

*A Brief History of Asian North America*



Trade between Europe and Asia has existed since the Middle Ages. Asia was a source of luxury goods - first silk and spices, later porcelain and tea. For centuries, Italy controlled the overland route to Asia through its contacts with the Ottoman Empire. In order to circumvent Italy's monopoly over this lucrative trade, nations such as Portugal, the Netherlands, Spain, France and England sent ships out to find a direct sea route to Asia. The Great Age of European Exploration (late 15th-16th centuries) was a direct result of the desire to trade with the empires of the East. However, instead of Asia, most of the early explorers found themselves in the Americas. When Columbus landed on the coast of Hispaniola in 1492, he referred to the natives as 'Indians' in the mistaken belief that he had landed in India. Rather than trading with these territories, the Europeans plundered the nations of the New World for their natural resources. South America became a great source of wealth for Spain and Portugal, while North America became a source of valuable natural resources, primarily fish and furs. Sea routes to Asia were eventually established. The Portuguese, Dutch and English dominated the eastern route (from the Atlantic, around Africa to the Indian Ocean to India, China and Japan), while the Spanish were largely in control of the western route around South America.

This project is a special community building initiative of Vancouver Asian Heritage Month. The intent of this project is to broaden our understanding of the Asian presence in North America. It celebrates a legacy which began 450 years ago and continues today. The story is told through a timeline which focuses on the achievements of individual Asian North Americans. Through these achievements, we learn how Asians have long been an integral part of the settlement and development of North America.

In the past decade, much research has been done on the history of Asians in North America. But as with any new field of study, the history has been fragmented and focused on individual nations and ethnic groups. This ground-breaking project is the first of its kind to unify the history of the Asian settlement throughout the entire continent including Mexico, United States and Canada.

This timeline is a work-in-progress and by no means definitive. It is, however, an important first step towards a more accurate historic record and providing a foundation for further research and compilation.

Consider this the first draft of a living project. Share your stories and your resources with us. Contact us at [asiannorthamerica@hotmail.com](mailto:asiannorthamerica@hotmail.com)

1492  
Christopher Columbus unintentionally lands in the Americas. In four separate voyages to the Caribbean from 1492 to 1504, he remains convinced that he had found India and Cathay.

1557  
The Portuguese establish a presence in Macao. Macao remains a Portuguese colony until 2000.

1588  
The Spanish Armada is defeated by the English. This marks the beginning of England's rise as a major naval power.

1607  
Jamestown (Virginia) is founded. It is the first permanent English settlement in North America.

1608  
French colonists build the settlement of Quebec.

By the late 17th century Europe was consolidating their 'discoveries' and developing the commercial potential of their trade routes. A series of trade companies were established, most notably the British and Dutch East Indies Companies and the Hudson's Bay Company. The Europeans were able to dominate trade in South America, North America and India, but not with China and Japan. Xenophobia in Japan and China closed all but a few, tightly regulated ports to European trade. While Asia produced goods such as tea, silk and porcelain that the Europeans craved, there were very few goods that Europe could offer in return. Therefore, gold and silver flowed steadily into Asia, slowly draining Europe of its wealth. It was not until the 19th century that European nations decided to stop this trade imbalance by taking military action in Asia.

1690  
The English establish Calcutta in India.

1775  
The American Revolution begins. Independence is declared in 1776.

1778  
On January 18, Captain Cook reaches the Sandwich Islands (present-day Hawaiian Islands), landing on the island of Kauai to take on fresh water and provisions on his way to search for the elusive Straits of Anian or the Northwest Passage.

1565

The Spanish colonize the Philippines and begin their lucrative trade between China, Hawaii, the Philippines and Acapulco. This is known as the 'Manila - Acapulco Trade'. Chinese and Filipinos are sought after for their skills as sailors and navigators on board Spanish galleons and other colonial ships.

1587

The Spanish galleon *Nuestra Senora de Buena Esperanza* anchors off the coast of present day Morro Bay, California, on October 18. Filipinos (*Luzones Indios*) are among the crewmembers. Filipinos are sent to scout the shore. On October 20, during a skirmish with local Indians, one Filipino is killed. The galleon departs California on October 22, 1600.

