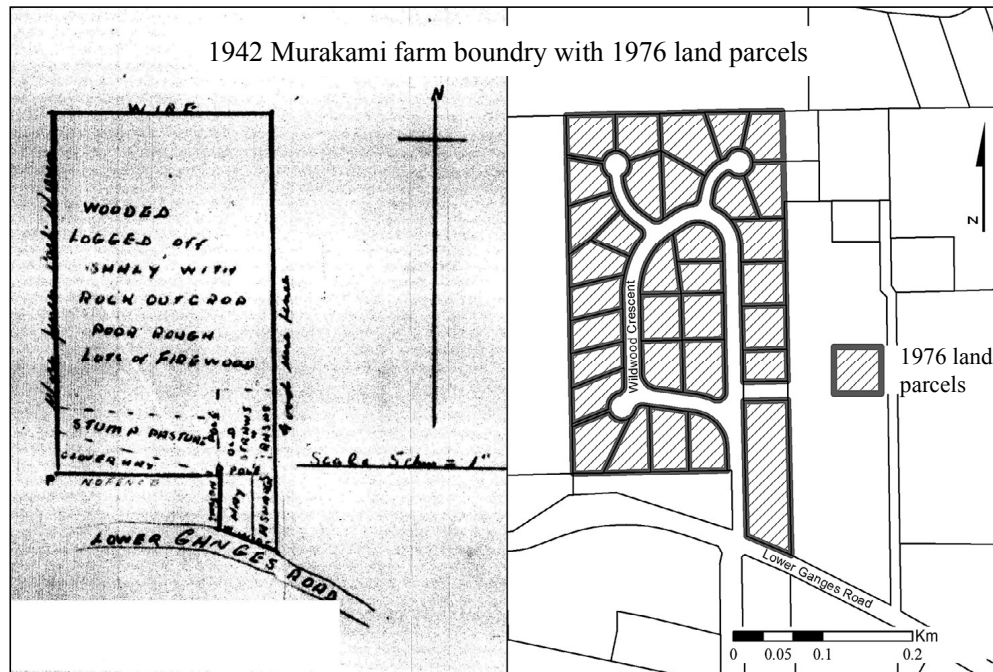


Figure 10.5 The Murakami farm before and after subdivision.

To understand such losses, we need to situate the market of the 1940s in history. The forced sales must be contextualized not by contrast to the wider market at the time of sale but rather within the passage of time in the market for land. Such analyses exceed the capacity of the Bird Commission, which ran from 1947 and 1950. They also exceed the standard considerations of eminent domain cases, which typically restrict themselves to market value at the time of property taking. But this is a particular history. Leaving aside the lawfulness of the dispossession, the wider policy context – in which Japanese Canadians were mostly confined to remote areas of limited opportunity (and low property values), forbidden, in any case, from purchasing new property, required instead to expend their capital to support themselves in confinement, and then forcibly relocated again to eastern destinations – made its effects particularly enduring. Many Japanese Canadians had to rebuild in the postwar era from virtually nothing. The material effects of these federal actions cannot be assessed without a view to their intergenerational impacts.

The results of this analysis will be anticipated, in broad strokes, by anyone familiar with the subsequent history of real estate in coastal British Columbia. Japanese Canadian real estate owners were astoundingly well situated in 1942. Fortunate and successful immigrants and their children – most of them labourers or small business owners – had struggled across the Pacific and through the Depression, some of them

managing to gain a foothold in the market for land by 1942. They stood on the precipice of life changing and heritable economic benefit. Their dispossession, and the draconian rule that they use the equity resulting from the sale of their property to meet their basic needs, meant that they were deprived of gains that should have been theirs. Instead, others reaped those rewards.

Even if we know this “ending” as we begin, the details should matter. They mattered to Japanese Canadian landowners. More broadly, they promise to ground in evidence new analytic insight. Previous work in this area has tended to fall into two camps: those who seek to express property losses in monetary terms and those, on the other hand, who focus on interests in property that are abstract, ineffable, and difficult to measure – the identity-constituting value of property to its owners. The division between such perspectives has often been contentious. From his side of the battle lines, geographer J.D. Porteous (whose insights into the loss of home are foundational to this wider volume) laments that “attachment, grief, [and] loss” are “immeasurable” and “thus easy to ignore by the cost-benefit brigade.”⁴⁷ From the opposite perspective, Frank Shears, in the Office of the Custodian in the 1940s, advised that compensation for Japanese Canadian losses should exclude their claims of harm to self, citizenship, and community, maintaining instead strict focus on the “tangible and specific.”⁴⁸ Representing opposite poles in the politics of dispossession, Porteous and Shears seem to agree: quantification cannot capture the deeper meanings of loss.

