



Street Stories

Barnett Street

GPS: [49.1503068,-122.2918085](#)

“We are happy to have had the privilege of helping [the Japanese pioneers] in our little way,” said Henry Barnett.

Henry and Emma Barnett moved from England to BC in 1915 and to Mission three years later. They had three daughters: Miriam, Ruth, and Berna.

The Barnetts were deeply involved in Mission’s Japanese community. According to Henry, “The first gentleman to show me a kindness was...Mr. M. Kudo. He was driving a pair of ponies and gave me a ride to Mt. Mary Ann, where eventually we made our home.”



Emma and Harry Barnett in their flower garden on Mt. MaryAnn in 1963.

Mission Community Archives / Barnett Family fonds

The Japanese Canadian community became an important part of the Barnetts’ lives, especially Emma’s. She was loved and respected as the kindergarten teacher at Mission’s Japanese Language school. Mrs. Barnett cared deeply about her students and worked diligently to provide a bridge that allowed Japanese youngsters to cross into the mainstream of Canadian life. She taught them about Canadian holidays as well as nursery rhymes that might be learned by any Canadian student.

Mrs. Barnett took a personal interest in the life of each child. Her kindergarten school records of when and where the children were born provide the best source of information we have on Mission’s Japanese children. Mrs. Barnett’s records also reflect the relocation of Mission’s Japanese families in March of 1942: this is where the records end. There are no names filling the lined pages--nothing, just blank paper. It is as if a group of people have ceased to exist. A shiver runs through me at the sight of those blank pages as I realize that an important and special part of this community was here and flourishing one month and gone the next.

Mission’s Japanese families left their heirlooms and valuables in Mrs. Barnett’s care during the relocation. Even as adults, her former students kept in touch, writing letters and visiting. The records housed in the Community Archives include over 50 photographs of members of the Japanese community. Henry died in 1964, but Emma continued to live in the old house for several years before moving to Vancouver in 1979, where she died at the age of 90.

Barnett Street runs northwest off of Knight Avenue, close to Mt. Mary Ann, where Emma and Harry made their home.

Street Stories is provided by the Mission Community Archives, which is operated by the Mission Historical Society. If you have any questions or further information on the Barnett family, please call us at 604-820-2621.

Laura Barth