

Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby

RESOURCE GUIDE



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The *Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby Resource Guide* was created as part of an ongoing commitment by the City to uncover the diverse roots of the community's history.

Researchers and community members worked together to create the guide by documenting and sharing stories that exemplify the resilience of Burnaby's Chinese Canadian community members who contributed to the development of Burnaby despite significant barriers, including racism and discriminatory legislation.

The guide is intended to honour the long history and important contributions of Chinese Canadians to Burnaby's history through themes of early industries, food networks, culture and activism. The City of Burnaby greatly appreciates the efforts of staff, volunteers, and community members in creating this resource.



Mayor Mike Hurley



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION CHAIR

The *Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby Resource Guide* is a learning resource designed for school-aged children and the general public.

It was produced by the City of Burnaby as a project of the Community Heritage Commission, with the support of Mayor and Council.

The content for the guide was developed in partnership with a volunteer advisory committee of the Burnaby Village Museum that includes academic and community advisors. The many hours of work and thoughtful feedback by the volunteer advisory committee is greatly appreciated.

The City also appreciates the generosity of the many community members who shared family stories, photographs, and copies of documents for inclusion in the guide. Your willingness to share your stories helps make the important contributions of Chinese Canadian community members to Burnaby's development more widely known.



Councillor Colleen Jordan



PURPOSE

WHY DID WE WRITE THIS GUIDE?

Chinese Canadians have contributed to Burnaby's growth for over a century. The long and intertwining histories between Chinese Canadians, Indigenous people and other communities have shaped the founding of Burnaby and British Columbia. This resource guide was created because their life experiences and important contributions to Burnaby's development are not widely known.

By talking to the children and grandchildren of early Chinese residents, researching photographs and documents in archives, and reading through many English and Chinese-language newspapers, the author of this guide was able to learn about the fascinating lives of early and present-day Chinese Canadian families, as well as the complex interconnections between community groups throughout the Lower Mainland and across the Pacific Ocean.

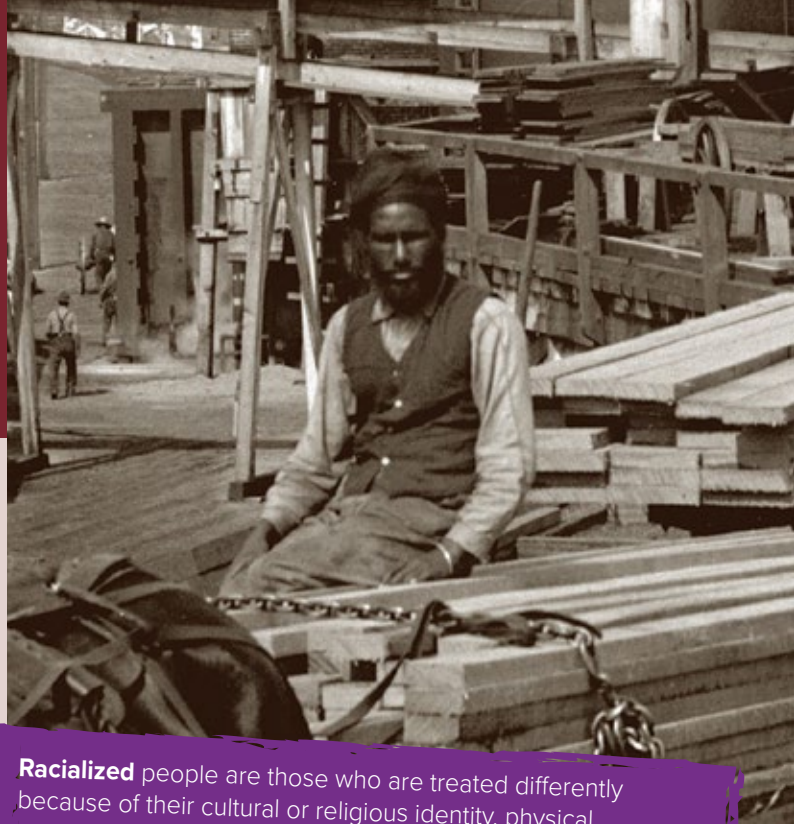
It wasn't easy to find all of these stories. Historians, archivists, and museum curators often omitted the stories of racialized and Indigenous peoples. By focusing on the contributions of people of European origin, these histories create the false impression that Indigenous and racialized people played a less important role in history.

Researchers and community members are currently working together to amplify the voices and stories of racialized and Indigenous peoples in Burnaby's history. This work is guided by the commitment to recognize that Burnaby's history was created by diverse community members on the unceded homelands of Indigenous people, and to acknowledge the continuing legacy of colonialism, racism and discrimination.

This resource guide honours the contributions of Chinese Canadians to the community's history, as a step toward uncovering the diverse roots of Burnaby's past.

FRONT COVER: Lee Quon Lip (right), his eldest son Gary Lee (centre) with his niece and her two children in front of the Lee's family corner store C & L Grocery Confectionery, 1968. Lee Quon Lip arrived in Canada in 1921 from Sun Woy/ Xinhui county, Guangdong. He purchased a grocery store business on Kingsway at Griffiths Ave in Burnaby in 1962 and named it C&L Grocery. The family grocery store sold groceries and canned goods and was in business for approximately 15 years.

BV021.18.3, COURTESY OF THE LEE FAMILY.



Racialized people are those who are treated differently because of their cultural or religious identity, physical appearance, or other attribute. Many people continue to experience discrimination and unfair treatment today because of their appearance, religious beliefs, language, and countries of origin.

Burnaby is located on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm and Skwxwú7mesh speaking peoples.

Acknowledgements

The Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby Resource Guide was produced by the City of Burnaby as a project of the Community Heritage Commission, with the support of Mayor and Council.

The City of Burnaby thanks researcher Denise Fong for her work on this resource guide.

The City also thanks the Chinese Canadian History Project Advisory Committee for their advice and contributions to supporting this project since its inception. This learning resource guide grew out of a multiyear research project on Chinese Canadian history that began in 2017, which led to the creation of several heritage plaques, Burnaby Village Museum's Across the Pacific exhibition and many multimedia resources on the subject. The advisory committee is a volunteer group of the Burnaby Village Museum, and its members include: Cecil Lee, Daphne Woo, Edmond Leong, Gail (Law) Yip, Henry Yu, Josephine Hong, Julie Lee, Ken Yip, Kevin Huang, Richard N. Liu, and Sarah Ling.

Thank you to educational consultant Gina Wong who reviewed this document and offered feedback.



A 1908 photograph taken at the North Pacific Lumber Mill includes European, Chinese, and Sikh workers. 1908, VPL 7642

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EARLY MIGRATION

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE EARLIEST ARRIVAL OF CHINESE TO CANADA?

For many centuries, people from the southern part of China have migrated to places such as Southeast Asia to work and establish businesses. Chinese migrants first arrived in northwestern North America in 1788, where they began interacting with local Indigenous peoples of diverse histories and traditions. Skilled Chinese carpenters and shipwrights were part of the crew aboard the ship of Captain John Meares, a European adventurer and fur trader. The Chinese artisans helped build ships and establish a non-Indigenous settlement at Yuquot.

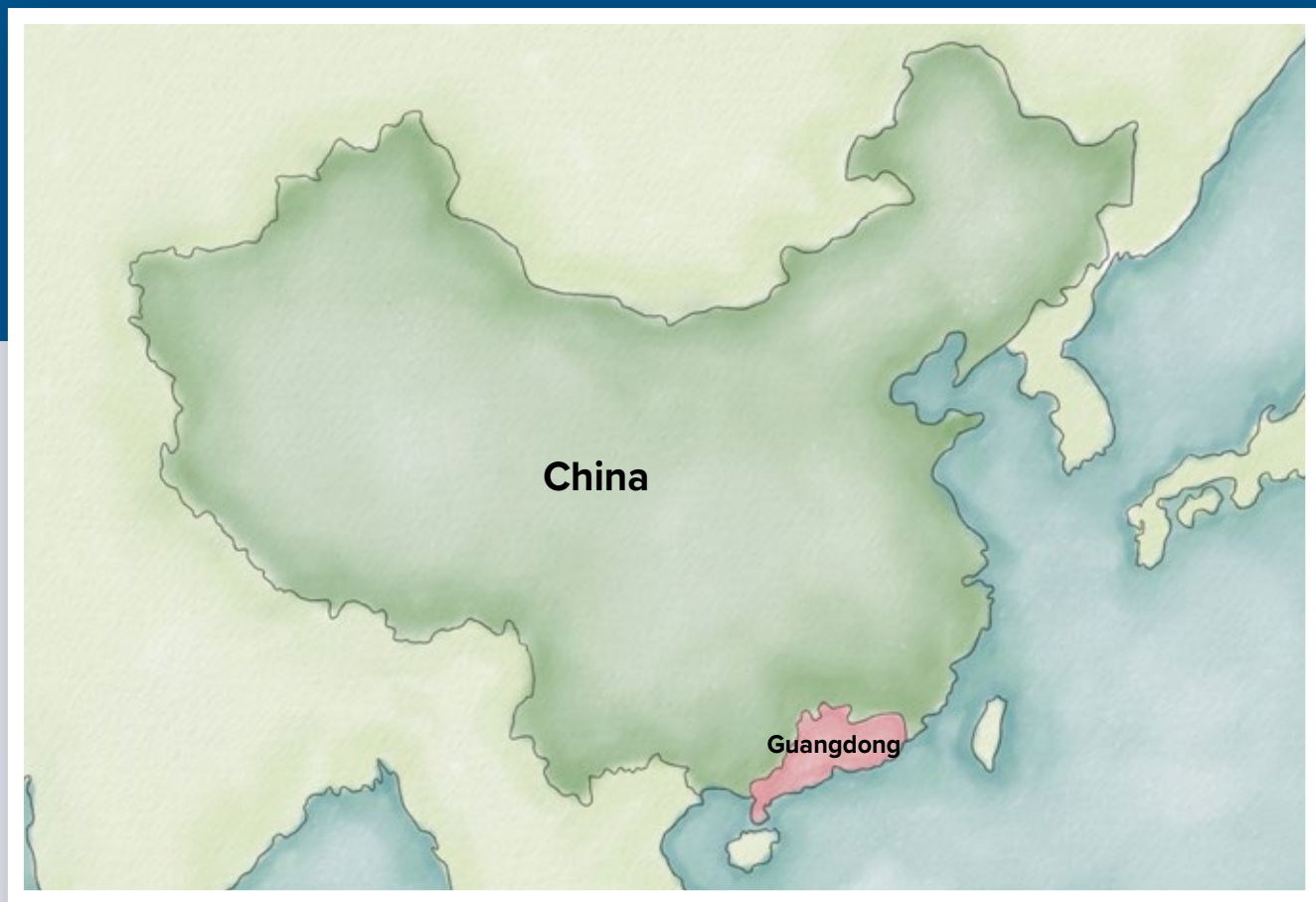
As more and more newcomers continued to arrive, relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples evolved. Marriages between Indigenous women and non-Indigenous men were common and helped build trading relationships. There are many examples of Chinese men who married into Indigenous communities and formed families with blended cultural traditions.