By specifying the material impacts of forced sales in the context of the prior and subsequent sales, the following section attempts a third path: emphasizing the economic significance of *choice*, particularly in the context of dynamic markets. By placing the sales in historical context and emphasizing the importance of the deprivation of choice, this analysis expresses loss in material terms without reducing it to a simple assessment of “fair market value.” The loss of freedom – a large measure of the injustice of the internment and dispossession – has quantifiable material dimensions. This analysis will not, of course, convey the full emotional impacts as articulated variously in other chapters of this book. But it does draw two disparate ways of thinking about loss somewhat closer together and communicate material harms in terms of the enduring legacies of injustice.

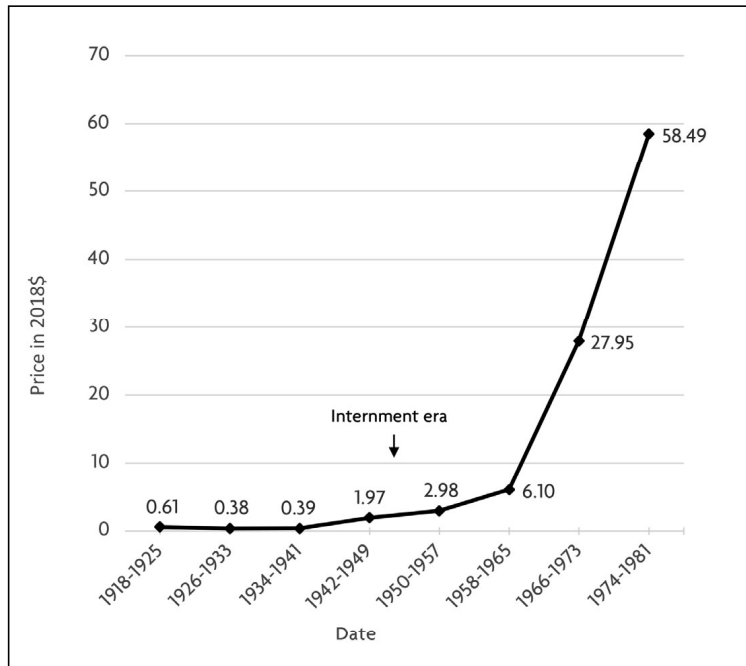
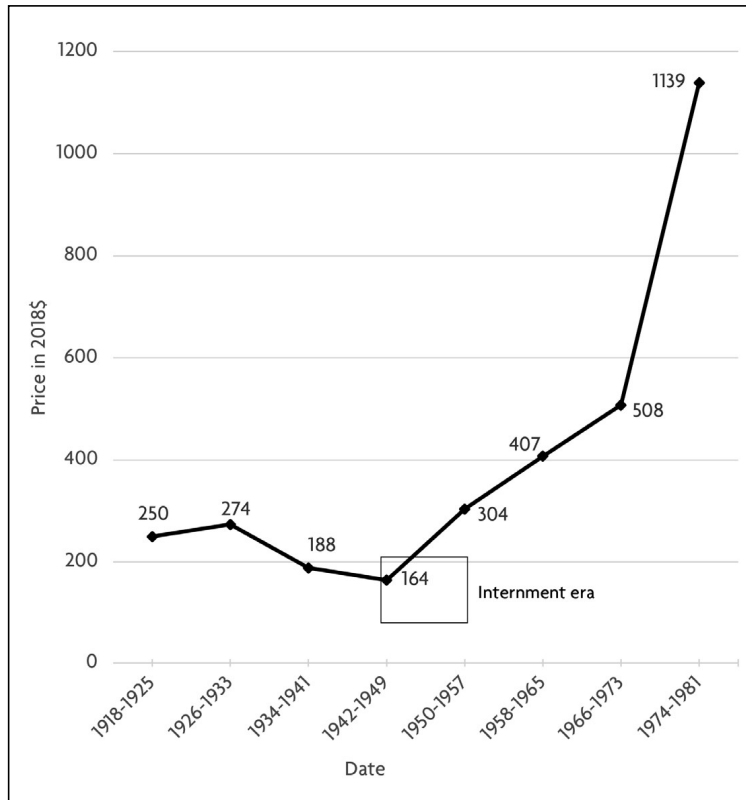
In some senses, this approach offers a reframing of a key prior analysis of the dispossession, the Price Waterhouse report of the 1980s, commissioned by the National Association of Japanese Canadians as part of their campaign for federal acknowledgment of harm and redress. Conducting title searches on fifty properties, Price Waterhouse estimated the worth of Japanese Canadian holdings in 1949 when government restrictions were finally lifted. Rather than accepting the market at the moment of sale as the benchmark of fairness in the handling of property, Price Waterhouse shifted perspective, detailing the material harms of the whole internment era. The study emphasized the prohibition against real estate purchases by Japanese Canadians, which

meant that they were divested from the market as prices were rising. By the time those few with the funds to do so could contemplate investing again, they had already paid a steep premium. Within the Price Waterhouse analysis, 1949 stood for the end of the internment policy and hence the end of documentable harms, a sensible strategy in pressing the government for compensation.⁴⁹

From a wider historical perspective on the real estate market, however, 1949 is an inadequate end point. Extending only slightly the logic of the Price Waterhouse study, we can inquire more expansively into the value over time of the lands that Japanese Canadians owned in 1942. We can ask what the properties were worth in the 1950s or, indeed, the decades that followed. Given the opportunity, many Japanese Canadians would have chosen to keep their property well beyond the first moment of their return to Pacific Canada. They might have leveraged what they already owned as security for further investment or sold and reinvested otherwise. This analysis encourages a counterfactual imagining. We conjure a history in which Japanese Canadians had not been forced to sell but rather retained their lands not just to 1949 but also beyond.⁵⁰ If such reflections are counterfactual, however, the analyses are not – rather, they can be grounded in the actual values of the lands that Japanese Canadians owned in 1942 but were forced to sell against their wills and over their protests.

