

Milton Mukai

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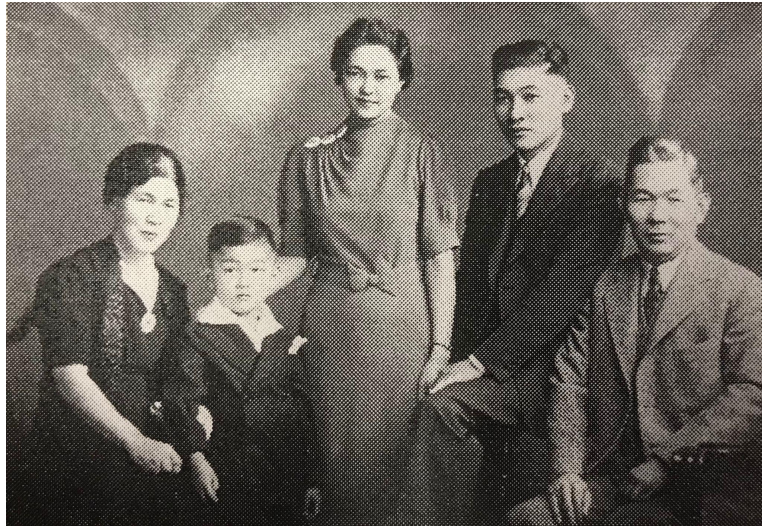


Image Source: Japanese Presence Project

The Mukai Business was founded by BD Mukai in 1910 when he moved to Vashon with his wife Sato to begin farming strawberries. Their son, Mashiro (Masa) was born in 1911 and when he was 16 he purchased 60 acres of land for his family to continue their business which was named The Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barreling Plant. In 1934, Masa inherited the farm when he moved back to Japan. While the plant began as a strawberry farm, Under Masa's hand it focused more and more on the packing and shipping process.¹



Kuni and her friend under cherry trees, 1950's ca

[Image Source: mukaifarmandgarden.org](http://mukaifarmandgarden.org)

Milton Mukai was born around 1935 to Mashiro (Masa) and Chiyeto Mukai.² They lived in an American-style house with a traditional Japanese hill garden at 18017 107th Ave SW Vashon, WA 98070.¹ In 1942, when Milton was about 7, Jiro Ned Mukai, Milton's half brother, was born. Unfortunately, Jiro died within a year of unspecified causes.³



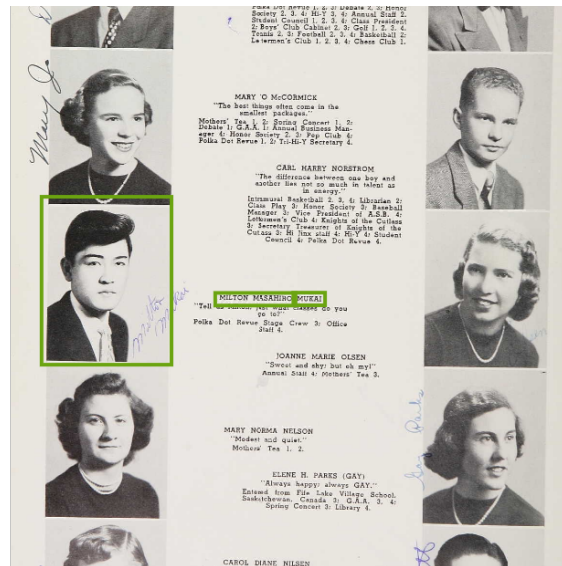
[Image source: Mukai Farm and Garden](#)

In 1939, growing anti-Japanese sentiment caused Masa and Chiyeto to change the name of their company from The Mukai Cold Processing Fruit Barreling Plant to Vashon Island Packing Company (VIPCo) to avoid conflict and discrimination.¹ In 1942, Masa was tipped off by a friend in the military about the signing of Executive Order 9066.⁴ Rather than wait for the order to move to an assembly station, the Mukai's left the farm in the hands of an associate and evacuated beyond the exclusion zone. They ended up in Dead Ox Flats, Oregon where Chiyeto had family.¹



[Image Source: Google Maps](#)

While in Dead Ox Flats the Mukai's continued to farm, this time lettuce and other vegetables. Their presence helped introduce row crops into what had primarily been cattle country. They were able to make a reasonable living while exiled as Masa was able to invent his own harvester that was able to catch seeds that would otherwise be lost.¹



[Photo Source: Ancestry.com](#)

When WWII ended the Mukai's moved back to their home on Vashon. Upon their return, Milton attended Vashon Island schools. In high school he was part of the theatre stage crew for three years and an office assistant for four.³ After he graduated in 1952, he moved to Seattle and began working for City Light.¹ It is unknown whether Milton attended College or another type of higher education.



Image Source: Japanese Presence Project

Masa Mukai worked in the packing plant but changed to a septic and contracting business until he retired in 1979.¹ At 30-years-old, Milton got married to Chiyeto Mukai on 24 Dec. 1964.³ The couple lived in Seattle with no known children. On March 15th, 2020 he passed away from complications related to a stroke and a heart attack.⁵

Sources:

- 1 "Mukai Farm & Garden – a Historic Farm in the Center of Vashon Island." Mukai Farm Garden. Accessed February 8, 2022. <https://mukaifarmandgarden.org/>.
- 2 "The Japanese Presence Project." Japanese Presence Project. Accessed February 8, 2022. https://www.vashonhistory.com/japanese_presence_main_2.html#.
- 3 "Milton M Mukai in the 1940 Census: Ancestry®." Ancestry.com. Accessed February 8, 2022. https://www.ancestry.com/1940-census/usa/Washington/Milton-M-Mukai_25md5h.
- 4 Macdonald, Sally. The Seattle Times. The Seattle Times Company. Accessed February 7, 2022. <https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=19991101&slug=2992493>.
- 5 "King County Deaths (03/20/2020)." seattlepi.com. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, March 24, 2020. <https://www.seattlepi.com/local/obits/article/King-County-deaths-03-20-2020-15154536.php>.