Aside from European settlers, the population of newcomers to British Columbia before the 1890s included Chinese, Black, Kanaka (Indigenous Hawaiian) people, and the descendants of European fur traders and Indigenous women. Like other non-Indigenous newcomers, British Columbia's early Chinese residents have lived and worked as uninvited guests on the unceded ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples.



Most of Burnaby's earliest Chinese residents who arrived in the 1890s originated from the Pearl River Delta region located in the province of Guangdong in southern China. These photos show a typical village from the area. The tall buildings called diaolou towers were built using the money that overseas Chinese sent home.

BV019.10.5, BV019.10.4, COURTESY OF THE HONG FAMILY.



Guangdong was the location of ancestral hometowns of most early Chinese Canadians. Shared language, culture, and family ties helped Chinese Canadians form tight knit communities in Canada.



The “North West America” was one of the ships that arrived in Yuquot in 1788, when the first Chinese migrants arrived in present-day British Columbia. Today, Yuquot is a National Historic Site of Canada, recognized for its association with the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation who have lived at Yuquot for over 4,300 years. *TPL JRR 13 CAB II.*

Indigenous Peoples in Burnaby

Since time immemorial, Burnaby has been part of the ancestral homelands of hə́łqəmiḥə́ and Skwxwú7mesh speaking peoples. They harvested a wide variety of plants, animals, fish, and seafood from local lands and waters, and had village sites in present-day Burnaby.

Today, Burnaby remains part of the shared, ancestral and unceded territories of the hə́łqəmiḥə́ and Skwxwú7mesh speaking peoples, who remain connected to these lands and resources.



ACTIVITY

Learn more about the Indigenous History of Burnaby from a [resource guide](#) produced by Burnaby Village Museum.

GOLD MOUNTAIN

HOW DID THE GOLD RUSH TRANSFORM COMMUNITY LIFE ALONG THE FRASER RIVER?

Between the 1840s and 1860s, gold rushes in California, Australia, New Zealand, and British Columbia attracted prospectors from around the world to mine claims and look for gold. The Fraser River gold rush of 1858 brought tens of thousands of newcomers from around the world, including Chinese miners and entrepreneurs. As a result of the gold rush, Great Britain claimed the mainland of British Columbia as a colony and began setting up its own government and laws and encouraging settlers to make it their permanent home.

Some Chinese men worked in the coal mining, farming, and cannery industries, while others started small businesses including general stores, laundries and cafés that served the settler miners and Indigenous peoples in places such as Barkerville. There are examples of friendships having formed between Indigenous people and Chinese newcomers during the gold rush, based on mutual respect and cooperation. However, the overall impact of the arrival of newcomers and declaration of mainland British Columbia as a British colony had devastating and long-lasting consequences to Indigenous communities.



Translation:

"I am in prison because I covet riches. Driven by poverty I sailed over here on the choppy sea. If only I did not need to labour for money, I would already have returned home to China."

During the early 20th century, many Chinese migrants were detained in Victoria's immigration detention building where they underwent medical examination and interrogation. Some men wrote poems on the walls of the cells, including this one. *RBCM 2000.41.3*

🔍 INVESTIGATE!

What has been the impact of colonialism on the Indigenous, Black and people of colour (IBPOC) communities? Learn more the roots of racism in British Columbia, and what historical and contemporary IBPOC communities have done to combat racism in the educational resource: Challenging Racist "British Columbia": 150 Years and Counting www.challengeracistbc.ca

A **settler** is a non-Indigenous person who occupies land inhabited by Indigenous peoples.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Chinese, 金山 (Cantonese: gam1 saan1; Mandarin: jīn shān) translates into "gold" "mountain". "Gold Mountain" is a metaphor of the different places where Chinese migrants travelled to create opportunities to improve life for themselves and their families. It was used by early Chinese migrants to refer to places in the United States, Canada, and Australia where gold rushes took place.

Would you leave everything
behind for the chance to find gold?



Ben Yip mined gold claims on Wild Horse Creek, northeast of Cranbrook, BC in 1880-1881. With the gold dust that he saved up, he established a farm and a small business with a partner in downtown Cranbrook. His son, D.T. (George) Yip, fought during the Second World War, and became a farmer in Burnaby after the war had ended.
COURTESY OF KEN YIP.

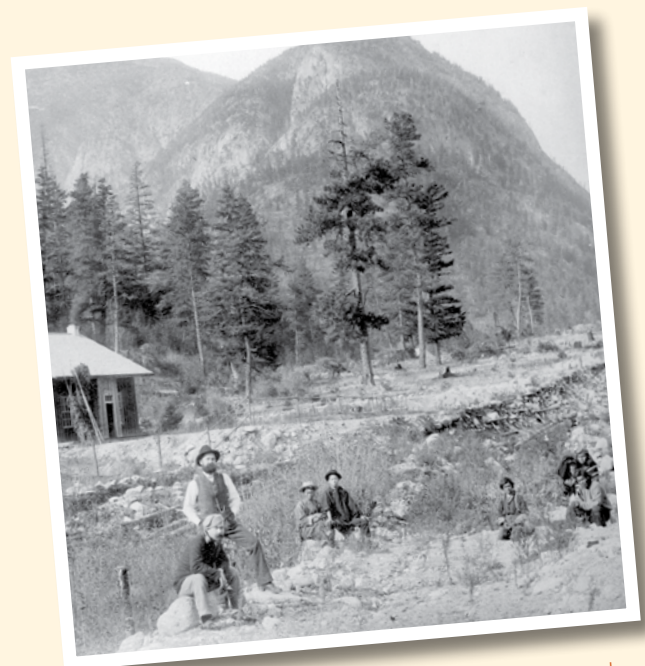


WATCH!

Gold Mountain: The True Story
of the BC Gold Rush



Chinese miners built long wooden boxes to help separate gold from rocks and sediment. They worked in groups to share the labour-intensive work of extracting gold from alluvial deposits using placer mining techniques.
RBCM e-00382



During the gold rush, Chinese miners worked and lived alongside Indigenous and European miners.
RBCM d-08746

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY?

Chinese railroad workers played a key role in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). From 1881 to 1885, over 17,000 Chinese railroad workers were recruited to complete the western portion of the railway, which connected British Columbia to Nova Scotia across the new nation now known as Canada. The Canadian Pacific Railway's transcontinental rail system and steamships made trading and travel between Asia and Europe safer and more efficient.

Despite their important contributions, Chinese railroad workers did not receive fair treatment in the workplace. They were paid less than European workers and were assigned the most dangerous tasks because their employers considered them easy to replace and did not think they deserved as much pay as European workers.

Once the railway was completed, many members of British Columbia's government pushed for the Government of Canada to limit immigration from China. The BC government and many municipal governments in the province introduced discriminatory laws that limited the ability of Chinese newcomers to earn a living, purchase property, and participate in settler society.



Chinese railroad workers participated in the construction of the Great Northern Railway in BC, circa 1909. RBCM d-07548



INVESTIGATE!

The Chinese railway workers who helped build the CPR received less pay, and performed dangerous work. Do you think that all workers in Canada today are paid fairly, and work in safe workplaces? Are workers in Canada treated better today than they were 100 years ago?



WATCH!

Explore videos about the struggle for safe workplaces in BC through the Knowledge Network series **Working People: A History of Labour in British Columbia**. (A Knowledge Network account is required)

A. By Law.

*To prohibit the employment of Chinese and Japanese
in the work of the Council.*

*Be it enacted by the Reeve and Council of the
District of Burnaby:—*

Bylaws restricted land ownership and work opportunities for Chinese Canadians living in Burnaby and other municipalities in British Columbia. The Chinese and Japanese Exclusion By-Law (1892) was in place for over 60 years in the Municipality of Burnaby, until it was repealed in 1953. *City of Burnaby, repealed Bylaw No. 4, Chinese and Japanese Exclusion Bylaw 1892. CBA*

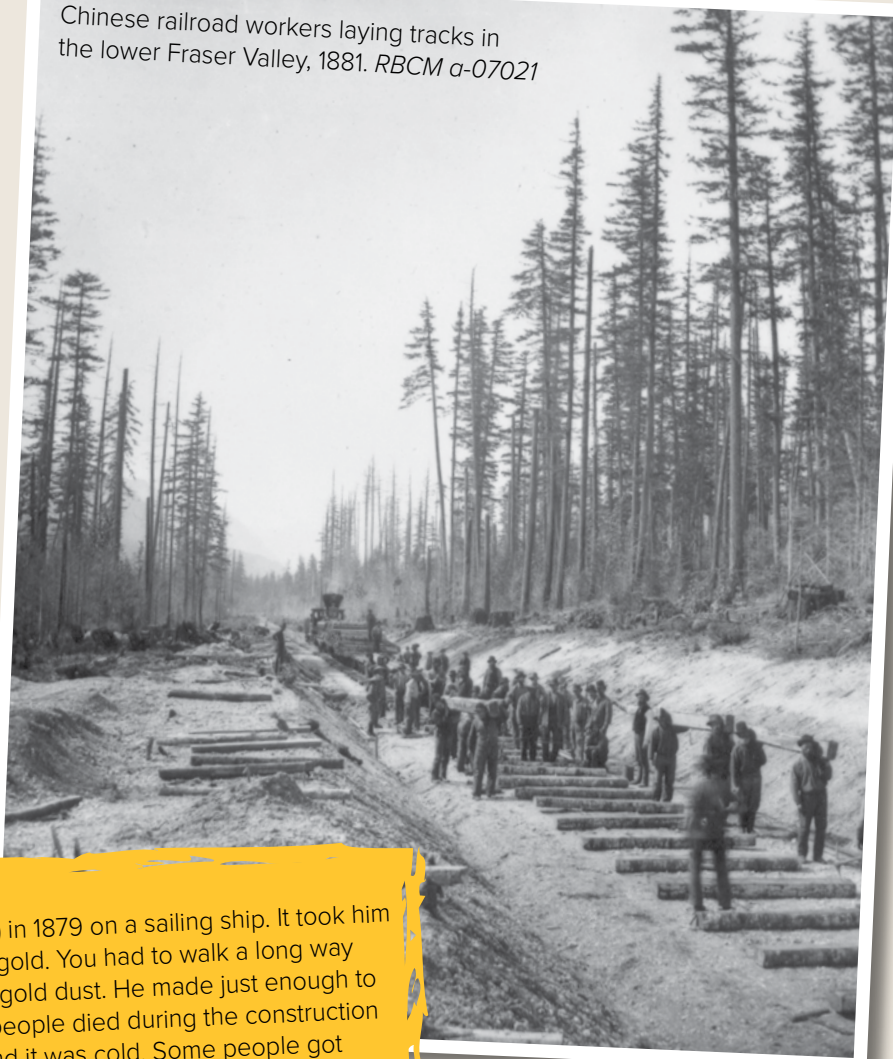
DID YOU KNOW?