This analysis will follow two principal branches, both offering descriptions of the market over time. The first approach is to reexamine the two important markets that I have discussed so far, taking into account the values of all properties transacted for the entire time period for which our project was able to collect data. The result of such a perspective is straightforward and stark. In the Powell Street neighbourhood, there was never a worse time to sell than the internment era (figure 10.6). For the most part, Japanese Canadians had purchased in the 1920s and 1930s, buying into a market that – in real dollar terms – was temporarily declining in value. They bought low, but then were forced to sell even lower, as the market reached a nadir in the 1940s. Then, in the years after their dispossession, prices skyrocketed. Forced to sell in the 1940s, Japanese Canadians parted with real estate at prices lower than the prevailing rates at any other time in the span of almost a century.

Other people also sold at the same time, but they did so by choice. We cannot trace for certain what they did with their money; many likely reinvested, either in real estate or elsewhere in the economy that was on the verge of booming. Japanese Canadians were deprived of this opportunity, which should, by law and right, have been theirs.⁵¹ One consequence was deprivation from the remarkable investments they had made in the decades prior. Prices in the market where they invested doubled in the subsequent decade and again by the 1970s and again by the start of the 1980s. During a period of exponential returns, Japanese Canadians were instead, for the most part, rebuilding their lives in Eastern Canada or deported to war-ravaged Japan. Such losses have multigenerational impacts.



In Maple Ridge, too, Japanese Canadians were dispossessed of remarkable investments in land. Indeed, owners of land in the vicinity of Vancouver's expanding suburban periphery were even better situated than their city-owning counterparts, and markedly so. As farms became suburban developments, the "real" price of a metre of land in Maple Ridge rose at a rate enviable even for Powell Street owners. Lands selling for two dollars per square metre in the 1940s sold for three times that price by the late 1950s and early 1960s, fourteen times as much a decade later, and reached thirty times their original prices by 1981. When the VLA purchased Maple Ridge farms at artificially depreciated prices and transferred them to returning veterans, they handed over a virtual goldmine (figure 10.7). In one sense, Japanese Canadian owners in Maple Ridge fared somewhat better than their Powell Street counterparts. Whereas prices in Powell Street dipped in the 1940s (so they were dispossessed at an historic low point in the market) in Maple Ridge land prices had already begun their meteoric rise by the time of the dispossession. As a result, in real dollar terms, Maple Ridge owners received on average more in the dispossession sales than they had paid in the decades prior (although, as noted above, they received considerably less than the prevailing market of the 1940s would have dictated). Nonetheless, from a broader perspective, the forced sales in Maple Ridge can only be regarded as a travesty. Rather than starting from nothing, former Maple Ridge farmers ought to have been weighing their remarkable opportunities in the postwar era.

A final descriptive analysis in a third locale reinforces and expands these observations of Japanese Canadian losses in historical perspective. We return to the place where the chapter began – Salt Spring Island. Once our researchers had completed data collection in our two principal sites of study (Powell Street and Maple Ridge), sufficient resources remained to do more limited analyses at several additional sites.

Figure 10.6 *Opposite top* Average price (in 2018 dollars) of a square metre of land, Powell Street, 1918–1981 (in eight-year segments). N = 1139 (1918–1925 = 250, 1926–1933 = 274, 1934–1941=188, 1942–1949 = 164, 1950–1957 = 304; 1958–1965 = 407, 1966–1973 = 508). For the segment from 1942 to 1949, sales by the Office of the Custodian have been excluded to reflect changes in the free market of exchange. Note that the price per square metre figures in this analysis differ somewhat from those reported in the prior section of this chapter due to selection criteria in each analysis (see <https://loi.uvic.ca/realestate> for a fuller explanation).

Figure 10.7 *Opposite bottom* Average price (in 2018 dollars) of a square metre of land, Maple Ridge, 1918–1981 (in eight-year segments). N = 1474 (1918–1925 = 34, 1926–1933 = 29, 1934–1941=57, 1942–1949 = 232, 1950–1957 = 200; 1958–1965 = 315, 1966–1973 = 513, 1974–1981=94). For the segment from 1942 to 1949, sales by the Office of the Custodian have been excluded to reflect changes in the free market. Note that the price per square metre figures in this analysis differ somewhat from those reported in the section above due to selection criteria in each analysis (see <https://loi.uvic.ca/realestate> for a fuller explanation).