1595

Filipino seamen are on board the Spanish ship, *San Agustin*, when it is shipwrecked near Point Reyes by the mouth of San Francisco Bay, California, on November 6.

1635

The 'Chinos,' a name commonly used to describe anyone who came from across the Pacific Ocean, are so numerous that Spanish barbers in Mexico City petition the Municipal Council to prevent Chino barbers from working in the capital. They are banished from the city, but Spanish shopkeepers still face competition from Chino physicians, tailors, weavers, silversmiths and ironsmiths, shipbuilders, carpenters, merchants and more. Many of these men take Mexican wives but they and their descendents remain Chinos. The seaport of Acapulco where the Manila Galleons landed becomes known as the ciudad de los Chinos, the 'City of Chinos'. The trade route from Acapulco to the capital, Mexico City is called El Camino de la China ('the road of the Spanish Chinos,' who later become known as Mexican Chinos).

1688

Catarina de San Juan (1609-1688) was *La China Poblana* ("The Puebla China Girl"). Originally named Mirrha, she was born in Delhi, India, and kidnapped at the age of nine by pirates. The captors sell her to a Portuguese merchant in Manila, who later shipped her to Miguel de Sosa, a Poblano who had commissioned the merchant to send him "a little Chinese girl." Sosa and his wife adopted 11 year old Mirrha in 1620 and baptized her Catarina. Upon the couple's death, Catarina married Domingo Suarez, the Chinese servant of the local parish priest. She was credited with designing the state costume of Puebla incorporating the colours and insignia of the Mexican flag. Puebla's monument to *La China Poblana*, an enormous statue atop a tiled fountain, is located in the northern end of the city at the junction of Boulevard Heroes del 5 de Mayo and Avenida Defensores de La Republica.



Woman in Puebla state dress designed by *La China Poblana*

1760

'The Manilamen,' another reference to those who arrived in the North America from across the Pacific, migrate north and settle in the bayou of Louisiana's Barataria Bay, thirty miles south of New Orleans. These descendants of the sailors of the Spanish galleons become the oldest living colony of Asians in North America.

1781

Antonio Miranda Rodriguez, a 50 year old Mexican-born descendant of a 'Manilaman,' and his 11 year old daughter, Juana Maria, are among the founding settlers of the village of "El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles de Porciuncula" which grew to become the present-day city of Los Angeles. He later became the ironsmith of the Santa Barbara Mission in California where he lived until his death. He is buried in the Santa Barbara Mission Church.

1785

On August 9, the ship *Pallas*, skippered by John O'Donnell, arrives in Baltimore, Maryland. After unloading his cargo, O'Donnell set sail immediately, stranding a crew of 32 Indians and three Chinese seamen named Ashing, Achun and Aceun. It is not known whether these men were ever able to return to their ancestral lands. This is the first recorded instance of Asians on the East Coast of the United States.

1787

*The Imperial Eagle*, commanded by Captain Charles Barkley, reaches Hawaii (Owyhee). On its journey to the Pacific Northwest, a young Hawaiian woman named Winee becomes the personal servant of Frances Barkley, the captain's wife, and the first Hawaiian known to have visited the Northwest Coast. Winee went on to China and was left at Macao. She later found passage back to Hawaii courtesy of Captain John Meares. Unfortunately she fell ill during her journey and dies on February 5.

In August, a Hawaiian chief named Tianna (Ka-i'ana) journeyed on board Captain John Meares's ship, *Nookta*, along with other Asian sailors towards the coast of British Columbia.

1788

Captain John Meares arrives along with Tianna (Ka-i'ana) and 50 to 70 Chinese artisans at Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island, to set up a fur trading post and establish British sovereignty. The following year, 74 more Chinese workers are brought to the area. Using hand-hewn wooden boards and handmade nails, they construct houses, a wharf and a small ship's dry dock, as well as a Chinese version of an English fort. They also build the first ocean-going schooner, the forty-ton *Northwest America*. On its maiden voyage to the Queen Charlotte Islands, it is commanded by a crew of English and Chinese seamen.



Tianna (Ka-i'ana), a Hawaiian chief

1789

On June 5, the *Eleanora* with 24 'Manilamen' and the *Fair American* with five 'Manilamen' sail from China for the Pacific Northwest coast of America.