Despite being assigned the most challenging and dangerous work during the construction of the CPR, Chinese workers were exploited for their labour. They received a third less pay than European workers. Historians estimate that close to 600 Chinese workers died from disease and accidents while working in harsh conditions during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

My Story

"My grandfather came from Kwangtung (Guangdong) in 1879 on a sailing ship. It took him several months to arrive. He was coming to look for gold. You had to walk a long way along the river and then all you got was a little bit of gold dust. He made just enough to eat. So then he went to work on the railroad. Many people died during the construction of that railroad. They lived in tents along the track and it was cold. Some people got arthritis. They were attacked by mosquitoes and black flies, and some people eventually went blind. And then, after it was finished, there was no other work. So he settled where the old Immigration Building used to be, and he raised pigs and chickens." — quote from Mary Lee Chan, descendant of a Chinese railroad worker.

Chinese railroad workers laying tracks in the lower Fraser Valley, 1881. RBCM a-07021



CHINESE HEAD TAX & EXCLUSION

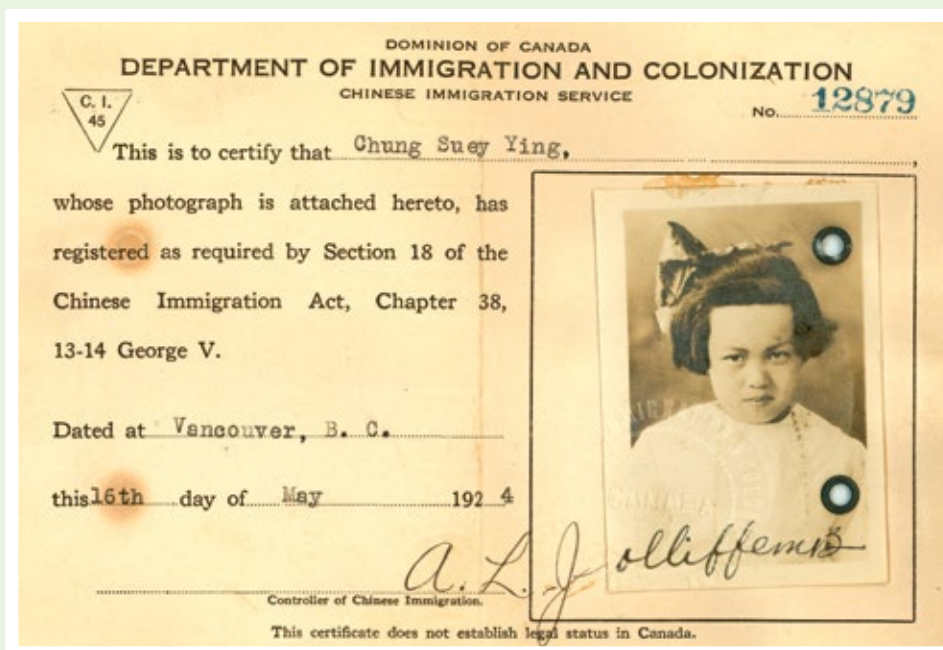
WHAT MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO PREVENT CHINESE FROM COMING TO CANADA?

The Government of Canada introduced a discriminatory head tax in 1885 to discourage the arrival of Chinese migrants. The head tax was a \$50 fee that Chinese people had to pay to enter the country. The amount of the head tax was increased to \$100 in 1901 and to \$500 in 1903. According to historians, Chinese people were the only group targeted by an immigration tax policy because of their ethnicity. The head tax provided a major source of income for the British Columbia and federal governments.

The Government of Canada later introduced the “Chinese Immigration Act of 1923” to prevent any further Chinese immigration. The act is also known as the “Chinese Exclusion Act” because it banned Chinese people from immigrating to Canada, with the exception of a few categories, such as merchants, students, and clergy. At the same time, the Canadian government required all people of Chinese origin, including those who were born in Canada, to obtain a certificate of registration which identified them as non-citizens.



Way How Dung (Howe Dong) arrived from Bak Chun/ Beicun (North Village), Guangdong in 1922. His family moved to Burnaby in 1957 and operated a 3-acre market garden located at 6220 14th Avenue until 1972. This immigration document indicates that he was exempt from paying the head tax when he arrived in Canada. BV021.13.1, COURTESY OF VIVIAN DONG.



Laura Suey Ying Jung's Chinese Immigrant registration card. Even though she was born in Canada, she was required to register as an “alien” under the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. An “alien” is someone who is not a citizen of the country. BV017.24.32, COURTESY OF JULIE LEE.

A circular inset provides a magnified view of a handwritten document. At the top, the word "NAMES." is printed in a bold, serif font. Below this, the name "62 Low Chong" is written in a large, cursive script. Underneath, the name "3 Low Yee Yuen" is also written in a similar cursive style. The document appears to be a ledger or a list, with faint horizontal lines visible in the background.

Burnaby businessman Lee Quon Lip arrived in Canada in 1921 and paid the \$500 head tax. Before he established his grocery store business in Burnaby, he operated a poultry farm in south Richmond. BV021.18.1, COURTESY OF THE LEE FAMILY

From 1885 to 1923,
over 82,000

Chinese paid the head tax, which amounted to a total of \$23 million. In today's currency, the value of the head tax revenue would be over \$350 million.

 VISIT AND EXPLORE!

Explore the Chinese Head Tax Database.

FAMILY LIFE

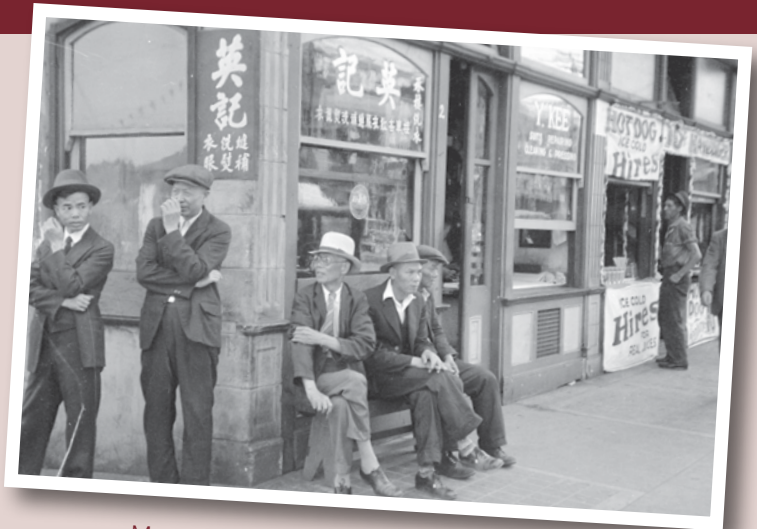
HOW WERE FAMILIES IMPACTED BY DISCRIMINATORY LAWS AND IMMIGRATION POLICIES?

1885-1923 HEAD TAX

The Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 negatively impacted Chinese Canadian communities because the high cost of the head tax made it too expensive for many men to bring their wives and children to Canada. As a result, many Chinese Canadian men lived in a “bachelor’s society” in Canada, with very few women and children. In the 1921 census of Burnaby, there were only six women out of over 200 Chinese people recorded by census takers.

1923-1947 CHINESE EXCLUSION

During the exclusion period, very few men travelled to China to visit their family members. Most could only rely on sending letters and money to family back home to stay connected. Wives, elderly mothers, and children often did not see their male family members for years. Some Chinese men married and had children in Canada, only reuniting with their extended families in China decades later. Many families remained separated on opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean for years until the “Chinese Exclusion Act” was repealed in 1947.



Men in Vancouver Chinatown, 1936. CVA Bu N158.2



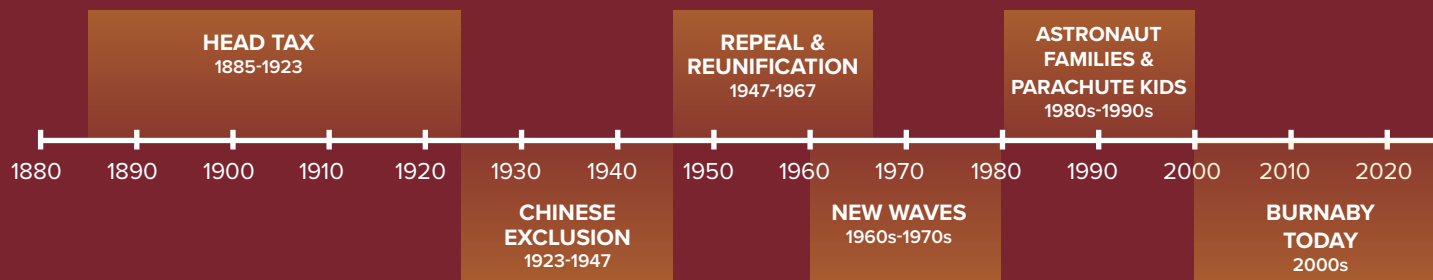
Some Chinese men started families in Canada. Chinese migrant Chan Puy Yuen married Burnaby-born Suey Ying Jung (Laura) at Fraser Mills and went on to raise two daughters: June (left) and Julie (right), 1946. BV017.24.9, COURTESY OF JULIE LEE.



Chinese Canadian men who left behind families in China often carried photographs of their treasured children. Many did not meet their children until much later in life. BV019.10.1, COURTESY OF THE HONG FAMILY.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 was passed on July 1. While many Canadians celebrate Canada Day on July 1, many Chinese Canadians remember it as “Humiliation Day.” The introduction of the “Chinese Exclusion Act” separated many Chinese Canadian families for over two decades, as it prevented family members in China from joining their relatives in Canada.