Of these, the most reliable and important data pertain to Salt Spring.⁵² On the island, we were not able to collect comparison data from the free market and instead searched only the transactions on properties owned by Japanese Canadians in 1942. The result is an analysis of a much smaller number of initial properties: we found thirteen sales by the Custodian on Salt Spring Island, although they were subsequently subdivided into many more parcels. We traced subsequent transactions on the original thirteen titles for thirty years. In instances of subdivision, we followed all descendent properties whenever possible. The result is a portrait of Custodian-sold properties one “generation” after the forced sales. In contrast to the graphs just above, which excluded Custodian sales from analysis of free market trends, this analysis builds specifically from Custodian sales to a subsequent history of exchange. The results reinforce the story told thus far but also point to the local specificity of the dispossession. The material impacts of forced sale were at a basic level common across all areas that we studied: Japanese Canadians would have been much better off retaining their lands. But the extent of the benefit of which they were deprived varied by locale. In this sense the legacy of the dispossession is both common and highly differentiated.

Among the localities for which we collected data, none saw so rapid an increase in postwar values as Salt Spring Island. Tsunetaro Murakami’s farm was in this sense typical: in the three decades after their sale by the Custodian of enemy property, the real value of Salt Spring Island lands increased at a remarkable rate. The Custodian sold low on Salt Spring Island, dispossessing Japanese Canadians for just sixteen cents per square metre. By the early 1970s, the same areas were selling for more than sixty times as much (figure 10.8).⁵³ Sales by the Custodian brought a Japanese Canadian farmer, working eighteen acres of land, the average holding in 1942, \$12,750 (in 2018 dollars); a generation later the same areas sold for an average of more than \$750,000 (2018).

Price gains on Salt Spring brought tremendous benefit to the purchasers of forcibly sold property. Indeed, the island was the site of one of the most notorious single land acquisitions of the entire dispossession: the sale, on 1 March 1945 of the 600-acre property of Tozaro Iwasaki. This transaction later became the subject of a challenge that reached the Supreme Court of Canada, where its legality was affirmed, in part on the basis of the misguided Nakashima case of the 1940s.⁵⁴ The transaction was a boon to the purchasers, the prominent Salt Spring Island Mouat family. Troublingly, Gavin Mouat was the local agent of the Custodian on Salt Spring Island, responsible for the safekeeping and management of Japanese Canadian-owned property. It was Mouat who rented the Murakami property to the unreliable Mr Jaggs. He also surely played a role in ensuring that the sprawling Iwasaki lands – ultimately one of the most valuable of the Japanese Canadian-owned properties in coastal British Columbia – went not to the director of the Veterans Land Act but rather into the hands of his own family company, Salt Spring Island Lands, for the sum of \$5,250 (\$76,825 in 2018).⁵⁵

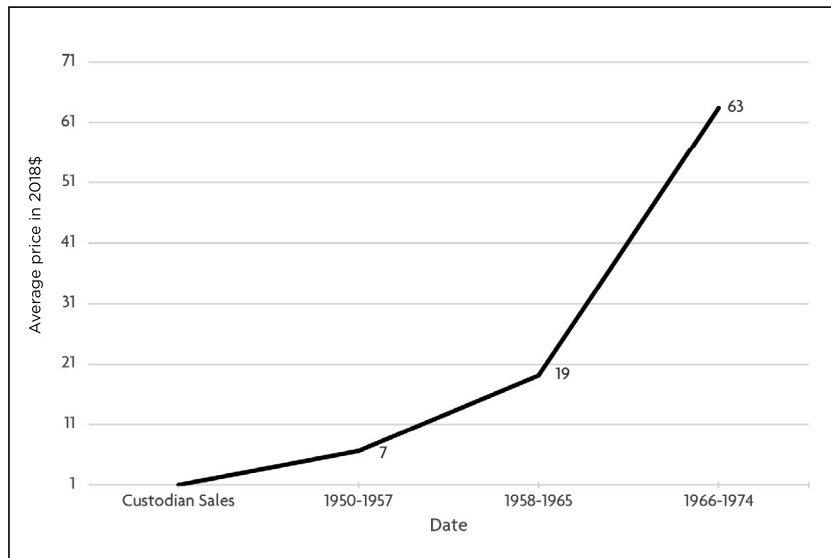


Figure 10.8 Salt Spring Island sale prices (average cost per square metre) for one “generation” of sales after the Custodian sold, expressed as a multiple of Custodian sale prices. N = 6 Custodian sales and 114 subsequent transactions (see <https://loi.uvic.ca/realestate> for a fuller explanation).