1791

On June 27, Spanish expedition ships, the *Descubierta* and the *Atrevida*, arrive at Yakutat Bay, Alaska, then known as Port Mulgrave. Initially, there are four Filipinos among the original crew from Cadiz, Spain. More Filipinos are conscripted in Acapulco to replace deserting crewmembers. Filipino sailors were commonly found in Acapulco as a result of the Manila-Acapulco Spanish galleon trade.

1792

The British ship *Jenny* sails to Nootka Sound with two Hawaiian women. They were returned home in 1794 with Captain George Vancouver, who had the distinct impression that they had been taken against their will.



Captain John Meares' settlement at Nootka Sound, Vancouver Island

1807

Two Hawaiian men, Hopoo and Obookiah, join Captain John Brintnall of New Haven, Connecticut, as cabin boy and sailor. Hopoo later serves on an American ship in the War of 1812, and was captured by the British in the West Indies. Both Obookiah and Hopoo later study for the ministry in New England. Obookiah translates the book of Genesis into Hawaiian and began to work on a Hawaiian grammar, dictionary and spelling book, but he fell ill with typhus and dies.

1789  
The French Revolution begins. France is declared a republic.

1803  
President Thomas Jefferson purchases the Louisiana territories from the French, doubling the size of the United States.

1807  
The British end their participation in the international African slave trade. Colonial traders go to India, China and later to Japan, Korea and Philippines for cheap labour for the plantations in America.

1818  
After defeating a series of kingdoms and principalities, the British, under the guise of the East India Company, become the effective rulers of India.

1819  
The British forcibly establish the free port of Singapore. The U.S. purchases Florida from Spain.

Aided by the Industrial Revolution that greatly contributed to advances in travel and production, Northern Europe sent its forces out to conquer the world. By far the most successful of the 'Empire Builders' was England, which at the height of its powers exerted its rule over nearly half of the known world. Although Europe never managed to take over China and Japan, they were able to force the two nations to open up ports to their control and impose other humiliating concessions for their profit. A succession of defeats at the hands of the Europeans sparked an intense period of civil unrest, economic recession and frantic attempts at modernization and reform. Unlike China, Japan was able to transform itself into a modern state. Its successes, both militarily and economically, earned them a degree of respect and cooperation from the Europeans. Therefore, its citizens abroad were treated with a greater degree of respect and were often not subject to the same restrictions imposed on people from other parts of Asia.

1811

Captain Jonathan Thorn of the Pacific Fur Company recruits 12 Hawaiians on a three-year contract and finds them to be excellent sailors with superb swimming, diving and boat-handling abilities. A year later he recruits 26 more Hawaiians to work for the company.

1812

King Kamehameha appoints a royal observer named Naukane to accompany and look after the interests of these first Hawaiian contract labourers. He is dubbed John Coxe during the voyage and retains that name throughout his life. He later becomes an employee of the Northwest Company and accompanies surveyor and mapmaker David Thomson by canoe and portage halfway across the continent to the company's supply depot and centre at Fort William on Lake Superior (now Thunder Bay, Ontario).

1817

Fort George is established. Approximately 50 men staff the post, more than half of who are Kanakas (Hawaiians — the term Kanaka is the Polynesian word for 'human being'). A year later, the Northwest Company establishes Fort Walla Walla in the Interior. Among its employees are 20 men of mixed Indian-white parentage, 38 Iroquois Indians and 32 Kanakas.

1819

Hopoo returns to Hawaii and helps establish the first Protestant mission in Honolulu. Decades later, he goes to California to join the Gold Rush.

1820

The practice of recruiting Kanakas for work on the Northwest Coast is firmly established. When the Hudson's Bay Company eventually merges with the Northwest Company, the growth demands additional Kanaka labourers. By 1842, there are over 310 Kanakas on the Hudson's Bay Company's payroll.

1827

Naukane returns to the Northwest Coast fur trade, and his identity as John Coxe, having returned to Hawaii in 1814. He later retired near Fort Vancouver.

