

Remembering our Local Japanese Heritage
地域の日系遺産を忘れずに

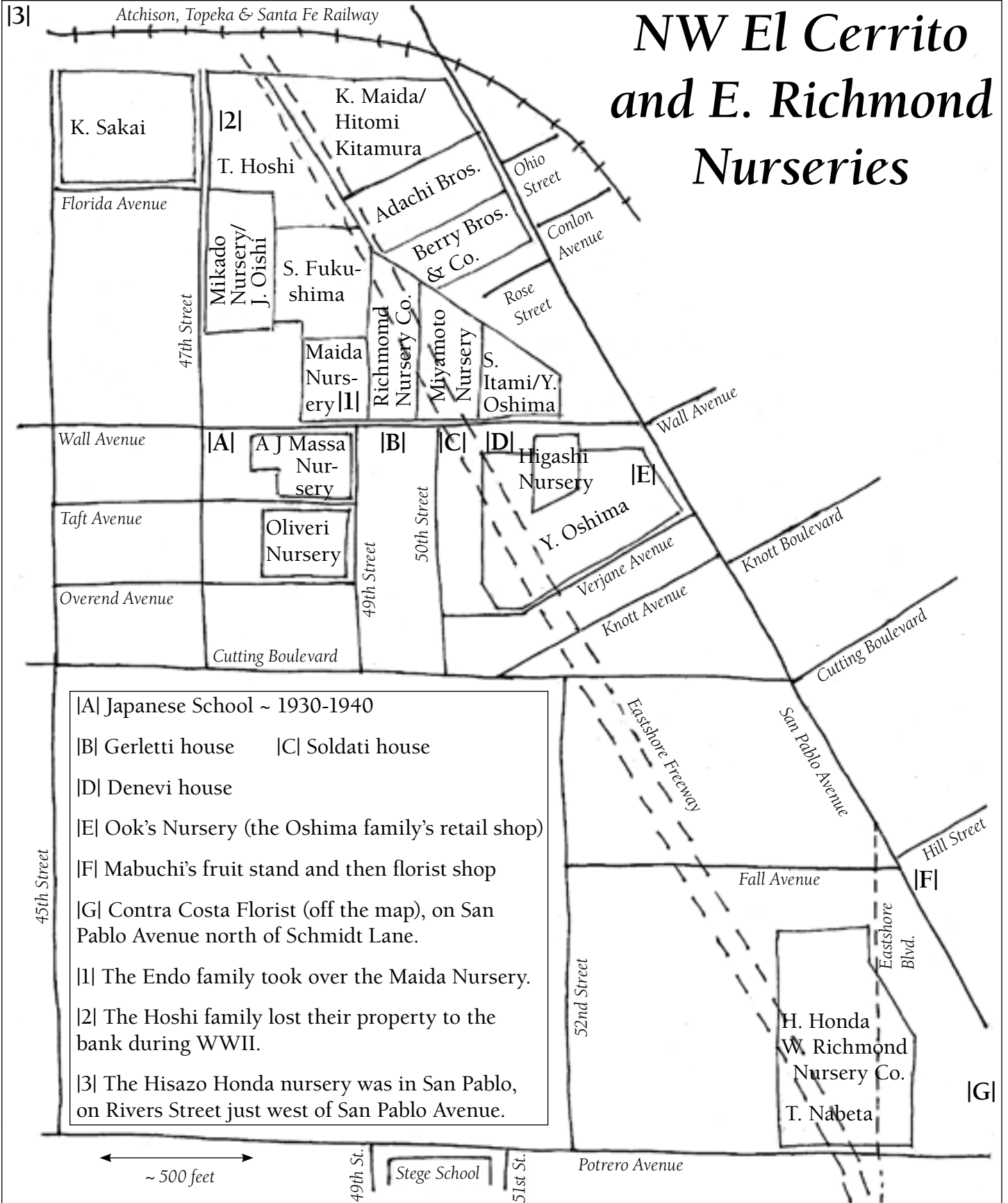
1900
明治33年



2006
平成18年

The Japanese School near the
El Cerrito/Richmond border.
Wall Avenue and 47th Street,
circa 1932