1947-1967 REPEAL & REUNIFICATION

Between 1947 and 1967, the Canadian government gradually relaxed restrictions on Chinese immigration and accepted more Chinese immigrants as citizens. This made it possible for wives, mothers, and children to join their male family members in Canada.

1960s-1970s NEW WAVES

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Canadian government introduced new immigration and multiculturalism policies. A new wave of Chinese immigration began in the 1960s from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Some arrived due to political uncertainties in their home countries, while others wanted to seek better opportunities.



WATCH!

Paper sons or daughters were migrants who overcame discriminatory immigration laws by purchasing identity documents that allowed them entry into Canada by posing as the child of someone already here. [Watch the fictionalized video of a paper son describing his experience.](#)



WATCH!

Several videos on Heritage Burnaby tell the stories of Chinese migration to Burnaby and Canada:

[Alfred Woo shares a story of a gift he received when he immigrated to Canada in 1954.](#)

[Judy Schultz tells her story of coming to Canada from Hong Kong in 1974.](#)

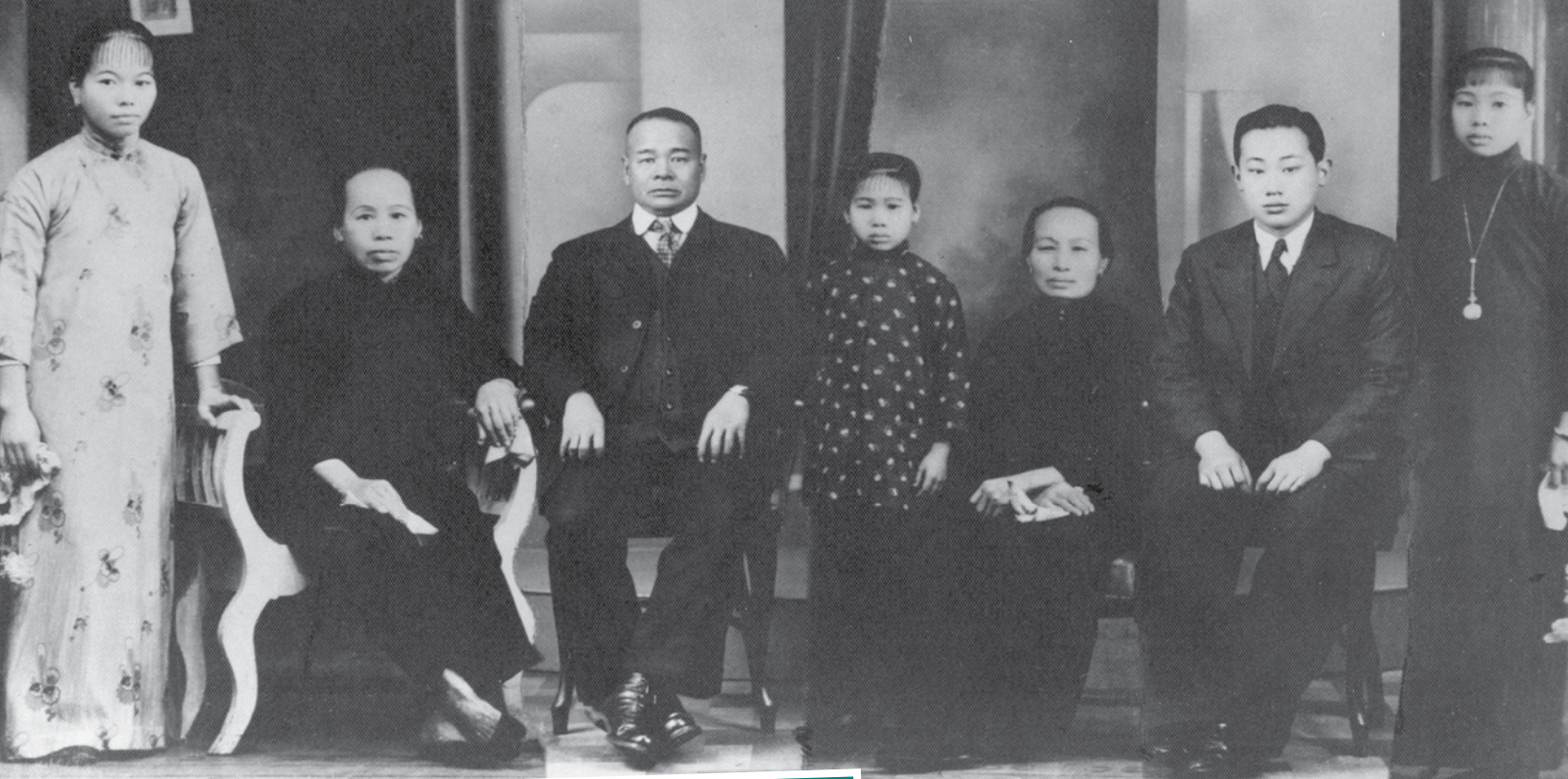


Chan Kow Hong (right) carried a baby photo of his eldest daughter, Pauline, in his wallet (see the photo on the left). Pauline finally met her father, Chan Kow Hong, for the first time when she was 8 years old. This family portrait was taken in 1958 on the day the family reunited in Canada. *BV019.10.2, COURTESY OF THE HONG FAMILY.*



VISIT AND EXPLORE!

Visit the grounds of the Burnaby Art Gallery, located on the former Fairacres Estate. The property was once the home to Chinese workers who helped grow food and operate the estate. What information can you find about the workers? Look for the public art piece on the grounds by Nathan Lee, called "Hak Chu/Pak Chu." What do you notice? Why did the artist create the work? What do you think of it?



🔍 INVESTIGATE!

For different generations of Chinese Canadians, the initial decision to immigrate to Canada often came with difficult choices and adjustments for families. Sometimes it meant sacrificing the opportunity to stay together in order to provide a better future for their children. Interview someone in your family, a neighbour, or someone in your school to learn about their story of immigrating to Canada. Why did they decide to immigrate? Was it a difficult decision? What sacrifices did they make to come here?

Family portraits created a sense of togetherness for families who were separated. The portraits of D.T. (George) Yip (right-2) and his father-in-law Chow (left-3) taken in Canada were spliced into a family portrait taken in China to create this 1937 family portrait. *COURTESY OF KEN YIP.*

1980s-1990s ASTRONAUT FAMILIES & PARACHUTE KIDS

"Astronaut families" are nuclear families with members who live apart in different countries. It has become common among Chinese Canadian families who have immigrated to Canada since the 1980s for one parent to remain in the home country while the other parent and their children live in Canada. "Parachute kids" are children who immigrate alone and live by themselves or with a relative or caretaker. By the 2000s, mainland China became the main source of Chinese immigration to Canada.

2000s BURNABY TODAY

Today's Burnaby is represented by greater diversity within the Chinese Canadian community. Some families have lived here for generations, while at the same time a continual influx of new immigrants are making Canada their home. According to the City of Burnaby's analysis of the 2016 Census data, 37% of Burnaby's population is ethnically Chinese. The Metrotown neighbourhood is home to a large percentage of Burnaby's immigrant population, of which 46% are immigrants from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.



Some Chinese Canadian families had complex migration journeys that brought them to multiple countries throughout their lifetime. As an educator and diplomat, Dr. Richard Dun-ren Liu (centre) helped establish the first Twin Sister City program between Canada and China in 1980, among many cultural exchange programs he established between China, Canada, US and Italy over the span of 40 years. Dr. Liu moved to Burnaby in 1984 with his wife Elizabeth (left) and sons Richard (left-second) and Stanley (right). In 1999, he relocated to Italy and later Beijing, and returned to Burnaby in the 2010s after retirement. *COURTESY OF RICHARD N. LIU.*



Chan Kow Hong, Guy Wong, See Fun Leong, and Gay Tim Hong (left to right) on farmland they leased from xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation, circa 1951. BV017.36.5, COURTESY OF THE HONG FAMILY.

ACTIVITY

All Chinese characters are made up of a combination of strokes written in a specific order. Try writing a Chinese character by following the stroke order.



(noun) family
(noun) home

CHINESE INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

Because of their long history of settling as newcomers to different places around the world, Chinese migrants learned the importance of interacting with local communities in friendly and respectful ways. Some migrant men formed marriage alliances with local Indigenous women and became a part of the community.

Most of Burnaby's earliest Chinese residents, who arrived between the 1890s and 1920s, originated from the Pearl River Delta region located in the province of Guangdong in southern China. Some of them have family roots that connect them to the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) community in the Lower Mainland, including the Hong family who has farmed in Burnaby for three generations.

WATCH!

Learn more about the historical relationship between Chinese and Indigenous peoples in British Columbia by watching *Cedar and Bamboo* (2010), and *All Our Father's Relations* (2016). For educational licensing, contact Moving Images Distribution.



Edmond Leong grew up on Chinese farms at the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) reserve along with his family and relatives. His father See Quin Leong established Quin On farm in Burnaby's Big Bend area in 1966. Edmond took over his father's farm in 1979 and named it Leong's Nursery, where he continues to work today. COURTESY OF EDMOND LEONG.

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

HOW DID CHINESE CANADIANS STAND UP AGAINST RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION?

Chinese Canadians worked together to fight discrimination. They often relied on the support of strong networks and allies from within the Chinese community, and from other communities too. Many second-generation Chinese Canadians volunteered to serve in the Canadian armed forces during the First and Second World Wars. Their active participation in the Second World War in particular changed political and social attitudes towards the Chinese community. As a result, the Chinese Immigration Act was repealed in 1947, and Chinese Canadians received the right to vote.

SERVICE TO CANADA: D.T. YIP

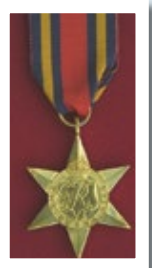
D.T. (George) Yip was no ordinary farmer. Because of his Asian appearance and language skills, he was recruited as a member of Force 136, a branch of the British Special Operations Executive in 1944 during the Second World War. As a radio operator, he was one of 150 Chinese Canadian soldiers who were sent behind enemy lines to support local Chinese resistance fighters in Burma. After the war ended, he moved to Burnaby and purchased farmland through a Veteran's Land Grant.



Cecil Lee (3rd row from top, right) and other Chinese Canadian youth standing in front of the Chinese Benevolent Society building in New Westminster, 1943. Membership by both older and younger generations of Chinese Canadians demonstrates the importance of shared alliances within a community. BV020.38.8, COURTESY OF CECIL LEE.



