



Palace Garden Mobile Home Park at 1424 Second Ave opened Jan. 1964

884 - The story of the Muraoka family and Chula Vista begins with Fukutaro Muraoka, a hotel cook from Yokohama, Japan, who determined to emigrate to the United States in 1884. By doing so, he and his family were to have a major impact on the agricultural history of Chula Vista and the South Bay. Like the great majority of the Issei, Muraoka planned to stay in the United States only long enough to save sufficient money to be able to return to Japan with a sizable economic stake. Arriving at the immigration processing station on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, Fukutaro Muraoka was cleared to enter the United States. Then like many of his Issei counterparts, the young former cook began to try his hand at a variety of occupations. As part of this peripatetic experience he found himself moving from San Francisco to Berkeley, then to Oakland, later to Los Angeles, and finally, in 1910 to San Diego where he worked for a time downtown as a cook. (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

1915 - Among the first to farm in Chula Vista were farmers: Mitsuji Kiyohara, Suekichi Ogino, Fukutaro Muraoka, Otokichi Kushino, and Mitsusaburo Yamamoto. (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

1916 - During this same period, the fishing industry in San Diego began to experience what was to be several decades of rapid and prolonged growth, with a number of canneries opening on San Diego Bay, including the Van Camp Sea Food Cannery located at the foot of Crosby Street. One of the major by-products of Van Camp's operation was a large volume of inedible fish scraps that were normally disposed of as garbage. Muraoka had noticed that there was no readily available source of fertilizer for the farmers in the South Bay, so he began purchasing fish scraps from the cannery and transporting them to Chula Vista where they were dried, turned into fish meal, and then sold to local vegetable farmers. Through his increasing contacts with farmers in the South Bay, Muraoka came to believe that Chula Vista had all the natural elements necessary for the growth of winter celery, a crop that heretofore had not been commercially grown in the area. Working in close association with

another early Issei farmer, Mitsusaburo Yamamoto, the two men began to cultivate the new crop with such a resounding success that within five years Chula Vista had become widely known as the "Celery Capital" of the United States. By 1916, his farming business had grown to the point that Fukutaro felt he required additional help. Consequently, he called his third son Saburo from Japan to work with him in Chula Vista, thus making his son a yobiyose. Yobiyosei was a Japanese term used at this time to describe a family member who had been summoned from Japan, usually by a relative residing in the United States. Among Issei immigrants, the term "called" was frequently used to describe the summons of such persons. Born the third son of the family on August 16, in the thirty-third year of the reign of the Emperor Meiji (1900), Saburo Muraoka was a little over two months beyond his fifteenth birthday when he departed from the port of Yokohama (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

1916 - Winter celery was not the only crop impacted by Issei ingenuity. Another technique that arrived with the Muraokas was the use of small, white, paper tents. Constructed at first of old newspapers, the tents were designed to protect the plants early development and encourage the growth of cucumbers. Cucumbers tend to grow faster. In 1924 Fukutaro Muraoko returned to Japan Chula Vista but his son Saburo decided to remain in Chula Vista and put down roots. To this end he married Haruko Miura in Hawaii in 1927 who was an American citizen born in Hawaii. born in Hawaii, but because of discriminatory an sexual exclusive legislation passed by the Congress, she was forced to surrender her United States citizenship when she married Saburo. 7 The Cable Act, which became law in 1922 deprived female citizens of their citizenship upon marrying an alien. The statute was patently discriminatory since male citizens who married female aliens were unaffected. Saburo, like virtually every Issei immigrant had that same year (1922) been designated by the Supreme Court in *Ozawa v. United States*, an "alien ineligible for citizenship." This action by the highest court of the land, in effect, denied all but a handful of Japanese immigrants, the historically most sought after of all immigrant prizes-United States citizenship. Saburo and Haruko Muraoka went on to have two sons, Roi and Takenori and two daughters, Yoko and Sadako, and to build a new life in Chula Vista. 9 In the decade before the outbreak of World War II Saburo Muraoka and his family worked hard. He acquired land and became one of the leaders of the local Nikkei community, serving as an officer in the Chula Vista Vegetable Growers Association, and the San Diego Buddhist Temple. (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