The party to establish Fort Langley includes three clerks and 21 men, among them, two Kanakas, Como and Peeohpeeoh. After 13 or 14 years, Como returns to Fort Vancouver where he works until his death in 1850. Peeopeeh stays in Fort Langley for the rest of his life.

1832

Chang and Eng Bunker, the Original Siamese Twins become one of P.T. Barnum's greatest attractions at the American Museum. They were born in Siam in May 11, 1811, to a Chinese father and a Chinese-Malay mother. They were 'discovered' by a Scottish merchant and brought to America in 1829 when they were 17-years old. They quickly become the toast of the European and North American medical community. In October 1839, they take the oath of allegiance and become American citizens. They adopt the surname Bunker and marry sisters, Adelaide and Sarah Ann Yates, settling permanently in White Plains, North Carolina. Together, they have a total of 21 children. On January 17, 1874, the elder twin comes down with bronchitis and dies. Because of their shared circulatory system, the other twin dies shortly afterwards. They are buried in the graveyard of the Baptist Church at White Plains.



Statue of King Kamehameha of Hawaii



Chang and Eng Bunker, the original Siamese Twins

1842  
The Opium War begins. Seeking to address a trade imbalance and to force the Chinese government to open up its ports, the British initiate the Opium War. The Chinese are defeated and forced to cede the port of Hong Kong. Hong Kong remains a British colony until 1997.

1845  
The Oregon provisional government considers in stituting a \$5 head tax on "any Sandwich Islanders." The U.S. annexes Texas.

1846  
The Oregon Treaty establishes the border between Canada and the U.S. The Mexican War begins; by 1848, the Americans have conquered New Mexico and California.

1848-52  
Gold is found at Sutter's Mill, California. Thousands are drawn to the West Coast in search of gold. Many Kanakas (Hawaiians) join the California Gold Rush. Their legacy can be found in place names in the area: Kanaka Bar, Kanaka Glade in Mendocino County, Kanaka Creek in Sierra County, and Kanaka Dam on the Yuba River. As their dreams of instant riches evaporate, they and other minorities become cheap sources of labour for the building of the frontier.

1850-1864  
The Tai-ping Rebellion in China results in an immense loss of life and enormous economic suffering. Many rebels go into exile and settle in Chinese populations in Southeast Asia and North America and plot resistance. The imperial government, already weakened by the Opium War, never recovers its authority or its wealth. China enters a period of political and social decline.

1854  
Admiral Perry forces the Japanese Empire to open its ports to American trade. Similar 'unequal treaties' are forced on Japan by other western nations.

1857  
Uprisings occur in Northern India to protest British rule. The political mandate of the East India Company is revoked; the British government now assumes direct rule of India.

1859  
The Kingdom of Hawaii establishes formal consular representation in Victoria, B.C., and nearby Port Townsend, Washington.

1861-65  
The American Civil War. With the victory of the northern forces, slavery is abolished in the U.S.

1833

First recorded Japanese shipwreck off the west coast of British Columbia.

1845

Fort Vancouver becomes the base for the Kanaka community in the New World. They eventually become the largest single ethnic group in the area. That year, a total of 207 Kanakas worked at the forts, farms and coastal ships of the Hudson's Bay Company from California to Alaska.

To counteract the excessive rowdiness of the Kanaka population, Hudson's Bay Company's Honolulu agent recruits missionary William R. Kaulehelehe, who became better known as Kanaka William. He arrives in June with his wife Mary S. Kaai and founds the Owhyhee Church.

1846

Fifteen Kanaka seamen are found serving in the Mexican navy. Hawaii's Interior Minister proclaims, "There is no port in this ocean untrodden by Hawaiians."

1847

Yung Wing is one of three Chinese students to arrive in New York to attend school. In 1854, his graduation from Yale marks the first such event for Chinese in America. While a sophomore, he becomes a naturalized American citizen on October 30, 1852. Yung Wing later earns a law degree from Yale in 1876. He plays an important role in building Sino-American relations.

1849

Fort Rupert, near present-day Port Hardy on Vancouver Island, is built to protect newly discovered coal deposits. Coal becomes important because of the number of steamships traveling up and down the Northwest Coast. The initial work party consists of 35 French Canadians, Kanakas and Englishmen.