D.T. (George) Yip in his military uniform. COURTESY OF KEN YIP.



A close up of D.T. (George) Yip's Burma Star medal. COURTESY OF KEN YIP.



LISTEN

[Learn more about D.T. Yip's story through his son, Ken Yip.](#)



INVESTIGATE!

Who do you know or see that stands up against racism and discrimination? What do they do?



Douglas Jung (left, second). VPL 41618B

DID YOU KNOW?

Douglas Jung was the first Member

of Parliament of Chinese Canadian descent. He was a Second World War veteran, a trained lawyer, and community advocate.

He served as a legal advisor for many Chinese Canadian community organizations, including Burnaby Chinese Canadian farmers and grocery store owners who were members of trade associations, such as the Lower Mainland Farmers Co-Operative, and the Lower Mainland Independent Grocers Association.



Burnaby Soldier Promoted

SERVICE TO CANADA: HOWE LEE

Born and raised in a farming family in Armstrong, BC, Howe Lee moved to Vancouver to study at UBC. He was a Science and Mathematics teacher in the Burnaby school district for over 40 years. He was also a dedicated community advocate for the local Chinese Canadian community. Among his many honours, Colonel Howe Lee received a Governor General's Medal for his contributions in spearheading the creation of the Chinese Canadian Military Museum, which helped to showcase the contributions of Chinese Canadian war veterans.

A photograph of Howe Lee was published in the *Burnaby Examiner* on March 25, 1965, along with the announcement he was promoted to the rank of Major and appointed Commanding Officer of the 156 Company, Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (Militia).



[Listen to Colonel Howe Lee's story.](#)

WORKING IN BURNABY

WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR CHINESE CANADIANS WHO WORKED IN EARLY BURNABY INDUSTRIES?

Chinese Canadians have played a significant role in shaping Burnaby's history since the 1890s. The population of people of Asian descent was much smaller than those of European origin in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Working alongside many Japanese and South Asian workers, they were part of a diverse workforce and participated in a wide range of pioneer industries that helped establish Burnaby as a municipality. In Burnaby, historical records show that Chinese Canadians worked in many different occupations, such as farm workers, laundry workers, lumber mill workers, house servants, cooks, vegetable sellers and piggery operators.

HOW DID PEOPLE WORK TOGETHER TO FIGHT AGAINST INJUSTICES IN THE WORKPLACE?

Sometimes European and racialized millworkers worked together in the same trade union to fight for better working conditions and wages. The first major shingle mill strike was organized by European, Chinese and other Asian workers across dozens of shingle mills. Although the strike was unsuccessful, it prepared the workers for a much larger strike in 1919, in which Asian (mostly Chinese) shingle mill workers successfully fought back against a wage reduction and negotiated a pay raise.

WHEN WAS THE FIRST CHINESE CANADIAN WORKER HIRED BY THE MUNICIPALITY OF BURNABY?

For many decades until the 1950s, Burnaby's fourth bylaw prohibited the employment of Chinese workers by the Municipality or by any contractor supplying to the Municipality. Richard S. Lee, a 22-year-old Chinese Canadian man, was the first Asian person to break the color line when he was hired by the Municipality of Burnaby in 1953. He was hired as a "bookkeeping machine operator".



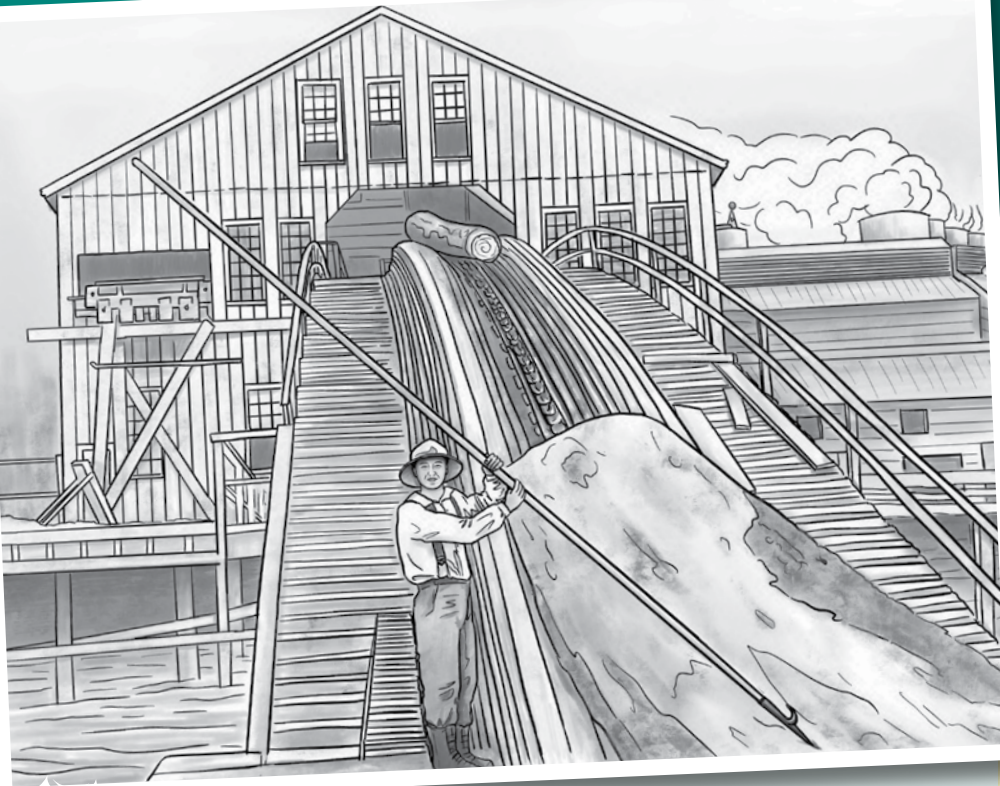
Hok Yat Louie (1875-1934) arrived alone in Canada in 1898. After working several jobs, he leased land in Burnaby's Fraser Arm district and started a small farm with a business partner. This family portrait of Hok Yat with his wife Young Shee and 11 children was taken shortly before a visit to China. *COURTESY OF THE H.Y. LOUIE FAMILY ARCHIVES.*



Chinese Canadians raised pigs in Burnaby and New Westminster from the 1890s to 1920s. The piggeries provided an important source of meat and fertilizer to local residents. VPL 6749

 **WATCH!**

Learn more
about the history
of piggeries in
the short video
A Pig's Tale.



Chinese mill workers faced harsh working conditions and received less pay and benefits compared to European workers. This illustration depicts a Chinese mill worker moving a large log on a log chute at the North Pacific Lumber Mill at Barnet in the early 1900s.

My Story

"The mill had so many mosquitoes, you had to wrap up your face to work there. The sky would get dark, with so many mosquitoes! . . . The stronger men were faster and they earned more money — eleven cents for a thousand shingle pieces. You did ten thousand and earned a dollar or so. The cutter had to work fast, so he'd find someone who could pack fast enough for him. If you cut fast, you want a fast packer. If you cut slow, you get a slow packer. If the mill was looking for help, I'd introduce my kin. You learn by watching, by helping others...Once you worked in the shingle mill, you always worked there, because no other work gave you as much money. Did I like it? You just had to be careful! The whites didn't like the work, because they were afraid to lose their fingers."

Quote from Hong Len Jung, a Chinese shingle mill worker in 1915.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO WORK IN THE LUMBER INDUSTRY?

Chinese lumber workers harvested and processed wood in a variety of workplaces in Burnaby. Chinese labour contractor Lee Deen recruited Chinese woodcutters to supply firewood for the interurban railway's steam generators. Chinese workers also worked as sawmill workers, woodcutters and as shingle bolt cutters who salvaged wood from stumps and logs left behind by loggers. The wood they salvaged was made into shingles and shakes at local shingle mills, which were used to build roofs and siding for houses and other buildings.

🔍 INVESTIGATE!

Take a walk in the business area of your community. Who is working in these places? What services and jobs are they doing? How is this same or different from the workers in early Burnaby industries?



Ding Quai Lee and his wife Seo Ngen Sui, in the 1920s. When Ding Quai first arrived in Canada, he worked as a millwright and labour contractor for G.W. Beach's three mills in New Westminster. Their youngest son Cecil Lee later went on to work for Kelly Douglas Limited, which was a large Burnaby business that purchased produce from farmers to re-sell to stores. As a produce buyer, Cecil Lee worked closely with Burnaby's Chinese Canadian farmers. BV017.24.2, COURTESY OF CECIL LEE.

FROM FARM TO TABLE

HOW DOES PRODUCE GET FROM A FARMER'S FIELD TO YOUR KITCHEN?

Chinese Canadians have played a major role in developing a local produce distribution network to supply fresh fruits and vegetables to customers throughout Burnaby and the Lower Mainland. Market gardeners, vegetable sellers, green grocers and wholesalers developed this network beginning in the 1890s. Many Chinese Canadian businesses continue to sustain the modern-day distribution network, too.

MARKET GARDENERS

The earliest documented Chinese Canadian market gardener in Burnaby farmed in the Big Bend neighbourhood in the 1890s. Market gardeners grew fruits, vegetables and flowers on small-scale farms.

Up until the 1950s, restrictions and racist attitudes prevented most Chinese Canadian market gardeners from purchasing farmland. Some market gardeners created partnerships with family and relatives to rent or lease small plots of land from European landowners. Chinese farmers often cooperated with Chinese vegetable sellers and green grocers to distribute their produce, and also sold to wholesalers.

VEGETABLE SELLERS

Historically, vegetable sellers were often called “peddlers” – they sold fresh produce by carrying it door to door in baskets, by truck delivery or on the street. By selling and delivering produce, they provided an essential service to many families and businesses during a time when transportation was not as convenient. The success of Chinese sellers was upsetting to some, and several local governments imposed discriminatory taxes or trade licenses to discourage Chinese from entering the industry.



Produce truck at Tong Yip Farm. The farm was established by D.T. Yip in 1948. The farm supplied produce to the grocery section of the popular Woodward's department stores in New Westminster and Surrey from the 1950s to 1970s, and also supplied wholesaler Kelly Douglas, who sold to Supervalu stores. *COURTESY OF KEN YIP.*



INVESTIGATE!