1916 - Saburo Muraoka, who had come to the South Bay as a teenage immigrant fresh from Japan in 1916, and whose father, Fukutaro, was one of the first Japanese to farm in the Chula Vista area, (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

1916 - The story of the Muraoka family and Chula Vista begins with Fukutaro Muraoka, a hotel cook from Yokohama, Japan, who determined to emigrate to the United States in 1884, to Angel Island, and finally, in 1910 to San Diego where he worked for a time downtown as a cook. The canneries opening on San Diego Bay, included the Van Camp Sea Food Cannery located at the foot of Crosby Street. Muraoka noticed that there was no readily available source of fertilizer for the farmers in the South Bay, so he began purchasing fish scraps from the cannery and transporting them to Chula Vista where they were dried, turned into fish meal, and then sold to local vegetable farmers. Muraoka and another early Issei farmer, Mitsusaburo Yamamoto, began to cultivate the new crop of winter celery with such a resounding success that within five years Chula Vista had become widely known as the "Celery Capital" of the United States. By 1916, his farming business had grown to the point that Fukutaro felt he required additional help. Consequently, he called his third son Saburo from Japan to work with him in Chula Vista. (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

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1920 - Harada, Tsuneke ,foremn, 3d nr 2nd ave Muraoka F, rancher, h es National blvd cor H. (City Directory, 1920.)

1923 - Muraoka Unjiro (Kiyo) rancher h ss L 1 w of National av (City Directory)

1927 - Winter celery was not the only crop impacted by Issei ingenuity. Another technique that arrived with the Muraokas was the use of small, white, paper tents. Constructed at first of old newspapers, the tents were designed to protect the plants early development and encourage the growth of cucumbers. Cucumbers tend to grow faster. In 1924 Fukutaro Muraoko returned to Japan Chula Vista but his son Saburo decided to remain in Chual Vista and put down roots. To this end he married Haruko Miura in Hawaii in 1927 who was an American citizen born in Hawaii. born in Hawaii, but because of discriminatory an sexual exclusive legislation passed by the Congress, she was forced to surrender her United States citizenship when she married Saburo. The Cable Act, which became law in 1922 deprived female citizens of their cltzenship upon marrying an alien. The statute was patently discriminatory since male citizens who married female ahens were unaffected. Saburo, like virtually every Issei immigrant had that same year (1922) been designated by the Supreme Court in Ozawa u. United States, an "alien ineligible for citizenship." This action by the highest court of the land, in effect, denied all but a handful of Japanese immigrants, the historically most sought after of all immigrant prizes-United States citizenship. Saburo and Haruko Muraoka went on to have two sons, Roi and Takenori and two daughters, Yoko and Sadako, and to build a new life in Chula Vista. In the decade before the outbreak of World War II Saburo Muraoka and his family worked hard. He acquired land and became one of the leaders of the local Nikkei community, serving as an officer in the Chula Vista Vegetable Growers Association, and the San Diego Buddhist Temple. (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

1935/11/29 - Members of the board of directors of the newly organized CV Vegetable Exchange were Dan Stralt, S. Muraoka, Jack Roether, Walter Steel, Fred W. Stafford, R. Conforth, Herman Schmeddling. The organization had purchased the old Walter Sharp warehouse at Third and K . (Chula Vista Star, Nov. 26, 1945) (Chula Vista Star, Nov. 26, 1945.)

1940/09/27 - bldg permit to remodel home by Naruko Muraoka, 872 Fifth Ave (Chula Vista Star, Friday, Sept. 27, 1940.)

1946 - Returning to Chula Vista in 1946 the Muraoka family discovered that most of their personal belongings and arm equipment had simply disappeared. Pulling together, the Muraokas started over again. In 1950 they purchased seventy acres of land and leased an additional forty acres for the growing of tomatoes and cucumbers. At the age of 62, when many men are thinking of retirement, Saburo embarked on a new venture by formIng Muraoka Enterprises, a land development company. He sold off all of his agricultural holdings except for thirty-three acres which he retained and initially developed into a 294 space mobile home park which ultimately included apartments, a motel and single family housing. In 1956 as part of President Eisenhower s People to People program, Saburo became instrumental in the founding of the the San Diego-Yokohama Sister City program, one of the first such groups organized in the United States. Continuing his "peo•ple to people" efforts, he assisted with the 1981 establish•ment of a second Sister City program involving Chula Vista and Odawara, Japan, a program in which his oldest son, Roi, plays a major role today.lo For these and his other efforts, the San Diego City Council designated September 24, 1982, as Saburo Muraoka Day.