1853

Alarmed that an influx of Americans would result in a challenge to British sovereignty, James Douglas, the soon-to-be governor of the colony of Vancouver Island establishes the Belle Vue sheep farm on San Juan Island. In December, the farm's first foreman, Charles J. Griffin, and a band of Hawaiian shepherds arrive to care for a flock of 1,300 sheep. Despite this, in 1872, the disputed islands are ceded to the United States. Most of the Kanakas leave San Juan Island and settle across the border on the Gulf Islands, particularly Saltspring Island. Friday Harbour on San Juan Island is named in memory of one of the Kanakas, Joe Poalie, better known as 'Joe Friday'.

1858

A gold rush draws thousands of prospectors to the Fraser Valley. Chinese miners arrive from San Francisco, following the gold rush north. Mrs. Kwong Lee, the first Chinese woman in Canada lands in Victoria, B.C. She is the wife of the owner of the Kwong Lee Company.

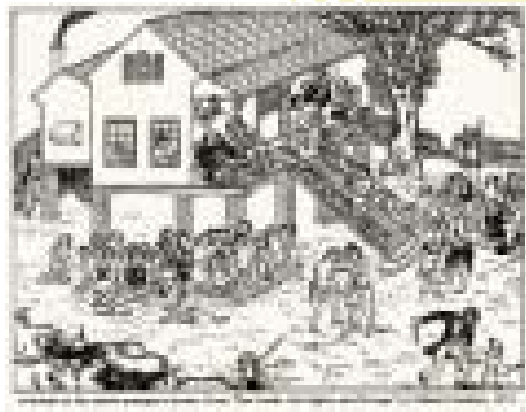
1861

Won Alexander Cumyow becomes the first Chinese baby born in Canada, in Port Douglas, B.C., at the head of Harrison Lake.

Chinese soldiers serve in the 'Avegno Tiger Zouaves' Company, 14th Louisiana Infantry, in 1861. The Zouaves companies started as companies of the Governor's Guard but were combined to form a battalion and then put in a regiment.



The hunt for beaver pelts propelled the explorations of the Hudson's Bay Company, resulting in the establishment of places such as Fort George, Fort Langley and Fort Rupert.



Indentured 'coolie' labour on an estate in Guyana (1871). Asian workers were used as a source of cheap labour on European owned plantations in the Caribbean.

1867  
The Dominion of Canada is established in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

1868-1918  
The Meiji Restoration in Japan. Following two centuries of self-imposed isolation, Japan enters a period of intense modernization. Within a short period, Japan stabilizes its politics and strengthens its economy. Japan becomes the strongest nation in Asia, and begins to expand its empire overseas.

1869  
Egypt completes the Suez Canal, facilitating trade between Europe and the Asia-Pacific. Britain later buys a controlling share of the canal to control the sea route to India.

1871  
British Columbia enters Confederation.

1877  
Britain's Queen Victoria is declared Empress of India.

1863

People from China, India, Singapore, Malaya and other Asian nations serve and die on both the Union and Confederate sides during the American Civil War. Many serve under the 'Colour Troops' divisions of both armies.

1864

Cheeahluc, the chief of the Songhees tribe on southern Vancouver Island, dies on November 11. He is reported to have Hawaiian blood.

1869

A Kanaka family settled in Coal Harbour, at a large pebble beach (where the Westin Bayshore Hotel now stands at the foot of Denman Street). They build a homestead, which comes to be known as 'Kanaka Ranch.' In 1895, a real estate developer tries to dispossess the Kanakas. The case goes to the Supreme Court, which in 1899 sustains the Kanakas' squatters' rights.

1871

Saltspring Island is nicknamed 'Little Hawaii.' The community is led by William Naukana, believed by his descendants to be the son of John Coxe (Naukane), the leader of the first Kanakas on the Columbia River. One of the most colourful Hawaiian traditions surviving in the Gulf Islands is the luau.

1877

Nagano Manzo of Yokohama abandons ship in New Westminster and takes up permanent residence in Canada, as the first recognized Issei (first-generation Japanese person). He subsequently runs a gift shop, a Japanese food store and a hotel in Victoria, B.C..

Chinese-owned laundries are established in Toronto.