Consider growing Chinese vegetables or learning how to identify Chinese vegetables at the grocery store. Educational resources on Chinese vegetables are available on the hua foundation website, including:

- » [Seasonal Choi Guide](#)
- » [A Beginner's Guide to Growing Chinese Vegetables](#)

My Story

“As a produce buyer for Kelly Douglas, I worked closely with local farmers along Burnaby’s Marine Drive and in the Fraser Valley. The Burnaby company was one of the largest food distributors in Canada. In the mid-1970s, I was asked to oversee the import of Chinese mandarin oranges into Canada. My cultural knowledge and Chinese language skills helped build this very profitable part of their business. This mandarin orange box was designed by me in the 1970s.” — Cecil Lee. BV019.6.1



MAP OF BURNABY



“Big Bend” is the neighbourhood at the southern tip of Burnaby, next to the Fraser River. For thousands of years, this part of Burnaby was home to extensive cranberry bogs that were harvested by Indigenous people. Following colonization, these lands were drained to grow crops to feed newcomer communities. Big Bend is one place where Chinese farmers leased small plots of land to grow food for sale. By 1974, there were approximately 27 Chinese market gardens concentrated in the Big Bend area, and many of them were family farms.

GREEN GROCERS

Green grocers operate shops that sell fresh fruits and vegetables. When local governments introduced discriminatory taxes and expensive licenses to discourage Chinese vegetable sellers, some opened green grocery stores to serve suburban customers. The term “green grocer” was coined by Chinese in Vancouver to distinguish themselves from grocery stores, which were primarily owned by people of European origin. By the late 1920s, many Chinese Canadian owned green grocers opened in Burnaby along Hastings Street and Kingsway.

WHOLESALE

Some Chinese Canadians owned produce wholesalers, where they purchased produce from farmers and then sold it to stores. There were also non-Chinese produce wholesalers that hired Chinese Canadians to work for their businesses. Chinese Canadian farmers often worked in partnership with Chinese Canadian wholesalers and retailers in rural and urban areas to supply produce throughout British Columbia.



VISIT AND EXPLORE!

Arrange a class visit to a green grocery store in your neighbourhood to explore the variety of produce available for sale. What are different names the students in your class have for the vegetables that are for sale? How many different ways can you cook and eat them?



LISTEN

Listen to the podcast episode *Where is your food from?* to discover how Chinese Canadian history is rooted in local food systems.

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR VEGGIES?



ACTIVITY

All Chinese characters are made up of a combination of strokes written in a specific order. Try writing a Chinese character by following the stroke order.



(noun)
vegetables



1

2



3



4



5



6



FIND THE MATCHING PAIRS

Baby Bok Choy

Sai Yeung Choy

Ong Choy

Kale

Sui Choy

Choy Sum/
Yu Choy



Chinese Canadian market gardeners used intensive farming techniques such as raised beds and planting in tight rows to make their fields more productive. This photo shows a Chinese Canadian market gardener growing lettuce at 4800 Marine Drive, 1961. VPL 41621.

FAMILY FARMS

WHERE DOES YOUR FOOD COME FROM?

Chinese migrants brought skills (and even tools!) from China and began to work in Burnaby's local agricultural industry in the 1890s. They grew a variety of vegetables such as carrots, lettuce, cabbage, potatoes and tomatoes that were popular with European settlers, who were their main customers. Some also grew Chinese vegetables for their own family consumption.

JUNG FAMILY FARM

The Jung family was one of the earliest Chinese Canadian families to settle in Burnaby. Jung Chong and his wife Jung Gee Shee operated a farm and a piggery with their family. The farm was located on a five-acre lot located at Still Creek and Douglas Road, directly in front of the Douglas Road interurban tram station. The Jungs raised five children, including daughter Laura Suey Ying Jung who was born on the farm in 1912. She lived with her parents and helped them run the farm until she moved to Fraser Mills when she was married.



Laura Jung at her family farm, which was close to the Douglas Road interurban tram station. From the late 1890s to 1950s, an electric railway service operated in the region and was an important mode of transportation. The Jung farm was near a railway line that connected New Westminster to downtown Vancouver through Burnaby. BV017.24.26, COURTESY OF JULIE LEE.

LISTEN

What is it like to grow up on a farm?

[Listen to the podcast episode *A Family Farm*.](#)

[Listen to the Jung family's story.](#)

WATCH!

Learn about the history of Chinese Canadian farmers in these short films:

- » [Burnaby's Chinese Canadian Market Gardens \(2018\)](#)
- » [Covered Roots \(2012\)](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

By 1921, Chinese Canadian farmers were responsible for growing 90% of vegetables and 55% of the potato crop in the Lower Mainland!

HOP ON FARMS

Gay Tim Hong and his brothers arrived from Chungshan/ Zhongshan, China in 1921, and began farming on land that they leased from the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) community. He brought his son Chan Kow Hong to Canada in 1952, who joined his father at their farm in xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam). When opportunities to purchase land opened up in the 1950s, Gay Tim Hong, Chan Kow Hong and two other parties moved to Burnaby's Big Bend area with their young families. Together, they established Hop On Yuen (farm) on Marine Drive in 1953. Gay Tim Hong and Chan Kow Hong eventually bought out the other two shareholders. Chan Kow's daughter Pauline and her husband Jack took over management of operations in 1973 and changed the name to Hop On Farms. They grew and sold a variety of vegetables and bedding plants, and have been an important member of Burnaby's farming community for generations.



Members of the Hong family harvesting green onions at Hop On Farms in the 1980s. BV017.36.11, COURTESY THE HONG FAMILY.

TONG YIP FARM

The Tong Yip farm was established by D.T. (George) Yip, who was a Canadian born Second World War veteran. He was born in Cranbrook, BC, in 1921. His father Ben Yip, originally from the Poon Yue/ Panyu county in Guangdong, ran a small market garden and a general store in Cranbrook. After the war, D.T. established Tong Yip farm in 1948 on land acquired through a Veterans' Land Act grant. These grants were loans to war veterans that helped them acquire land and housing. Yip grew lettuce, carrots, radish, cauliflower, celery, cabbage, kale and spinach, and sold produce to supermarkets in Burnaby, New Westminster and Surrey.



Gail Yip (centre), Carolyn Law with neighbour Tommy Yee on the Law family farm on Marine Drive in the Big Bend in 1955. COURTESY OF GAIL (LAW) YIP.



VISIT AND EXPLORE

Call ahead to arrange a visit to one of Burnaby's active farms and find out what they grow!

Learn more about the history of Chinese Canadian farmers in Burnaby by visiting the Chinese Market Garden demonstration garden at Burnaby Village Museum or the outdoor heritage markers located at the Riverway Golf Course club house at 9001 Bill Fox Way.



CORNER STORES & GREEN GROCERY STORES

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO RUN A GREEN GROCERY OR CORNER STORE WITH YOUR FAMILY?

Many Chinese Canadian families overcame the discrimination they faced in the workforce by choosing to own their own business instead. Self-employment was a strategy to avoid the dangerous work and low pay that was offered in places like lumber mills. Some chose businesses where all family members could help out, like farms, restaurants and corner stores. These types of businesses also enabled owners to acquire the land the business was located on and often provided the opportunity to live on site. Running the business with family, owning the land and living on site helped them to save money and potentially earn a profit by investing in real estate.

Corner stores and green grocery stores were commonly co-owned by multiple family members or business partners. Their partnerships were often based on shared language and family ties to their ancestral hometowns in China. Some of Burnaby's earliest Chinese Canadian stores were located along Hastings Street in North Burnaby. By the 1960s and 1970s, stores had opened in many Burnaby neighbourhoods. The families often lived in a home behind the store or on the second floor.



Tommy Chu arrived in Canada from Poon Yue/ Panyu county, Guangdong, in 1957. After working as a delivery boy and running a store in Vancouver, he and his wife Betty established Tommy's Market on Edmonds Street in 1964. In the early years, the store operated as a convenience store, selling mostly dry goods, flowers and some fresh produce. By the mid-1990s, some items such as canned foods were discontinued to create more space for fresh produce. *COURTESY OF THE CHU FAMILY.*

14 Big Shopping Days 14

Dec. 13th to Dec. 31st inclusive

LEE'S Grocery and Produce Co.

3824 Hastings St. High. 4

Prompt Service ★ Free Deliv



<h3 style="text-align: center;">Tobacco - Pipes</h3> <p>Home, fine or counter cut, 1 1/2 lb tin 49c Leaf Tobacco, per lb. 29 and 34c Pipes, each 25 and 50c Special pens or CHRISTIAN CHURCH, CIGARETTES and TOBACCO, fancy wrapped at extremely low prices. <h3 style="text-align: center;">Razor and Blade Special</h3> <p>Kingpin Razor, in fancy case, 95c Gillette Razor, in fancy case with 5 blades 45c Miles, 5 for 9c, 3 for 12c, 1 for 20c and 1 for 23c.</p> </p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Sundries</h3> <p>Scott's Emulsion, large 15c Scott's Emulsion, small 15c Rescuey's Compound 15c Nutmegs, reg. size 15c Mentholators, reg. size 15c Palm Kernel 23 1/2c Farm, per jar 15c Vanillin, white, large jar 15c Vanillin, white, small jar 15c Kerry Fruit Salt, large bottle 15c Kerry Fruit Salt, small bottle 15c Almond Chalk, silver ball, reg. size 15c Big Ben Almond, reg. size 15c The Perfect Watcher, reg. size 15c Ladies' Night Watcher, 15c More Watcher 15c Bracelets, all made 15c</p>
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Tea

New season brand with 1 lb. B. C. sugar tea with every purchase (1 lb. limit) per lb. 39c

Candies

Fancy Mints - per lb. 15c, 20c, 25c

Butter

Our own Brand First Grade 29c

Bread

All Kinds 14c

Mincemeats

The Best Outing 14c

Tea

New season brand with 1 lb. B. C. sugar tea with every purchase (1 lb. limit) per lb. 39c

Candies

Fancy Mints - per lb. 15c, 20c, 25c

Butter

Our own Brand First Grade 29c

Bread

All Kinds 14c

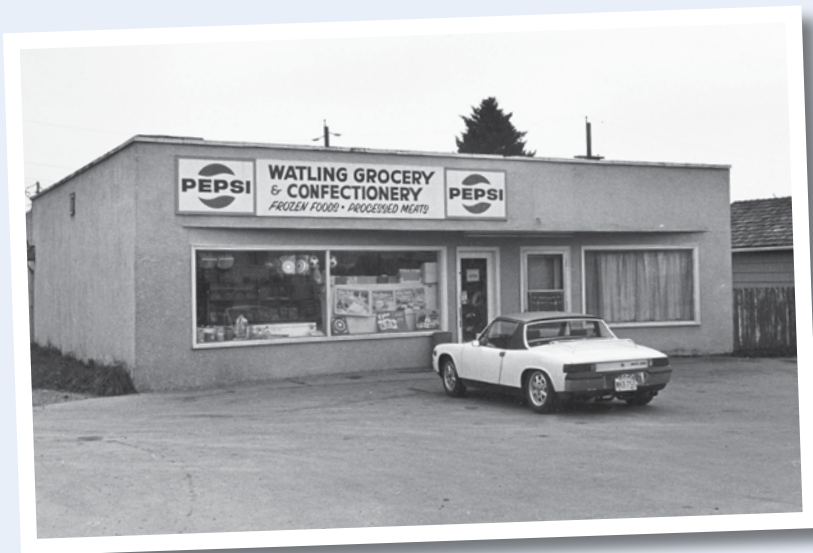
Mincemeats

The Best Outing 14c

A 1936 advertisement for Lee's or Lee Kee Grocery in *The Advertiser* newspaper. The store was located at 3824 Hastings in Burnaby. The proprietor Yow Lee Ko, also known as Lee Kee, operated the grocery store for 40 years. The store sold produce, animal feed, coal and dried goods.