エルセリートとリッチモンドの花の生産者
The El Cerrito and Richmond Flower Growers



Cover photo: The Japanese School at 47th Street & Wall Avenue, ca. 1932. Front row: Junko Maida, Sue & May Honda, Asako Maida, Yoshiko Nabeta. 2nd row: Heizo Oshima (standing), Jun Honda, Tom Oishi, Fumiko Nabeta, Sachi Honda, Elsie Mayeda, Ruby Sakai, Mrs. Oshima. 3rd row: unknown, Hiroshi Honda, Meriko Maida, Lucy Oishi, Amy Oishi, Hisako Honda. 4th row: Toshiro Nabeta, Harry Mayeda, George Oishi, Ruby Adachi, Maria Mayeda, Hana Oishi. 5th row: Min Mayeda, Ben Mayeda, Mrs. Mayeda, Mrs. Adachi, Mrs. Sakai, Mrs. Oishi. 6th row: Mrs. Nabeta, Mrs. Honda. ECHS collection, courtesy of the Honda Family.

The first community to establish itself in the northwest El Cerrito area and the adjoining part of Richmond was a cluster of Japanese nursery growers. In 1900, when the Nabeta brothers started building their nursery northwest of the present intersection of Potrero Avenue and Eastshore Boulevard, the area was still called Stege. There was very little economic activity in the area. El Cerrito was not to be founded for another 17 years. "Richmond" consisted of a small settlement located in the area that we today call Point Richmond. Incorporation was still 5 years away.

These immigrant Japanese nursery growers saw opportunity here where few others did. But they faced one obstacle after another: blatant discrimination against all Asians; The Alien Land Act, which forbade persons of Asian citizenship from owning land; and then the internment during World War II. The children of these immigrants were born here, went to school here, spoke English as their first language, and considered themselves to be average American kids in every way. By the late 1930's the nursery community was prosperous. Imagine the surprise of these American citizens when they were rounded up along with their parents and sent to internment camps during World War II. There they lived behind barbed wire fences with machine guns pointed at them.

Yet many of these young men volunteered to serve their country as members of the now famous 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Unit, and Military Intelligence Service. They often received the most difficult and dangerous assignments but served their country with astonishing valor and distinction. These men fearlessly stormed the Beach at Anzio and fought their way to Rome and on through Italy; famously rescued the "Lost Battalion" from the Nazis in France; and helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp. The 442nd became the most decorated unit in the history of the U.S. Army.



Sandi Potter
Mayor of
El Cerrito

After the War many local families returned home to find their nurseries either vandalized or in ruins. Just after finishing the painstaking job of rebuilding their nurseries, some families learned that the State of California had decided to extend the Eastshore Freeway (which ended at Bayview) through their property. So they had to relocate and rebuild one more time. Finally, in the years after the War, through mutual support and collaboration, the Japanese nursery community again became a successful and prosperous community. It is our pleasure today to recognize and celebrate with this exhibit the many contributions of the Japanese nursery community to our local history.



Supervisor
John Gioia
District 1

October 2, 2009



The Isaburo Adachi family, 1940: Back row - Hideyo(s), Toshitatsu(s), Ruby(d), Sonoko(d); Front row - Wakako(m), Isaburo(f). (Daughter Elsie was in Japan at this time.) ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.



The Maruo Fujii family, 1940: Noriko(d), Kukichi(bro), Kaoru(d), Tomoko(d), Jiro(s), Satsuki(m), Maruo(f). ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.



The Sango Fukushima family, 1940: Sango(f), Tazu(m), Saburo(s), Taro(s). *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Honda Family.*



The Hisajiro Honda family, 1940: Sue(d), Hisajiro(f), Masue(m), May(d), Sachiko(d), Jun(s). (Daughter Hisako is not present, son Hiroshi died in 1936.) *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*



The Hisazo Honda family, 1940: Helen(m), Ray(s), Hisazo(f) with son Bob. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*



The Zenzo Hoshi family, 1940: Zenzo(f), Namiko(m), unidentified infant, Yoshiko(d), Amy(d). *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Honda Family.*



