



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.
- 1900 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 services 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.