At that time he was formally awarded the Key to the City of San Diego and received special commendations from the City of Yokohama and the Agricultural Association of Japan. (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

1956 - Returning to Chula Vista in 1946 the Muraokas started over again. In 1950 they purchased seventy acres of land and leased an additional forty acres for the growing of tomatoes and cucumbers. At the age of 62, when many men are thinking of retirement, Saburo embarked on a new venture by forming Muraoka Enterprises, a land development company. He sold off all of his agricultural holdings except for thirty-three acres which he retained and initially developed into a 294 space mobile home park which ultimately included apartments, a motel and single family housing. In 1956 as part of President Eisenhower's People to People program, Saburo became instrumental in the founding of the the San Diego-Yokohama Sister City program, one of the first such groups organized in the United States. He assisted with the 1981 second Sister City program involving Chula Vista and Odawara, Japan, a program in which his oldest son, Roi, plays a major role today. For these and his other efforts, the San Diego City Council designated September 24, 1982, as Saburo Muraoka Day. (Estes, Donald H. "South Bay Monogatari: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community," in Chula Vista Historical Society. Chula Vista, the Early Years. Vol. 5. San Diego CA: Tecolote Publications, 1996.)

1956 - Saburo Muraoka has been stuck in Chula Vista for 62 years For 42 of those years he farmed in the South Bay, pioneering in the celery industry and raising He first farmed with his father and they raised vegetables where the shopping center now stands at H and Broadway in Chula The tradition is carried on by his son Roi, who operates the only farm in the South Bay. he worked out a new system, using plastic net under the sod," Muraoka said , "This prevents receding of ground so you don't end up with a hole like they have on the sod farms around Oxnard." Muraoka family's farming duties were rudely interrupted when War II started. They were taken to U.S. internment camps. When the war ended, and they could return home, a desolate sight greeted them. Their home had been stripped. "We slept on the floor for two months, all six members of the family," Muraoka said. "When we came home, everything had been stolen." But he refused to accept defeat. When many of his fellow Japanese- Americans were deserting the farms for the cities, Muraoka sought a way to get back into the fields. "I said to myself," he recalls, "it's not too late to start over." He was 45 at the time. MURAOKA went to the Bank of America (then the Bank of Italy) branch office in Chula Vista and talked to manager Ed Smith. He offered his land and house for collateral, but says Smith told him it was unnecessary. "The U.S. needs food," Muraoka says Smith told him. "You can have what you need." The Muraokas were back in the farming business. They borrowed money twice a year, at planting time, and repaid as they harvested - gradually building up to a highly successful operation. Instead of wasting time in bitterness, Muraoka gave his spare time, money and considerable talent to the People to People program (now called the Sister Cities program) started by President Eisenhower in 1956. For more than 20 years he has worked diligently to promote better understanding between his native Japan and this, his adopted country. "Many millions of innocent people died because there was a war," Muraoka says. "So it's my duty to help as I can." For this highly praised by both Japanese and American officials. Outstanding among his many awards is the magnificent Fourth Order of the Sacred Treasure, presented to him by the Japanese emperor. The award includes a beautifully lettered certificate and a stunning ruby-set medal. Other awards include the cultural award from the City of Yokohama - where he was born - commemorating the 100th anniversary of a treaty between the United States and Japan. Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles presented him with a commendation during Nisei Week last year. There's a plaque from the San Diego Yokohama Friendship Committee, and one from the Lord Mayor of Yokohama. . All attest to the willing effort which Muraoka has put into his goodwill campaign AS HE WAS being interviewed by the Star-News, Muraoka paused to answer a telephone inquiry about the care of an ailing cherry tree. He is helping to preserve the health of 100 of the trees which are to be transplanted eventually into a Japanese garden in Balboa Park. A huge "snowview" lantern in the Muraoka front yard is a gift from the mayors of San Diego and