The Goro Kawai family, 1940: Tsuyu(d), Chieko(d), Henry(s), Masa(m), Kiyoko(d), Dorothy(d), Hide(d). (The father Goro died in 1940.) *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*



The Torayoshi Maida family, 1940: Back row - Meriko(d), Junko(d), Kaneko(m), Asako(d), Torayoshi(h); front row - Kumakichi(gf). *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*



The Yuuko Mayeda Family, 1940: Maria(d), Ben(s), Yuuko(m), Harry(s), Elsie(d), Minoru(s). (Daughter Chiyoko died at age 2 in 1924, the father Eiichi died in a boiler explosion in 1925.) *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Honda Family.*



The Torataro Nabeta family, 1940: Masa(gm), Torataro(f), Toshiro(s), Takayo(m), Yoshiko(d), Fumiko(d). *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*



The Tamaki Ninomiya family, 1940: Back row - Hajane(m), Jiro(gf), Tamaki(f); front row - Martha(d), Alice(d), Flora(d), David(s). (Daughters Ann and Mary were not yet born.) *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Honda Family.*



The Seizo Oishi family, 1940: Tom(s), Joe(s), George(s), Lucy(d), Hana(d), Rui(m), Seizo(f). (Son Seiichi died as an infant, daughters Amy and Miti are not present.) *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Honda Family.*



The Yuhei Oshima family, 1940: Yuhei(f), Heizo(s), Fred(s), Yoshi(m). (Son Yuichi is in Japan.) *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*



The Kotaro Sakai family, 1940: Back row - Kazue(dil), Tetsuma(s), Nellie(dil), Sam(s), Roy(s); front row - Junsuke Agari(gs), Chu(m), Kotaro(f), Ann(gd). (Daughter Ruby and married daughter Shizue are not present. Married daughter Chizuru, Junsuke's mother, died in 1917.) *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*



Left: The Sakurai family, 1940.
Tsuruko(w), Toyohiko(h). *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*

Below: The Jujiro Sugihara family, 1940:
Back row - John(s), George(s), Fumiko(d),
Yuriko(d); front row - Gilbert(s), Teru(m),
Jujiro(f). *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*





Looking west over the nurseries ca. 1920, with Mt. Tamalpais visible in the distance. Conlon Avenue is in the center and left foreground, MacDonald Avenue is the long street to the right of Conlon. The Berry house and the Adachi nursery on San Pablo Avenue are just to the left of center. A Santa Fe train is approaching San Pablo Avenue on what today is the BART right of way. *Courtesy of the Western Railway Museum.*



The Miyamoto Florist shop, 5013 Wall Avenue ca. 1938. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Miyamoto family.*

*Former and Current
El Cerrito/Richmond residents in the 100th/442nd/MIS*



Shoichi Kimura



*Ben Mayeda
Purple Heart*



*Howard Hanamura
Purple Heart, Bronze Star*



*Shig Doi
2 Bronze Stars*



Yoshiro Tokiwa



Jun Honda



Jun Agari



*George Oishi
Purple Heart*



Fred Oshima



*Tom Yamashita
2 Purple Hearts*

100th INFANTRY BATTALION - Many Nisei, the American-born children of Japanese immigrants, were loyally serving in the Hawaii National Guard at the time of the attack on Pearl harbor. Three days after the attack, their rifles were taken away and they were guarded at gunpoint even when they went to the latrine. Why? Their parents came from the country that attacked America. Many military officials were horrified that half of Hawaii's defense force looked like the enemy, especially given the impending Japanese attack on Midway, an island about 1,500 miles northwest of Oahu. They planned to discharge the Nisei soldiers in the Hawaii National Guard as soon as white replacements arrived.

Civic leaders interceded. The patriotic Nisei performed backbreaking work in spite of being dismissed from military service and declared enemy aliens. They convinced the War Department to let them form a special unit of Japanese-American soldiers. On June 5, 1942 1,400 Nisei from the Hawaii National Guard boarded a ship and, five days later, landed in California. They traveled on to Camp McCoy in Wisconsin where, from June to December, they trained.

