



Timeline

- 1788 Explorer John Meares arrives in Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, with two ships and 50 Chinese carpenters and craftsmen.
- 1849 Gold is discovered in California, attracting Chinese miners to the West Coast of North America.
- 1858 The first Chinese gold miners arrive in the colony of British Columbia from San Francisco after gold is discovered in the Fraser Valley.
- 1860 The first Chinese woman arrives in Victoria, B.C. She is the wife of the owner of the Kwong Lee Company.
- 1861 Won Alexander Cumyow is born at Port Douglas, B.C. He is the first Chinese born in what later becomes Canada.
- 1866 The first cargo of timber shipped to China leaves Burrard Inlet (later Vancouver) for Shanghai.
- 1867 On July 1, the British North America Act creates the Dominion of Canada.
- 1871 Kevan Jangze's grandfather, Cheng Ging Butt, arrives in Canada to work on the railroad.
- 1871 British Columbia joins Confederation.
- 1872 British Columbia passes a law disqualifying Chinese and First Nations from voting.
- 1877 Chinese-owned laundries are established in Toronto.
- 1870s Judi Michelle Young's father, Yong Hong Yan, arrives in Canada to work on the railroad.
- 1880s Stan Fong's grandfather, Lum King Fong, arrives in Canada to work on the railroad.
- 1880s David Wong's grandfather, Sam Kwan, and two great-uncles arrive in Canada to work on the railroad.
- 1880 The Canadian Pacific Railway contractor Andrew Onderdonk starts to hire Chinese labourers for railway work.
- 1881 Cindy Leong's great-grandfather, Willy Nipp, arrives in Canada to work on the railroad.
- 1883 Brian Joe's great-grandfather, On Lee, arrives in Canada and opens a store in Yale, B.C., to provision railroad workers.
- 1884 Larry Kwong's father arrives in Canada to prospect for gold.
- 1885 First Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration.
- 1885 Completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway on November 7th, at Craigellachie, B.C.
- 1885 The Canadian government levies a \$50 head tax on Chinese immigrants entering Canada.



- 1891 Vancouver's Reverend Chan Sing Kai is the first Chinese minister ordained by the Methodist Church.
- 1892 A smallpox alarm in Calgary leads to destruction of Chinese laundries by a mob of 300.
- 1895 Chinese Board of Trade formed in Vancouver.
- 1903 The head tax is raised to \$100.
- 1903 The head tax is raised to \$500.
- 1905 Ron Lee's grandfather, Lee Duck, leaves China for Canada.
- 1906 The British colony of Newfoundland imposes a \$300 head tax on all Chinese.
- 1907 Anti-Asian riots sweep through Vancouver's Chinatown, causing \$29,900 in damages.
- 1908 William Lyon Mackenzie King heads Royal Commission on Oriental Immigration.
- 1910 Alexandria Sham's grandfather, Sum Yong Tai, arrives in Canada and works as a cook for the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- 1911 Dr. Sun Yat-sen visits Canada to raise funds for the Nationalist revolution that topples China's last dynasty.
- 1912 Landy Ing-Anderson's grandfather, Ralph Lung Kee Lee, arrives in Canada.
- 1912 Saskatchewan bans employment of White women in Chinese-owned laundries and restaurants.
- 1914 The *Chinese Times* newspaper is launched in Vancouver. It operates until 1992.
- 1916 The Chinese Labour Association is organized in British Columbia.
- 1918 David Chu's grandfather arrives in Canada to work for the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- 1919 A missionary report notes that Vancouver has 6,000 Chinese with 210 families, and Toronto has 2100 Chinese with 35 families.
- 1920 A dozen Chinese veterans who served in the Canadian Army during the First World War are given the right to vote.
- 1921 A Montreal newspaper reports that the city's Chinese population is about 1600, with 600 businesses.
- 1922 James Pon, then 5 years old, and his mother pay \$500 each to enter Canada and reunite with his father and grandfather, who worked on the CPR.
- 1923 On July 1, Dominion Day, the Canadian government passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, banning Chinese immigration. Chinese Canadians lose the right to vote.
- 1931 During the Great Depression, the Anglican Church sets up a soup kitchen in Vancouver's Chinatown, where 80 per cent of the people are unemployed.
- 1935 Japan invades China in an attempt to conquer the country.
- 1937 The Chinese Tennis Club is organized in Vancouver.



- 1939 World War II begins. Hundreds of Chinese Canadian men and women volunteer to serve in Canada's armed forces but many are rejected.
- 1941 Vancouver's Chinese set up their own Air Raid Patrol and train 100 wardens.
- 1942 Chinese Canadians are called for military service under the National Resources Mobilization Act. About 800 serve in all theatres of war. Some become commandoes in special operations in Asia.
- 1945 The Second World War ends. The racial bar against the Chinese is lifted at Vancouver's Crystal Pool, a public swimming pool.
- 1947 The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed and limited entry of wives and children of Chinese Canadians begins.
- 1947 Chinese in British Columbia are allowed to vote and to work as pharmacists, lawyers, and accountants.
- 1948 Larry Kwong plays hockey for the New York Rangers and then for the Valleyfield Braves.
- 1949 The Chinese Communists win a civil war and proclaim the People's Republic of China.
- 1949 Alexandria Sham's grandfather get his citizenship – after the Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed.
- 1950s Kwoi Gin's father, Suey Kee Gin, arrives in Canada as a "paper son," using false identity papers.
- 1953 The first Chinatown Lions Club in North America is formed in Vancouver.
- 1955 Margaret Gee is the first Chinese Canadian woman lawyer called to the bar.
- 1957 Douglas Jung is the first Chinese Canadian elected to the federal Parliament.
- 1960 David Chu's uncle gets the first Canadian Tire franchise.
- 1966 Peter Wing was the first mayor of Chinese descent in North America. He served as mayor of Kamloops for three terms.
- 1969 Alexandria Sham's mother and brother arrive in Canada.
- 1970 Alexandria Sham is born in Canada – the first Canadian-born of four generations in the country.
- 1971 Vancouver's Chinatown is designated a historic site.
- 1982 Canada passes *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, making it illegal to discriminate based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.
- 1983 Chinese Canadians celebrate the 125th anniversary of Chinese settlement in Canada.
- 1984 MP Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East) raises issue of compensation for the head tax in the House of Commons. Chinese Canadians rally to demand redress.
- 1988 David Lam is appointed lieutenant governor of British Columbia.



- 1994 The federal government rejects a call for redress on Chinese head tax.
- 2001-2003 Chinese Canadian community launches lawsuit against Government of Canada over head tax compensation; the suit fails, as does an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.
- 2002 New Zealand becomes the first Commonwealth country to apologize and offer compensation for a head tax on Chinese immigrants.
- 2006 On June 22, Prime Minister Stephen Harper offers an official apology to Chinese Canadians for the head tax and Chinese Exclusion Act.
- 2006 Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams apologizes for implementation of the Chinese Head Tax.
- 2006 Frank Lim, Betty Fong, Bing Yen Tom and Gook Fung Tom are among surviving head tax payers and their spouses who each receive a cheque for \$20,000 as federal compensation for the head tax.
- 2010 125th anniversary of the driving of the “Last Spike” that completed the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, with help from early Chinese Canadians.