Hoy Bew Louie, the owner of Louie's Food Basket, arrived in Canada in 1920. He worked in a lumber mill, and later started his own business selling fruits and vegetables. His eldest son, Bing, took over the family business and operated the store until the late 1960s. Burnaby resident Ken Yip recalls from his childhood that Louie's carried a great comic book selection, including Superman and Batman. Ken would often visit the store as a child to browse their comic books and shop.



Eva and Joo Ping (Joe) Ko operated Watling Grocery from 1970 to 1987. For years, Joe worked as a cedar shingle packer and was a member of the labour union. When the mill closed down, Joe and Eva decided to start their own corner store business on Watling Avenue in Burnaby and together raised five children. CBA 556-156



VISIT AND EXPLORE

Take a walk in the neighbourhood around your school and look for food places. List the restaurants, corner stores, grocery stores, and vegetable gardens you can find. What other places did you find food? Make a map or chart to record your data.

FOOD & RESTAURANTS

WHAT IS CHINESE CANADIAN CUISINE?

Chinese Canadians have had an important role in feeding Burnaby families for decades, including growing food, selling produce, and cooking in homes and restaurants. Some of Burnaby's earliest Chinese Canadians found work as dishwashers and line cooks in cafés that served cuisine ranging from Chinese smorgasbord to Canadian comfort food. With the financial support of relatives, some eventually operated their own businesses.

By the 1950s, there were several Chinese Canadian owned restaurants along Kingsway in Burnaby. Often their menus featured "Canadianized" Chinese food recipes such as chop suey and General Tso's chicken that were created to appeal to Canadian tastes. Chinese customers could also order authentic Chinese cuisine "off the menu" such as steamed pork patty with preserved vegetables. As the Chinese Canadian community has become more diverse, the range of regional flavors and ingredients offered by restaurants and grocery stores continues to evolve and expand.

Today's Chinese Canadian cuisine is not limited to Canadianized Chinese food. Burnaby's Crystal Mall food court features a wide array of Chinese cuisines representing different regional flavours from Hong Kong, mainland China, and Taiwan, as well as Southeast Asian dishes.



Chef Stephen Yan operated Yan's Gourmet Chinese Restaurant in Burnaby at 9948 Lougheed Highway in the 1980s. He was the star of the popular television cooking show "Wok with Yan," which popularized Cantonese home cooking for mainstream audiences. *BV002.48.9*

What is your definition of Chinese Canadian cuisine today?





EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE!

BUSINESSMEN STUDENTS FAMILIES
CHINESE SMORGASBORD EVERY DAY
 RED CARPET TREATMENT FOR THE
 WHOLE FAMILY...

- Designed
 for modern service - Chinese Food Smorgasbord
 or Western Foods or our popular Char Coal Broiled
 Steaks from our menu.

BUSINESS MEN'S LUNCHES SERVED FROM 11:30 TO 2 P.M.
 (Smorgasbord at our Burnaby location only)

For gracious dining in an atmosphere of old China
 with a modern touch, the Pagoda Room is ideal
 for banquets, parties or groups of up to 125.



BUSINESS HOURS

Monday to Thursday 11:30 to 1 A.M.
 Friday and Saturday 11:30 to 2 A.M.
 Sunday 3 P.M. to 10 P.M.

PLACE YOUR ORDER 1/2 HOUR BEFORE CLOSING

.FREE DELIVERY

.BANQUETS

**.WEDDING
 RECEPTIONS**

**.CATERING
 SERVICES**

The House of Chinese Smorgasbord

Dragon Inn

**DINE & DANCE
 CABARET**

4510 KINGSWAY • 431-4148 BURNABY
2516 KINGSWAY • 434-8788 VANCOUVER



WATCH!

Watch Scraps and Dragons to learn
 about the history of the Dragon Inn.

In the late 1950's, Larry and Kathy Lee opened the first Dragon Inn restaurant near Slocan Road and Kingsway in Vancouver, along with seven other partners who mostly originated from Larry's hometown in Kaiping. The restaurant served Chinese smorgasbord. He and his business partners opened three more locations in Burnaby and one in New Westminster. *COURIER EXAMINER*



Larry Lee purchased property on the block of his restaurant at Kingsway and Willingdon. He later sold the land to the developers who constructed the Crystal Mall in 1998. *CBA 535-1267*



VISIT AND EXPLORE

Educational resources on Chinese food are available on the hua foundation website, including:

- » Dried Goods Guide
- » Baked Goods Guide

Explore the neighbourhood around your school/home to look for Asian restaurants. List the names of these restaurants. How many different types of Asian cuisine are represented? Which restaurants have you tried? Which places would you recommend to a visitor to your home?

Some Chinese Canadians relocated their families to China temporarily so that their children could learn language and cultural practices in China. This photograph of Cecil (Kan) Lee (seated) and his siblings was taken before they departed for a steamship journey to China in 1931. From left to right: Cecil, Dick, Ken, Rose, Pearl, Charlie, Walter, and Gladys. BV017.24.5, COURTESY OF CECIL LEE.



THE NEW WESTMINSTER CHINESE PUBLIC SCHOOL 825 VICTORIA STREET NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.			
中華民國	年級	民	坎拿大不詩省烏威士編市打埠
年	班學生	十	華僑公立學校
月	年度	學	學生成績報告
日	學期	年	

校長	教員	七	五	三	一	家長簽名
		八	六	四	二	

家長注意
本校對於學生教授及自理自當盡其職責然必須學生家長通力合作務使其子女勤力同學遵守校規庶可獲良好成績也仰為家長者注意焉

Many Chinese Canadian children attended Chinese language schools. As a child, Cecil Lee attended the New Westminster Chinese Public School on Victoria Street. This report card was used to record student grades in areas such as reading and writing. NWMA PAM231

WATCH!

Members of Burnaby's early Chinese Canadian community originated from the southern region of Guangdong province, China. Different dialects were spoken in villages and counties throughout the Szeyp/ Siyi (four counties), Samyup/ Sanyi (three counties) and Chungshan/ Zhongshan areas within Guangdong province. Today, Mandarin is the official spoken language of China, but there are many varieties of local dialects spoken in different parts of China. [Watch this video to listen to the phrase "Have you eaten yet?" spoken in different Chinese languages or dialects.](#)

INVESTIGATE!

How many cultures are represented in your school, or your neighbourhood? What languages do your classmates speak? How many speak more than one language? What cultural festivals are celebrated by people in your class? How are different cultural festivals celebrated? Make a graph or infographic to show your data.

COMMUNITY LIFE

DID BURNABY HAVE ITS OWN CHINATOWN IN THE PAST?

Many places in British Columbia had Chinatowns that served early Chinese Canadian community members, beginning in the 1850s. While Chinatowns provided important spaces where Chinese Canadians could practice cultural traditions and support one another, they were not the only spaces where Chinese Canadians lived.

Burnaby never had its own Chinatown. Some of Burnaby's early Chinese Canadian residents traveled regularly to Chinatowns in New Westminster and Vancouver to conduct business, shop at Chinese stores, and socialize with friends and relatives. Their social networks were based on extended family networks tied to their ancestral hometowns in China. To this day, these networks continue to extend throughout the province and country, and even around the world.

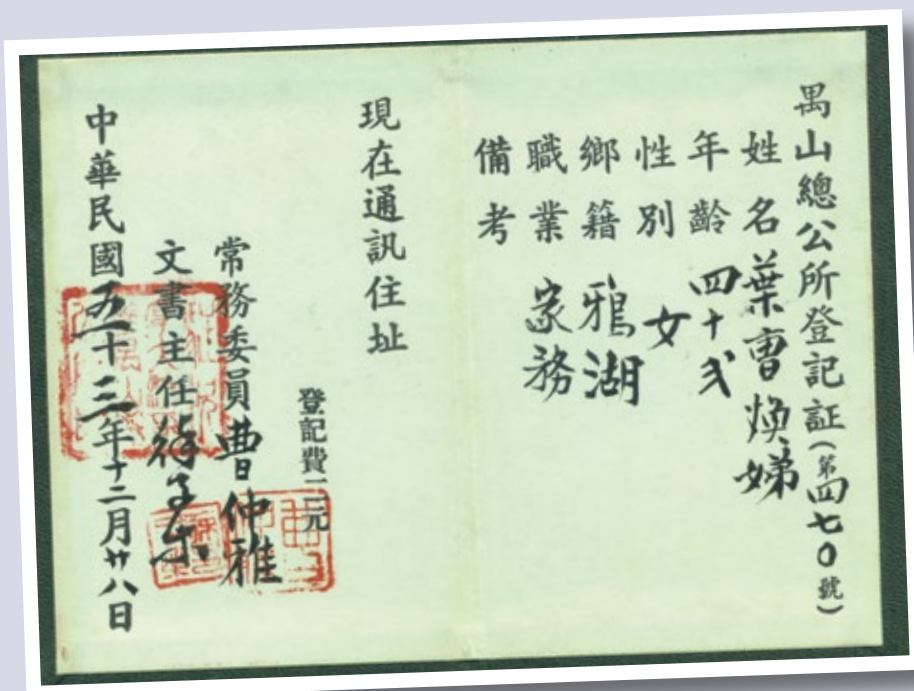
WATCH!