In May, the new 100th Battalion participated in war maneuvers and impressed the top brass, including the Chief of Army Ground Forces. Upon hearing of the 100th's performance, the Army Chief of Staff offered the battalion to his generals. General Clark's reply was, "We will take anybody that will fight." After seeing them in action, General Clark said. . . "I will say [this] about the Japanese fighting in these units. . . they were superb! . . . They took terrific casualties. They showed rare courage and tremendous fighting spirit. Much can be said of the performance of those battalions in Europe and everybody wanted them. . . We used them quite dramatically in the great advance in Italy. . . "

442nd REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM - The excellent training record of the 100th, and a steady stream of petitions from prominent civilian and military personnel helped convince President Roosevelt and the War Department to re-open military service to Nisei volunteers. These volunteers would later become the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. These men excelled at maneuvers. Their motto was "**Go for Broke.**"

In March of 1944, Chief of Staff General George Marshall inspected the regiment. In April the regiment packed up, and on May 1, 1944 the men boarded ships destined for Europe. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team included the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, 232nd Combat Engineer Company, 206th Army Ground Force Band, Antitank Company, Cannon Company, Service Company, medical detachment, headquarters companies, and two infantry battalions. The 1st Infantry Battalion remained in the States to train new recruits. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions would join the legendary 100th Battalion, which was already fighting in Italy.

The 4,000 men who initially came in April 1943 had to be replaced nearly 3.5 times; in total, about 14,000 men served. **They earned 9,486 Purple Hearts, 21 Medals of Honor, and an unprecedented eight Presidential Unit Citations. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team was the most decorated unit for its size and length of service, in the entire history of the U.S. Military.**

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (MIS) - The MIS story is one of numerous small units of Nisei soldiers who operated confidentially, individually or in small groups. Some were attached to combat units in the war against Japan; others were loaned to allied combat units from other allied countries. Larger groups served at intelligence centers. Following the conclusion of the war, the MIS also proved crucial to the United States's postwar occupation of Japan. The MIS linguist's skills in the Japanese language, combined with their knowledge of local customs, helped smooth relations between United States occupation forces and the Japanese people. MIS linguists and administrative personnel also helped draft the new Japanese Constitution. The MIS linguists provided essential assistance to the occupation authorities in Japan and eased the transition from United States post-war occupation to Japanese civilian control in 1952.



The Adachi Florist and Nursery on San Pablo Avenue ca. 1940. Home Depot is now located at this site. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Adachi family.*



Looking east from above the Brookside nurseries, ca. 1960. Brookside Avenue runs vertically through the center of the picture. The Nabeta, then the Aebi nursery are north of Brookside. The Ninomiya (2 rows), then the Kawai, then the Sugihara nurseries are south of Brookside. The Mayeda nursery is near the upper left and the Miyamoto nursery is just off the picture near center left. The Fukushima and Fujii nurseries are off the picture at the upper and center right. The Kawai nursery also had property just off the picture at the lower right. The Hisajiro Honda post-war nursery on Gertrude Avenue is about 3/4 mile south of the lower right-hand corner of the photo. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Aebi family.*



Nellie, Sam, Chu, and Kazue Sakai prepare flowers ca. 1940. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.*



The Nabeta nursery at Potrero Avenue & 50th Street ca. 1923. On the running board: Takayo(m), Fumiko(d), Michiko(gm) & Toshiro(s). Behind them are Torataro(f) and Yataro(gf). From the left are the main house, shed, boiler house and housing for the hands. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Doi family.*



Contra Costa Florist at 1226 (later 10848) San Pablo Avenue ca. 1938. Clara, mother Tomi, and Akiko Mabuchi are out front. The Mabuchi family originally had a fruit stand in El Cerrito, which they later converted to a retail florist shop. They moved the florist shop to this location in 1935. The fruit stand moved about a bit over the years but was located at Hill Street and San Pablo Avenue for the largest part of its existence. *ECHS collection.*



The nurseries west of San Pablo Avenue, 1939. San Pablo Avenue runs diagonally through the picture from the lower right to the upper center. About half of the Nabeta and Honda nurseries have already been claimed by the construction of the new Eastshore Boulevard (the northern connector to the Eastshore freeway, which ended near Bayview Avenue in those days.) The nurseries north of Cutting Boulevard and west of San Pablo Avenue are still intact. *ECHS collection.*