Yokohama. It fits well into the gracious home where Saburo Muraoka and his wife Haruko now live. The home, on a hill at 1480 1st Ave., overlooks the 300-space Palace Gardens Mobile Home Park, which they own. It is replete with memorabilia gathered during their travels and given to them by friends and admirers. An unusual feature of the home is that it has no drapes. Instead, sliding translucent screens called "shoji" are installed on the windows, lending an Oriental atmosphere. A small Japanese garden is tucked into the landscaping, complete with a pond where colorful carp swim, a cherry tree and a decorative Japanese stone lantern. The home has an air of closeness, of a family haven where their nine grand- children are no doubt coddled and spoiled a bit - just as other American grandchildren are. It's easy to see that the M~raokas enjoy their role as goodwill ambassadors between the United States and Japan - and just as easy to see that t'hey are wholeheartedly American in their loyalties. (Zillow=built 1954] (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 16, 1978.)

1961/06/20 - 1961/06/20 - Annexation No. 77 - Muraoka 142.32 acres 7533.58 city accum total .222 sq mi 11.771 city accum total 765 Ordinance 6-20-61 Council 7-20-61 State (Annexations List, Information and Technology Services Department, City of Chula Vista)

1962/02/01 - CV tomato farmer Muraoka claimed Little League spectators ruined his fields with beer cans and stole his vegetables, but Little League mothers said it was the Castle Park JHS students, not the Little League. Muraoka has protested the renewal of the conditional use permit of the ball field (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 1, 1962.)

1962/02/11 - Little League park permit renewed, Muraoka to get 14-foot fence on Palomar St in Castle Park, Mrs. Charles Day, wife of League Pres, had defended the boys (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb. 11, 1962.)

1962/04/26 - Public hearing on rezoning newly annexed Muraoka area of Castle Park to allow multiple-dwelling zone will be postponed. Muraoka proposes to put a trailer park directly across from Castle Park JHS. (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr. 26, 1962.) (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr. 26, 1962.)

1962/07/05 - Planning Commission approved the Muraoka trailer park on the south side of Quintard street bet 1st and 2nd sts, after the entrance had been moved away from Castle Park JHS on Quintard to 2nd Ave. Park will have 243 spaces, 129 in each of two units. (Chula Vista Star-News, July 5, 1962.) (Chula Vista Star-News, July 5, 1962.)

1963/03/17 - Muraoka signed contract for \$800,000 Palace Gardens trailer park at 2nd ave and Quintard, for 242 psaces (Chula Vista Star-News, March 17, 1963.)

1964/01/23 - (photo) Muraoka's new Palace Garden Mobile Home Park has 242 spaces, \$100,000 clubhouse with heated pool, shuffleboard, horse-shoes (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan. 23, 1964.)

1966 - Roy Muraoka, who refused to rent trailer space to Odessa Rhodes, censured by Japanese American Citizens League. June 16, 1966 A:l :7 (Chula Vista Star News Index Cards, Local History Room, Chula Vista Public Library.)

1966 - A plaque at the intersection of Broadway and Palomar Streets marks the site of the former Chula Vista gakuen. Ben Segawa {left} and Roy Muraoka (right) hold the commemorative plaque in 1996 before its installation. As a youngster, Roy Muraoka walked five miles to attend Japanese-language school, walked on the RR tracks from K street to the school next to the tracks on H St. After the war, the japanese-language school did nor resume. The building was moved in 1950 to Palomar due to construction of the Montgomery Freeway. The property was leased out and eventually sold in 1994. (p. 124) -- IMG_7702 photo of boulder IMG_7701 is cu of plaque dedicated Sept 1996 to South Bay Isei Pioneers, arrived 1885, made numerous major contributions to the agricultural

development of this area. This site marks the final location of the CV Gakuen, or Japanese School, which was originally dedicated on October 6, 1925. (Hasegawa, Japanese Americans in San Diego, p. 108.)

