

Tanaka Family History –

A) Tanaka, Alan & Margaret (nee: Hamilton)
(see: Tanaka, G.; Vetsch H.)
Submitted and Written by: Alan Tanaka

History – Roots of the family

Issei

In 1917 Toshitaro & Chiya from Kumamoto Ken, came to Canada and settled in Raymond to work on a farm. They moved to Coaldale in 1940 and started a farm in the Broxburn area. They had four sons Mitsug, Murashi, Itsuki, Shinob, and a dtr Chiduka

Nisei

Tanaka, Mitsug & Kinuko (nee: Ohashi) they had five children: Gerry, Harvey, Alan, Keith & Brent

Sansei – Tanaka, Alan & Margaret (nee: Hamilton) two children both married Geoffrey, Heather Vetsch (nee: Tanaka)

In 1954 I was born in Coaldale as a Sansei and proud of my heritage. The experience of farm life in my earlier years had a profound effect on me. The hardship enabled me to focus and strive for a new path, so much so that in Grade one in a small country school called Kinniburgh, I decided I would become a teacher, and leave the sugar beet fields and farms behind. The country school was from K to 6 and then I went to WR Myers School in Taber for grades 7 through 12. The vision that I had was reinforced each year. The farm chores were not so bad but as we lived 24 miles out of town, to enjoy after school activities such as curling, music or team sports were out of the question. Through the years of growing up, our family worked on irrigation farms to make money.

Those of you that worked on irrigation farms know that with the long hours the pay was about 85 cents an hour. All this while swarms of mosquitoes buzzed around taking turns at the blood transfusion. I strove to better myself and promised myself that my children would not have to go through what I did. I considered myself lucky in that I had the opportunity to change things. I saved my money for years, but it wasn't enough, so in order to carry out my vision, I worked at potato manufacturing plant after I finished High School to make enough money to seed my attendance at university in

Edmonton. During my university years I worked at different jobs; the most intense time was when I was going to university through the day, working full time at the Post Office through the night, and on the weekends subcontracting shingling roofs.

I met my wife Margaret at the University of Alberta, was engaged 3 months later and now have been married 30 years. Margaret received her degree, BSc (honors) and later received her CGA designation and her CFP (Certified Financial Planner). Me I received a BEd, majoring in Economics - International Monetary Systems. The economics background aids my current role as a Financial Advisor to understand how the financial markets interrelate and to help people understand how money works so that they can use RRSP's, TFSA's and proper investing to keep more money for themselves. There are many things about money that the schools do not teach.

Perhaps it is fate that leads us down one path and not the other. After graduating in 1978 and getting married I got a teaching position in La Crete so the Tanaka's moved north on a 25 year journey. The people were fantastic, friendly, and there was a strong sense of community in the North. We purchased an accounting firm in January of 1982 in High Level that was located an hour and a half away on gravel roads. Margaret used to drive it every day, a busy feat in that our children were twenty one months and two months old. So in July after the school term, we moved to High Level where the business was. I stayed teaching for 8 more years until I switched to working at our CGA Accounting office full time. We grew and expanded into the NWT with a second office. We flew as far North as Inuvik by the Beaufort Sea, and as far west as Coral Harbour in the Hudson Bay. The area that we serviced spanned four provinces. My position at the office was Administrator, catch all person when an area was behind and special projects. My job included preparing personal tax returns, preparing corporate year ends, and consulting with businesses to make them more profitable. One of my more interesting projects was being the Head Project Accountant for a new \$250 Million OSB plant, the biggest of its kind in the world. It is spectacular when you mix virgin land, technology from different companies around the world contributing their expertise and equipment to make a fully functional world class OSB Mill.

The north afforded us many opportunities, for which we are eternally grateful. We became actively involved with the community and area to further its social and economic advancement. To name a few organizations where Margaret served as a board member in different capacities, the Chamber of Commerce, the United Church, the "Voyageur 125" program, , the Alberta Immigration & Settlement Committee, the Action North treatment facility, she spoke at an Edmonton Alberta Opportunity Company conference and she participated in Toronto setting policy and guidelines for the Federal PC's.

Myself I also kept busy with different organizations, to name a few, Board of Governors for Fairview College including being Vice Chairman, Peace River Federal Progressive Conservative Party including Vice President and Treasurer, Chamber of Commerce President, Commissionaire for the ID # 23 Municipal Planning Commission, Northwest Regional Economic Development Board, Chairperson, Fairview College Joint Advisory Committee, Nominating committee for the High Level Housing Authority, participated in Toronto setting policy and guidelines for the Federal PC's, and President of the Swim Club. I ran for Member of Parliament in the '93 Federal election representing the Progressive Conservative Party, one of two Japanese who ran for Parliament in Canada that year and now I am active as Treasurer of the Calgary Japanese Community Association and also now the Treasurer of the National Association of Japanese Canadians.

We received different awards; our business was selected as one of the "Profit" magazine's 100 Fastest Growing Companies in Canada and we received the "Business of the Year" award from the Chamber of Commerce. Individually, Margaret and I had the honor of receiving medals sanctioned by the Queen and presented by the Governor General in recognition of our "Significant Contribution to Compatriots, Community, and to Canada".

In sports, I was fortunate to have received a Silver Medal in Tai Kwon Do for Alberta.

I enjoy relaxing riding my Goldwing on trips, reading, curling, badminton, carpentry and

sewing as hobbies. Margaret enjoys reading, knitting, curling and swimming.

For both of us, education played an important role and so we set up an endowment that pays a \$500 annual award at NAIT to help others achieve their success.

We sold our office in 2003 and moved down to Calgary to start our next phase of life. We foolishly tried to retire, but it was not to be so. One soon learns that sitting around all day with no purpose is not all it's cracked up to be. Being busy and contributing was the way of life that we were accustomed to. Margaret is now a Senior Manager at Collins Barrow a national CA firm, as a Tax Specialist and I am a Financial Advisor.

Life in the North was a fascinating experience that we do look back on with fond memories. Over the twenty-five year we lived in the North we packed in a lifetime of memories and experiences. The thing about giving to the community it comes back 100 fold with satisfaction and pleasure knowing that you helped in some way.

1978 our Wedding



P M Kim Campbell congratulations on being nominated to run for MP for the PC Party