The Hondas and Mayedas ca. 1919. The two young girls in front are unidentified. Behind them: Minoru M, Ben M, Hiroshi H, Masue H, Harry M, Yuuko M, Hisazo H, and Hisajiro H. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Hirano family.*



The Japanese School at 47th Street and Wall Avenue ca. 1937. Front row: Amy Hoshi, Midori Ogo, Fusako Furuzawa, Ruri Takeda, Mrs. Kawamoto, Sue Honda, Kiyoshi Ogo, May Furuzawa. Back rows: Jun Honda, Tom Oishi, Toshiro Nabeta (hidden), Ruby Sakai, Akira Takeda, Fumiko Nabeta, Maria Mayeda, Lucy Oishi, Hana Oishi, Yoshiko Nabeta, Asako Maida, Elsie Mayeda, Tama Yoshimura, Sachiko Honda, Kiyo Yoshimura, May Honda, Junko Maida. *NPS collection, courtesy of the Oishi family.*



Some nursery families returned from internment camp to find their property in shambles, as in this case on Wall Avenue. San Pablo Avenue is visible toward the back of the photo. 1945. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Hocking family.*



Nursery families returning from camp also discovered war housing had sprung up everywhere. The housing shown was in El Cerrito, west of the Nabeta & Honda nurseries. Ernest, Victor, and Gordon Avenues are located here now and the Eastshore Freeway would be in the foreground. 1949. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Honda family.*



The funeral of Yataro Nabeta at Sunset View Cemetery in 1928. At the left is Hisajiro Honda; the third adult right of him is Torataro Nabeta; the third adult right of him is another Nabeta; the second adult right of him is Matsue Maida, then Masue Honda, Kane Maida, and Kumakichi Maida. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Maida family.*



Sam Sakai at the California Flower Market ca. 1952. Sam was the first Nisei (second generation Japanese, the first generation born in America) to be elected an officer of the Flower Market. He was elected President in 1941 and was a strong leader until he stepped down in 1968. During the war years he ran the California Flower Market via the mail from the Rohwer internment camp. He was also an outspoken leader of the movement for reparations. *NPS collection, courtesy of the Sakai family.*



The "Gang" - an Oishi family outing ca. 1921. The fathers are indicated and a number is associated with each family according to the father's birth order. In the front row: Motoko Shimizu-4, Miti Oishi-2, Sada Oishi-1 with Teruku Shimizu-4 on her lap, Shizue Sakai-3, Tetsuma Sakai-3, Takurzo Shimizu-f4 with Toru Shimizu-4 on his lap, Amy Oishi-2, Jun Agari-3, Kotaro Sakai-f3. Middle: Roy Sakai-3, Tokutaro Oishi-f1, Masao Oishi-1, Henry Shimizu-4, George Oishi-2. Back: Seizo Oishi-f2, Sam Sakai-3, Toku Shimizu-4. (Kotaro and Takurzo were Oishis by birth but were adopted and took the name of the families that adopted them.) *Richmond Museum of History collection, courtesy of the Sakai family.*



World War I tea sale to benefit the Red Cross, ca. 1918 The woman on the right is a Sakai, left of her is Namiko Hoshi, two left of her is Kane Maida (in the kimono). *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Maida family.*



The end of the line in 1992 for the Japanese nurseries in El Cerrito. Between San Pablo Avenue and the Eastshore Freeway, everything (except a few buildings facing San Pablo Avenue) from Wall Avenue north through the Adachi property is being demolished to make way for Home Depot. The sidewalk of Wall Avenue is just visible on the right. *ECHS collection, courtesy of the Hocking family.*



“Farm laborer” housing on the Sakai nursery, 2006.
ECHS collection, courtesy of the Duveneck family.