Three years later, at the Bird Commission hearings, Iwasaki claimed the lands were worth \$60,000 (\$870,000). This valuation was ridiculed. “I do not think I will allow this claim to pass,” exclaimed Commissioner Bird, “without making some comment on the extravagance of the claim. I know something of Salt Spring Island and anyone who came up with a proposition that ... [its] lands were worth a thousand dollars an acre would make it ridiculous.” In fact, Iwasaki was claiming \$100 per acre. “Probably,” opined, Iwasaki’s lawyer, Robert McMaster, “the problem is that the claimant is expanding his idea of the development of the land into the future rather than the present time.” Bird replied: “Very far into the future.” Iwasaki, present but testifying through an interpreter, was asked nothing about his valuation. Acknowledging, nonetheless, that land values were indeed rising, the commission recommended an award of \$6,750 in consideration of Iwasaki’s losses on Salt Spring and another piece of real estate on the mainland.⁵⁶

In fact, all of the participants to the conversation massively underestimated the future value of the property, but Iwasaki was closest. Over the subsequent years, the Mouats subdivided the lands into dozens of parcels. Parts passed to Gavin’s children, Winnifred and Norman, some sold decades later. By the 1970s, the Mouats made enormous profits. As Salt Spring Island properties splintered, our researchers were forced to subselect rather than follow all branches of title history, so we cannot report



Figure 10.9 The Mouat family's sprawling oceanside property, circa 1970.

all of the transactions on the immense property, but we were able to trace the sale of seventy-three acres, or 12 per cent of the total Iwasaki lands. These the Mouats sold in twenty-seven transactions, stretching from the early 1950s to 1970: small parcels, sold one-by-one, to various buyers. Gavin made back the family's entire initial investment, and more, on 2 February 1953, selling two small parcels: Olga and William Napper paid \$4,000 (\$37,362) for 2.5 acres while Ralph Guilbride paid \$6,000 (\$56,043) for 3.2 acres nearby. Thus, five years after Iwasaki's valuation was ridiculed by Justice Bird, Mouat sold seven acres for \$10,000 (\$93,405), even more than the supposedly fantastical price – \$1,000 per acre – that the commissioner had derided. In September of the same year, Gavin sold another lot, this time for \$8,000 (\$74,723). And so it went: Gavin made another sale in 1954. One the next year. At least three each in 1957

and 1958. In seventeen years of subdivision and sale, the Mouats netted more than \$1.2 million (2018) by selling just seventy-three of the 600 acres. Tracing the rest of their gains would require sustained further research, but we can be certain that Iwasaki's losses considerably enriched one of the island's wealthiest families.

Conclusion

In February 1943, the editors of *The New Canadian*, the only Japanese Canadian newspaper permitted to publish during the war years, expressed a concern shared by many of its readers: that members of the community would see their investments in land “dwindle and vanish” by the end of the internment. A month had elapsed since cabinet's passage of Order in Council 469, which explicitly affirmed the Custodian's power to sell property without their consent. This breach of the prior promise of protection threatened to extinguish a fragile hope to which many property owners still clung: “that no matter how their cash and other assets might dwindle and vanish during the war, they were assured at least of a house or a piece of land which might see them through.”⁵⁷ For property owners in coastal British Columbia, their investments in real estate promised much more than this. Their homes, farms, and businesses should have been foundations of remarkable opportunity.

Forced to sell, real estate owning Japanese Canadians lost intergenerational wealth: wealth that been accumulated at great pains and that could have changed the lives of their children and grandchildren. The most significant material harms of the dispossession followed from the abrogation of choice as well as the barriers, including legal prohibition, to timely reinvestment. Those who owned in Powell Street were forced to sell at a uniquely inopportune time: prices had never been lower. Those who owned in Maple Ridge and Salt Spring were divested of lands that stood on the verge of historic price increases. The losses of Japanese Canadians were not confined to the moment of sale or the era of the dispossession. Their losses increased over time. The scope of the dispossession became apparent in the legacies of benefit and loss that it generated.

No more clairvoyant than we are today, British Columbians could not have foretold the future of the market. Other people of the 1940s also sold land. But they did not move to the remote interior of British Columbia, or the other internment sites, forced to exhaust their equity for mere subsistence while law prohibited them from reinvesting in land. They did not suffer multiple forced displacements while officials limited their access to their own money. The implications of forcing Japanese Canadians to do so cannot be reversed. The dispossession – in its unearned benefits and unwarranted losses – is permanent.

NOTES

Thanks to readers Eric Adams, Nicholas Blomley, Michael Ross, Hildy Ross, and Eric Sager.