1991/03/21 - MOBILE-HOME -- Roy Muraoka , owner of a mobile home park and other housing here, is seeking a special use permit from the city that will allow him to sell nonpotable water from his well to contractors, gardeners, and even private residents. The water comes from a 264-foot-deep well originally sunk to irrigate farmland his family used to cultivate, he said. Muraoka's plan is simple: he owns a well that now pumps about 90 gallons of water per minute. Currently, the water is pumped to a 100,000 gallon storage reservoir on the south side of the Palace Gardens Mobile Home Park at Second Avenue and Orange Avenue. The water has been used to water gardens of park residents. The remainder sits idle. Muraoka plans to lay about 300 feet of pipe from the storage tank and run it to a point where tanker trucks can fill up. That point is on land owned by San Diego Gas & Electric, but Muraoka said the utility has agreed to rent the land to him. Muraoka hopes to be able to fill a 7,000-gallon truck in about 30 minutes. (San Diego Union, Mar. 21, 1991.)

2010/07/20 - Roy Muraoka's grandfather was Fukutaro Muraoka who was born in Yokohama, Japan, emigrated to the U.S. at Angel Island 1884, and came to San Diego 1897, according to what Roy's father told him [not 1910 that Estes wrote], three years before Roy's father Subaru Muraoka was born Aug. 16,1900, in Yokohama. Subaru was the 3rd son in the family; the 1st was adopted, the 2nd was "Jiro" who would become a farmer in Chula Vista around J Street. It was in 1915, according to Don Estes, that Fukutaro Muraoka was among the first group do Japanese farmers in Chula Vista. He asked Subaru to come to Chula Vista, and in 1916 Subaru Muraoka emigrated from Japan to the U. S. and joined Fukutaro Muraoka and his partner Mitsusaburo Yamamoto farming winter celery in Chula Vista using small, white, paper tents. Roy's father told him his grandfather would get drunk after selling his celery near H Street, and would lay down in the cart and the horse would take him home. Fukutaro Muraoka returned to Japan in 1924 and never came back to America. Subaru Muraoka decided to remain in the U. S. and he married Haruko Miura in Hawaii in 1927 who was an American citizen born in Hawaii. Roy Muraoka was born in 1930, in the family home at 844 1st Ave. The 1930 City Directory lists Muraoka, Saburo (Haruko) rancher, house 862 5th ave. Roy says the address of the house changed between 844 and 862 and 872, but it was located in the northwest block at 1st and L, across the street from the golf course and the Tarrytown subdivision. The family was able to own land because Haruko was an American citizen. It was 12 acres planted in lemons that provided a cash income for the family, paid by the Sunkist coop one year after harvest. They also leased land at Gunpowder Point 1938-41 where cattle had compacted the soil. They were able to keep the land during WW2 internment, was held by Laubmeyer, and Haruko sold it sometime during the war. Subaru Muraoka went to a camp in Montana, then to Crystal City, Texas where he joined the family that had been sent first to Poston. After the war, they returned to Chula Vista and were fortunate to have money to start over. They leased land around 1st Ave between Palomar and Orange, then in 1955 bought 90 acres at \$475 per acre, where the Palace Gardens Mobil Home Park is located today. Subaru dug a well just north of the Castle Park JHS site that produced 300 gal per min. with a 36 hp motor. The water was severely reduced in the 1960s when National City drilled wells in the Sweetwater Valley. This was north of the farms leased by Sam Vener, and by "Nakaji" [prob Takidje Hirai and his wife Matzumo, a rancher with house at 150 Bay blvd]. Roy does not recall the dump at Bay Blvd and D St., but does remember the dump in the center of town where Parkway is today, and the smell from the black smoke when in burned. (Muraoka, interview, July 20, 2010.)

2010/07/20 - Subaru Muraoka began the Sister City program when he went to Japan and talked with the mayor of Yokohoma about how San Diego and Yokohama were both port cities and could benefit from a closer friendship. Yokohama sent over a snow lantern, and San Diego sent a Cabrillo Highway bell. Yokohama sent a big bell that was installed on Shelter Island, and San Diego sent a duplicate of the Guardian of Waters statue. Roy remembers walking five miles to the Japanese

language school after attending Rice School in the 3rd grade. The family switched to growing tomatoes after the price of celery fell after plastic was introduced. Celery would get Black Heart disease if it got the wrong water. Kushino used to be a truck driver. The Japanese boarding house was at the northwest corner of 3rd and K. (Muraoka, interview, July 20, 2010.)