A farming family grows up on Wall Avenue. Yuuko Mayeda lost her husband in a boiler explosion at the nursery in December of 1925. She was left with five children to raise and a nursery to run; she did a very admirable job of both. *All photos ECHS collection, courtesy of the Hirano family.*



The Mayeda family grows up but the nursery on Wall Avenue is too small to support the three boys, so a new house is built and nursery started near Road 20 and Giant Road. The now-grandmother poses with her son-in-law, oldest daughter, and grandchildren. *All photos ECHS collection, courtesy of the Hirano family.*



Upper left: looking for trouble on Wall Avenue are Elsie Mayeda, Amy Hoshi, Yoshiko Hoshi, Junko Maida, and Asako Maida ca. 1938. The Gerletti house is behind Asako and the white house behind it is the Soldati house. Lower left: more trouble on Wall Avenue: sisters Meriko & Junko Maida with sisters Hide & Kiyoko Kawai, ca. 1958. Right: Kane Maida, Minoru & Yuuko Mayeda, ca. 1915. All photos ECHS collection, courtesy of the Maida family.



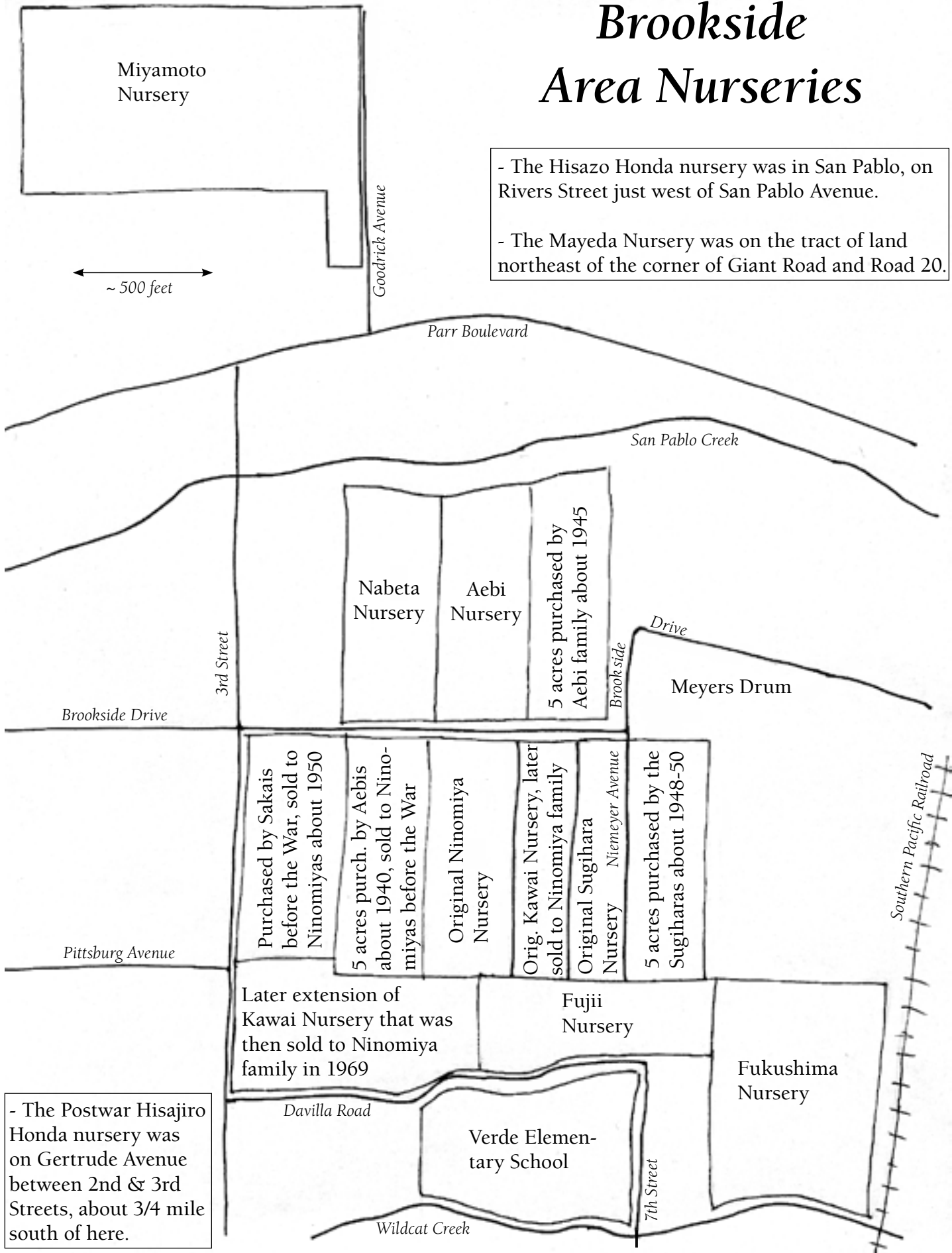
Clockwise from top right: Adachi House off San Pablo Avenue, Honda house near Fall & Eastshore, Nabeta house near Potrero & Eastshore, and Sakai house near 47th & Florida. ECHS collection, courtesy of the Adachi family, Honda family, and California Flower Market; NPS collection, courtesy of the Sakai family.