- 1 Custodian of Enemy Property Case Files 3277 and 8118, RG 117, C-3, LAC, Ottawa. The death of Tsunetaro's other son was reported to me anecdotally by Mary Kitagawa, also a resident of the island before the war. I conclude that Tsunetaro had lived at least three decades in the country due to the birth, thirty-one years prior, of his son in Canada.
- 2 In response to Jaggs's rant about "Japanese" people, about which only this cryptic line in an official memo remains, F.G. Shears claimed to have "admitted that our opinions might possibly agree [i.e. in strong antipathy for Japanese Canadians] but that this was quite aside from the question at issue [i.e. that people who fail to pay rent are evicted]." This exchange, aridly reported in official correspondence, simultaneously denotes the pervasiveness of racism and its insufficiency as an answer to questions about the dispossession (why were officials insistent that Jaggs pay rent, given that their "opinions ... agree[d]" on the topic of "the Japanese"?) that has been noted more broadly in this volume. See F.G. Shears to G.W. McPherson, 13 January 1943, Custodian of Enemy Property Case Files 3277, RG 117, C-3, LAC.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 At least 300 Japanese Canadians wrote to the Custodian between 1943 and 1947 to protest the sale of their property. Among these, more than 70 per cent indicated that the sale price was too low. More broadly, see chapter 4.
- 5 As Matt James and I argue in chapter 14, some forensic examination of the beneficiaries of injustice is necessary to the democratic learning that we hope will follow from studying (and teaching) such histories.
- 6 This chapter is based upon the Landscapes of Injustice Real Estate Database, which is presently available for consultation at www.loi.uvic.ca and will eventually be integrated into our project's full digital research collection. After consultative discussions within the Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective – taking into account both academic and community-based priorities – five sites of study were selected for real estate research: (1) Vancouver's Powell Street and (2) Kitsilano neighbourhoods, (3) Maple Ridge, (4) Steveston, and (5) Salt Spring Island. Working with the support of the Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia, researchers directly accessed plans (legal maps of properties), land titles (deeds of ownership), and transfer documents (conveyances) pertaining to properties in each of these areas, entering information into a purpose-built database codeveloped by myself and Martin Holmes of the Humanities Computing and Media Centre at the University of Victoria. In all five sites, the search process involved tracing the transactional history of individual selected properties. We adopted specialized search protocols in the various sites, due to the nature of the data and the constraints of time and resources, as documented at www.loi.uvic.ca.
- 7 Chapter 9.
- 8 Chapter 4.
- 9 Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1981), 95; Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), 329–30.
- 10 See Kaitlin Findlay, "The Bird Commission, Japanese Canadians, and the Challenge of

Reparations in the Wake of State Violence” (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 2018).

See also chapter 9.

- 11 Another major systematic analysis of Japanese Canadian losses, the Price Waterhouse Study of the 1980s, will be discussed below. However, that study deliberately avoided the question of “fair market value” at the time of sale, preferring instead to benchmark losses against values in 1949, when Japanese Canadians were permitted to return to the Pacific coast.
- 12 Justice Henry Irvine Bird, Report Upon the Investigation into Claims of Persons of the Japanese Race Pursuant to Terms of the Order-in-Council P.C. 1810, 18 July 1947, as amended, File 1, Box 5, Series 2, F.G. Shears Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library, Toronto (hereafter Bird Commission Report).
- 13 Chapter 10.
- 14 Bird Commission Report, 38. Bird also considered “other” rural sales – that is sales other than those to the VLA – and sales of other urban properties. Neither of these additional categories of real estate are discussed at length in this section of this chapter. The VLA sales and the Vancouver area sales constituted a majority of properties sold and the two poles of Bird’s conclusions. Of an approximate total of 1,740 sales by the Custodian of Enemy Property of Japanese Canadian-owned real estate, 741 (40 per cent) were VLA sales. The Bird Commission heard claims in relation to 884 of these properties, 486 relating to the VLA sales (Vancouver Office Report, undated [circa 1948], File 16, Vol 2, RG117, LAC).
- 15 Bird Commission Report, 23.
- 16 See chapter 9.
- 17 Throughout this discussion I will use “free market” to designate sales that were not compelled by the federal government as a result of dispossession. Free thus contrasts with the forced sales by the Custodian. Of course there are a variety of ways in which free market transactions may be compelled in various ways (by debt, etc.), but, for the purposes of this discussion, all transactions except those compelled by the Custodian of Enemy Property will be described as free.
- 18 Bird Commission Report, 39.
- 19 Both the reassessment of property values (by Clement) and the comparative analysis of market sales (by Corbus) were conducted only with respect to VLA sales (see Transcripts, 1220 and 1414, General Evidence 1–4 February 1949, Volume 77, RG 33-69, LAC).
- 20 Bird Commission Report, 14.
- 21 Chapter 5.
- 22 See also Jordan Stanger-Ross and the Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, “Suspect Properties: The Vancouver Origins of the Forced Sale of Japanese-Canadian-Owned Property, WWII,” *Journal of Planning History* 15, no. 4 (2016): 271–89.
- 23 National Japanese Canadian Citizens Association, Submission to the Royal Commission on Japanese Canadian Property, written November 1948 and entered into evidence 1 January 1949 (20) General Exhibit 97–131, Vol 79, RG 33-69, LAC.
- 24 Audrey Kobayashi, *Memories of our Past: A Brief History and Walking Tour of Powell Street* (Vancouver: NRC Publishing, 1992); Beth Carter, *Monogatari: Tales of Powell Street* (Burnaby, BC: Nikkei National Museum, 2011); Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 131–2, 151–2.
- 25 Determining the “granularity” for analyses of real estate data requires choice among imperfect options. In the discussion that follows, I take two distinct approaches.