Watch these video to learn more about the history of Vancouver Chinatown

- » [Vancouver Chinatown's Past, Present and Future](#)
- » [Chinatown in the Making of Vancouver](#)

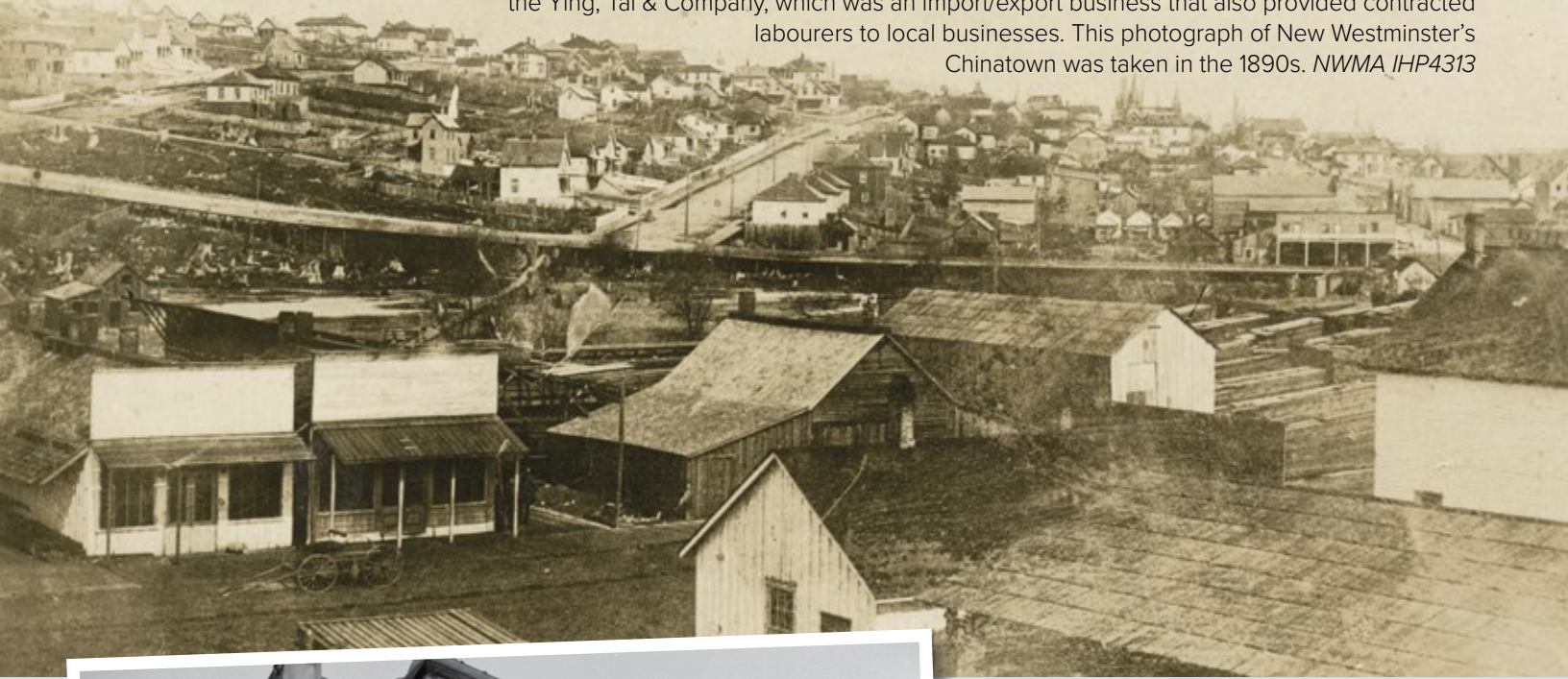
DID YOU KNOW?

The term "overseas Chinese" refers to ethnic Chinese people who live outside of mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau. According to the 2016 Census, over 1.5 million ethnically Chinese people live in Canada.



Family associations are volunteer organizations created by migrants from the same ancestral hometowns. Membership in family associations provided members with access to financial aid, affordable housing and social activities. This is the 1964 membership card for Mrs. Won Tai Chow-Yip who registered for membership in the Yue Shan Society association, which served Chinese immigrants from Poon Yue/ Panyu county, a region in Guangdong, China. *COURTESY OF KEN YIP.*

Gail Yip grew up on her father Herbert (Yee) Law's south Burnaby family farm established in 1948. In early years, her family had strong connections to New Westminster's Chinatown (shown in this photo), which was the closest Chinatown to Burnaby. In the 1890s, Gail's great-grandfather established the Ying, Tai & Company, which was an import/export business that also provided contracted labourers to local businesses. This photograph of New Westminster's Chinatown was taken in the 1890s. NWMA IHP4313



Vancouver's Chinatown was an important place where Burnaby's Chinese Canadian residents often shopped and socialized. VPL 41625



VISIT AND EXPLORE

Visit Burnaby's Crystal Mall. What do you notice about the variety of services and goods available? Do you think Crystal Mall's role in the community is similar to that of a Chinatown in the early years of BC? Why or why not?

LIVING TRADITIONS

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF LIVING HERITAGE PRACTICED BY CHINESE CANADIANS TODAY?

For over a century, migration between Canada and China transported diverse people, ideas, and objects across the Pacific Ocean. Chinese concepts of wellness, time and death are among many types of traditional knowledge that have been passed down through the generations and continue to be practiced by families and social groups throughout the year.

Living heritage is the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, and objects that communities associate with as part of their cultural identities. They are called 'living' because people need to continuously practice and adapt them to local environments in order for them to remain meaningful and representative of community values.

DID YOU KNOW?

Winter Solstice is commonly celebrated by Chinese and Indigenous peoples. The Winter Solstice date is determined by the lunar calendar. The Winter Solstice marks the first day of the coldest season of the year.



ACTIVITY

Although Burnaby did not have its own Chinese herbal medicine shop in the first half of the 20th century, local Chinese Canadian residents would have been able to visit Chinese medical doctors and purchase medicine from shops in Vancouver or New Westminster's Chinatown.

Visit Burnaby Village Museum's Way Sang Yuen Wat Kee herbalist shop exhibition to learn about Chinese medicine and Burnaby's early Chinese Canadian community.



Some Chinese Canadians refer to the lunar calendar to select good dates for weddings, funerals, planting crops, moving or starting a business. Also known as the Agricultural Calendar, the lunar calendar corresponds to the movement of the moon and the sun.





In the early 20th century, many cemeteries in the Lower Mainland had a segregated section for Chinese people. Today, cemeteries often include sections that are designed with elements of traditional Chinese culture, but people of Chinese origin are no longer excluded from the other sections of cemeteries. The Chinese mausoleum at Ocean View cemetery is decorated with a Chinese style mural and the porcelain figures representing the “Three Star” deities: Blessings (福 fú; 福 fuk1), Status (禄 lù; 祿 luk6), and Longevity (寿 shòu; 壽 sau6).



LISTEN

What are Chinese herbalist shops?
What is the cultural significance of traditional Chinese medicine?

Listen to a podcast episode *Chinese Herbalist Shops and TCM* to learn more.



ACTIVITY

Many Chinese workers who did not have a mailing address would use an herbalist shop as a post office to send money back home and receive letters from family members.

Download a postcard that you can sign and mail to someone you know.



Many Canadians whose families came from China visit their ancestral hometowns to pay respect to their ancestors. COURTESY OF KEN AND GAIL (LAW) YIP.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fallen leaves return to their roots (落叶归根 luò yè guī gēn; 落葉歸根

lok6 jip6 gwai1 gan1) is a Chinese expression. It refers to returning to one's hometown or family in old age or death. Before 1949, the remains of deceased overseas Chinese were often transported back to their home villages in China aboard the same ships that transported people and freight between British Columbia and China. This practice allowed the deceased to have a final resting place in their ancestral home, or “return to their roots.”

CREDITS

IMAGES USED IN THIS RESOURCE GUIDE COURTESY OF:

Angela Lee

Burnaby Advertiser

Burnaby Courier

Burnaby Village Museum

Pauline Hong as a toddler, 1951. BV019.10.1

Portrait of Sui Ha Hong, Pauline Hong and Chan Kow Hong, 1958. BV019.10.2

Four men standing on Musqueam First Nation farmland, 1951. BV017.36.5

Diaolou fortress towers in Sei Moon village, c. 1970-80. BV019.10.4

Aerial view of Sei Moon village c. 1970-80. BV019.10.5

Registration certificate of Suey Ying Jung (Laura), 1924. BV017.24.32

Lee family studio portrait, 1931. BV017.24.5

Wedding portrait of Sui Seo Ngen and Lee Ding Quai, ca. 1920. BV017.24.2

Chan Family photograph, 1946. BV017.24.9

Quinn Wong's family in front of the Chinese Benevolent Society, c. 1950s. BV020.38.8

Suey Ying Jung (Laura) with produce baskets, c.1940. BV017.24.26

Postcard. BV002.48.9

Hong family harvesting green onions at Hop-On Farm c.1980-1989. BV017.36.11

Quon Lip Lee and son in front of C&L Grocery Confectionery, April 1968. BV021.18.3

Head tax certificate issued to Lee Quon Lep (Quan Lip Lee), 1921-1949. BV021.18.1

Head tax certificate issued to Dung Way How, 1922-1934. BV021.13.1

Mandarin Orange Box. BV019.6.1

Cecil and Julie Lee

The Chu Family

City of Burnaby Archives: [John McCarron] Photo ID 556-156, Photo ID 556-239;
[John Morstad] Photo ID 535-1267

City of Vancouver Archives: [Major James Skitt Matthews] Photo ID Bu N158.2

Courier Examiner

Edmond Leong

Heritage Burnaby

The Hong Family

Ken and Gail Yip

Library and Archives Canada: e006067118

The Lee Family

The Louie Family Archives

New Westminster Museum and Archive: IHP4313

New Westminster Museum and Archives: PAM231

Richard N. Liu

Royal BC Museum and Archives: e-00382; 2000.41.3; [Andrew J. Onderdonk] d-08746;
a-07021; d-07548

Toronto Public Library: JRR 13 Cab II

UBC Rare Books and Special Collections: PE1130_C4_C39_1910

Vancouver Public Library: 41618B; [Philip Timms] 7642, 6749;
[Province Newspaper] 41625, 41621

Vivian Dong

Illustrations by Carly Bouwman p.5, 19, 21, 26

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS COURTESY OF:

Interview with Josephine Chow by Denise Fong February 7, 2020. Burnaby Village Museum, BV020.6.1

Royal BC Museum & Archives: AAAB3478, Mary Lee Chan and Shirley Chan Interview (1977);
AAAB4133, Hong Len Jung Interview (1980)

Access the resource guide online:

<https://search.heritageburnaby.ca/permalink/museumlibrary7608>





Dragon Inn Restaurant, 1976. CBA 556-239 39