Japanese nurseries in the El Cerrito and Richmond area

El Cerrito & East Richmond b WWII	West Richmond		Family	Date Founded	Family home in Japan	Plants Grown
	a WWII	a WWII				
X	X		Adachi, Isaburo	1905	Toki, Gifu	First carnations, then Roses & Retail
X	X		Endos & Noboru Nakatani	1962	Tottori, Wakayama-ken	(Hiroshi & Katsumi Endo) Carnations, later Alstroemeria
	X	X	Fujii, Maruo	1929	Fukuoka-ken	Roses, then Bedding Plants
X	X		Fukushima, Sango	1925	Hiroshima pref	Carnations
X			Higashi, Kokubei	~ 1950	Wakayama-ken	Ornamental Shrubs, Container Plants, Garden Plants
X	X		Hitomi & Kitamura	1948		Carnations
X	X	X	Honda, Hisajiro	1912	Wakayama-ken	Carnations & Roses
	X	X	Honda, Hisazo	1937	Wakayama-ken	Carnations
X			Hoshi, Zenzo	1922		Carnations
X			Itami, Sukemon	1911		Carnations
X		X	Kawai, Goro	1913	Gifu	Carnations, then Roses
X	X		Mabuchi, Hikojiro	1927	Mie-ken	Fruit stand, then Retail Florist
X			Maida, Kumakichi	~ 1906	Wakayama-ken + Osaka	Roses in early days, then Carnations
X	X		Maida, Torayoshi	1919	Wakayama-ken	Roses, then Carnations (Felton Nursery Company)
X	X	X	Mayeda, Yuuko	1914	Wakayama-ken	Carnations (Richmond Nursery Co.)
X	X	X	Miyamoto, Shikataro	1913	Takamataue, Kagawa-ken	Carnations, Retail Florist
X	X	X	Nabeta, Yataro	1900	Wakayama-ken	Roses
	X	X	Ninomiya, Jiro	1923	Okayama	Roses
X	X		Oishi, Seizo	1908	Sasayama, Hyogo-ken	Carnations
X	X		Oshima, Yuhei	1913	Kyoto	Retail & Roses
X	X	X	Sakai, Kotaro	1906	Sasayama, Hyogo-ken	Carnations, then Roses
X			Sakurai, Toyohiko	~ 1938	Tokyo	Carnations
	X	X	Sugihara, Jujiro	1915	Kyoto	Roses

Brookside Area Nurseries

- The Hisazo Honda nursery was in San Pablo, on Rivers Street just west of San Pablo Avenue.
 - The Mayeda Nursery was on the tract of land northeast of the corner of Giant Road and Road 20.



- The Postwar Hisajiro Honda nursery was on Gertrude Avenue between 2nd & 3rd Streets, about 3/4 mile south of here.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

A monetary sum and words alone cannot restore lost years or erase painful memories; neither can they fully convey our Nation's resolve to rectify injustice and to uphold the rights of individuals. We can never fully right the wrongs of the past. But we can take a clear stand for justice and recognize that serious injustices were done to Japanese Americans during World War II.

In enacting a law calling for restitution and offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have, in a very real sense, renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. You and your family have our best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. H. W. Bush".

GEORGE BUSH
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 1990