Examining “fair market value,” where it is especially important to trace individual properties longitudinally over time, I use legally described lots, or parcels of real estate, as the unit of analysis. It is important to note that individual “properties,” as colloquially understood and encountered in the world in the form of buildings, homes, or farms (for example), often occupy more than one legally described lot or parcel. In many cases therefore, a given lot (A) is packaged with others (B and C) in one or more transactions (say, when a large building is sold). Subsequently, if, for example, the building is demolished and a number of smaller edifices take its place, each of the lots might be sold individually. Further, any or all of the original lots can be packaged with still others (D, E, or F) in subsequent transactions. In addition, various forms of redevelopment result in the original lot (A) being extinguished, subdivided, and replaced by new legally described properties (1, 2, and 3), which might then be transacted together, separately, or in combination with other preexisting lots. As a result data analyses (and even database construction and management) required many long and complex deliberations between our programmer, Martin Holmes, and myself. We chose to begin our longitudinal datasets with each legally described property, linking those with antecedent and descendent exchanges of properties that occupy the same geographic location (as determined by a protocol regarding geographic overlap). As a result, in the analyses reported in this section, an individual transaction (of, say, lots A, B, and C conveyed together in one transfer) can appear three separate times within the three separate property histories of lots A, B, and C. The price agreed upon in a single transaction thus establishes the price for three different properties/lots. From the standpoint of statistical analyses this approach has drawbacks – ideally all individual rows of data would be completely independent of one another – but the reality of real estate transaction made this, in our view, the only feasible approach to tracing transaction histories over time. For fuller documentation of the files used in this analysis, see www.loi.uvic.ca/realestate.

- 26 Note that these are first transactions on each property after 4 March 1942.
- 27 Here square metre refers to lot size only. This analysis does not take into account the buildings on the properties, only the lot parameters.
- 28 The complexity of transactional histories means that these figures can be reported in various ways, with slightly different results. The figures reported in the text are for prior transactions (T₁) of the properties subsequently sold (T₂) by the Custodian of Enemy Property and 190 comparison sales. An alternative approach leaves aside the question of Custodian sales and instead compares prices paid by Japanese Canadians as opposed to non-Japanese Canadians for all properties exchanged prior to 4 March 1942. This approach yields 283 purchases by non-Japanese Canadians and 148 purchases by Japanese Canadians. The price discrepancies using this approach are slightly larger than those reported above; Japanese Canadians purchased at an average of \$244 per square metre, non-Japanese Canadians at \$465 per square metre (2018 dollars). Going still further back in time (to what we might call T₀), to the prices of properties even before Japanese Canadians purchased them, we find that the properties that they would subsequently buy, and then later lose to the dispossession, were already significantly less expensive, on average, than comparison properties in the neighbourhood.
- 29 This comparison was conducted as analyses of variance, for the effect of the Custodian as a seller (independent variable) on the price per square metre (dependent variable),

controlling for prior (T1) price per square metre and the date of the T1 transaction. These analyses found no statistically significant effect for the Custodian as seller.

- 30 This form of analysis is much more straightforward in the case of the urban market than in the vLA sales discussed below. Because the vLA as a purchaser was not seeking profit (and because vLA sales were often completed through lease-to-own arrangements with veterans that are not visible within the records of the market) analyses of what the purchaser from the Custodian did with their property (as against the purchasers in free market sales) is strained at best. Various attempts to circumvent this challenge yielded results largely corroborating the findings in the urban market: purchasers from the vLA did not make special profits. However, such analysis is indirect and somewhat speculative and is not reported here. In the urban market, by contrast, we are able to directly compare purchasers from the Custodian to purchasers in free market sales.
- 31 The comparison examines sales from 1942–49.
- 32 Yasutaro Yamaga, *History of the Haney Nokai*, trans. W.T. Hashizume (Beamsville, ON: History Editing Committee of Haney Nokai, 1963).
- 33 This difference results from our research process, which prioritized Powell Street as the largest node of Japanese Canadian life in the prewar period, as well as the considerable difficulties involved in rural research, where subdivision meant that these properties splintered into hundreds of descendant lots. As a result, in Maple Ridge we selected fifty-three Japanese Canadian–owned properties and one comparison property for each. Because not all of the owners in the comparison sample chose to sell in the 1940s, we have fewer comparators in our sample, somewhat reducing the statistical power of our analysis.
- 34 In contrast to Powell Street, Japanese Canadians and non-Japanese Canadians had purchased within a similar timeframe in Maple Ridge (with similar mean and median purchase dates ranging from the mid-1910s to 1941). We might expect, therefore, their returns on their investments to be roughly similar.
- 35 Transcripts Volume 6, 2334, File 1, Box 7, Series 2, F.G. Shears Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.
- 36 Letter to Gordon Murchison from Ivan T. Barnet (“Barney”), 28 March 1943, File V-8-10 Part 3: Japanese and their Farm Properties, vol. 403, RG 38, LAC.
- 37 This analysis was conducted as a repeated measure, testing the effect of the Custodian as a seller and time (as independent variables) on the price per square metre (dependent variable), controlling for prior (T1) price per square metre and the date of the T1 transaction. The Custodian sold properties for less, by comparison with prior values, than other sellers in the market. Depending on the restrictions placed on this analysis (which cases were included) this comparison hovered around the standard test of statistical significance. In the most restricted analysis, in which only the thirty-five comparison sales that occurred between 4 March 1942 and 1 April 1949, the test indicated a 94 per cent likelihood that the Custodian had an independent and significant effect on changes in property values over time. In a more open analysis, in which the number of comparison sales was increased, the analysis passed the test for statistical significance, with a greater than 95 per cent likelihood that the effect was not produced by chance. In the text above, I have reported the most conservative use of comparison data (only the thirty-five transactions).

- 38 Kankichi Onagi, Bird Commission Hearing Transcripts, 20 September 1948, File 923, Vol. 46, RG33-69, LAC.
- 39 Sakiye Takasaki, Bird Commission Hearing Transcripts, 24 June 1948, File 429, Vol. 20, RG33-69, LAC.
- 40 Chapter 9.
- 41 Thomas K. Shoyama, Submission to the Royal Commission on Japanese Canadian Property, 12 November 1948, National Japanese Canadian Citizens Association, File 5, Box 7, Series 2, F.G. Shears Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library, Toronto.
- 42 Custodian of Enemy Property Case Files 3277, RG 117, C-3, LAC, Ottawa. This parcel was legally described at the time as Lot 2 of Section 4, in Range 2 East of the North Division of Salt Spring Island, Cowichan District, Plan 3805.
- 43 All land transaction data, unless otherwise cited, is derived from the Landscapes of Injustice Real Estate Database, compiled at Land Title and Survey Authority of British Columbia offices. For details on the database, as well as access to data, see www.loi.uvic.ca. Donald McLeod died in 1970; see “Last Rites for Donald McLeod at Ganges Church,” *Gulf Islands Driftwood*, 5 February 1970. Thank you to Ceridwen Ross Collins at the Salt Spring Island Archives.
- 44 Currency conversions using the Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator (<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>), 25 December 2018.
- 45 Lot 3 of Section 4 and 5, in Range 2 East of the North Division of Salt Spring Island, Cowichan District, Plan 2183.
- 46 Mervyn Gardner chaired a meeting of the Salt Spring Island Credit Union in March 1964, *Salt Spring Island Driftwood*, 12 March 1964; on his family’s pioneer status on the island see Richard Mouat Toynbee and kindred souls, *Snapshots of Early Salt Spring and Other Favoured Islands* (Ganges: Mouat’s Trading Company, 1978), 19.
- 47 J.D. Porteous, “Domicide: The Destruction of Home,” in *Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings, and Environments*, ed. David N. Benjamin (Ashgate, 1998), 153.
- 48 F.G. Shears to K.W. Wright, 27 February 1947, file 55908, part 2.2, RG 117, LAC (2nd of two letters of that day).
- 49 National Association of Japanese Canadians and Price Waterhouse, *Economic Losses of Japanese Canadians After 1941: A Study* (Winnipeg: National Association of Japanese Canadians, 1985).
- 50 Landscapes of Injustice research coordinator (and contributor to this volume) Kaitlin Findlay suggests that there is, more broadly, an inherent counterfactuality to the study of loss. To study loss is to study what is not or can no longer be. Another collaborator, David Mitsui, sent me an advertisement for his dispossessed family home, recently listed in Port Coquitlam for almost \$700,000. The history of real estate loss has retained symbolic importance to Japanese Canadians perhaps because public expressions of market value repeatedly convey the opportunities lost in dispossession. Every real estate advertisement and every newspaper spread on the unaffordability of housing in coastal British Columbia puts a number on the enduring loss of what might have been.
- 51 For the claim that the sales were illegal, see chapter 8.
- 52 We also collected data for sales by the Custodian in Vancouver’s Kitsilano neighbourhood (where we found twenty such sales) and Steveston, a fishing settlement at the mouth of the Fraser River (twenty-one such sales). The title searches collected in these locales are useful for case studies of individual properties and may enter into some future analysis. In broad strokes, both seem to confirm the observations reported in



this chapter. However, given the particular analytic approach taken here and the subselections of property that it entailed neither of these locales yielded reliable and reportable results.

- 53 From 1966 to 1974, lands traced on Salt Spring sold for an average of \$10.45 per square metre.
- 54 Chapter 8.
- 55 For details on this purchase, including the transaction of additional lots, see Brian Smallshaw, “The Dispossession of Japanese Canadians on Saltspring Island,” (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 2017).
- 56 Torazo Iwasaki Bird Commission Hearing Transcripts, 2 March 1948, File 252, Vol. 13, RG33-69, LAC
- 57 “A Statement Is in Order,” *The New Canadian*, 20 February 1943, 2.