1879

George Apnaut, a Kanaka, is elected to one of the first Maple Ridge town councils. The Canadian Pacific Railway builds its tracks right along the Fraser River, obliterating the little riverside Kanaka community. The last house was gone by 1912.

1881

Over 17,000 Chinese workers are brought to Canada to spend the next four years working on the western section of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Considered the most dangerous and difficult section to build, at least 600 Chinese die in the process of laying track through the Rocky Mountains, more than four for every mile of track.



Woo Hong Neok (attributed) in Union uniform, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.



Chinese railway workers' camp (ca. 1882).

The 19th century was a time of nation building in North America. Vast tracts of land needed to be cleared and cities were being built. People were necessary if the land was to be cleared and settled. Men, and later women, were brought in from all over the world to build the railways, cut down the forests and work the farms and plantations. In Canada and the United States preference was given to the English over the Scots and Irish, Northern Europeans over Southern and Eastern Europeans, and Europeans over Asians. At first, leaders in the United States and Canada praised ethnic minorities for their industriousness but as the infrastructure of these countries was being completed, the words of praise changed to complaints that these men (mostly Chinese, Indian and Japanese) were taking away 'our jobs'. Despite the racism and prejudice encountered by these early Asian pioneers, most remained in North America in the hopes of building a better life for their families.

1882  
The United States enacts the Chinese Exclusion Act.

1885  
The Canadian Pacific Railway is completed. The federal government introduces the 'Act to Restrict and Regulate Chinese Immigration into Canada,' which requires every Chinese person entering Canada to pay a head tax of \$50. In 1901, the tax is raised to \$100. By 1903, to \$500, making it impossible for the average Chinese to bring wives and children to Canada. At the time, \$500 could buy an opulent, three-story house in Vancouver's best neighbourhoods. The Chinese are the only ethnic group required to pay a head tax before being allowed entry into Canada.

1886  
Vancouver's city charter excludes Chinese and First Nations residents from voting in municipal elections.

1887  
France joins the states of Cambodia and Vietnam into a union called French Indochina. Laos is added to the union in 1893.

1894-95  
The Sino-Japanese War ends in a shocking defeat for China. The Japanese occupy Formosa (Taiwan), which had been occupied by the Portuguese. Chinese reform leaders appeal to overseas Chinese to help modernize and strengthen China.

1895  
The Japanese are denied the right to vote in B.C., regardless of their citizenship.

1884

Chinese Canadian merchants establish the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria. It becomes the political centre for the Chinese community, and inspires similar associations in other Canadian cities.

1885

The Korean American community is founded by a small group of political and social reformers who had been expelled from Korea following an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the government.

1886

Chinese labourers are stranded in Canada following the completion of the railway. Many migrate south, settling in Victoria, New Westminster and later Vancouver. A number move east to cities such as Calgary, Toronto and Montreal in search of job opportunities and less discrimination.

1887

Kuno Gihei, a Japanese, visits Canada and returns to recruit fellow villagers to settle in the village of Steveston at the mouth of the Fraser River. Until the Second World War, Steveston had the second-largest Japanese Canadian settlement in Canada.

Shishido Yo becomes the first Japanese woman to settle in Canada. She takes up residence on Powell Street with her husband, Oya Washiji, a store proprietor.

1888

Pyon Su is the first Korean to graduate from a U.S. college. He graduates from Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland) in 1888. He is killed by a train shortly after and is buried in Beltsville, Maryland.

1889

The first nisei (second-generation Japanese person), Katsuji, is born to Yo and Washiji Oya.

1892

The Calgary Smallpox Riot begins in June when a Chinese worker at a laundry contracted smallpox after a visit to Vancouver. Civic authorities burn the building and all its contents; its occupants are quarantined. Nine Chinese fall ill, and three die. The town's citizens allege the disease was spread by their unhygienic living conditions. When the surviving four are released on Aug 2, a mob of over 300 men smash the doors and windows of all the Chinese laundries, ransack the Chinese district, destroying and looting property, and assaulting Chinese residents. The local police do not act until the riot is effectively over. The Chinese community is badly shaken by the violence and seeks refuge at the Mounted Police barracks or at the homes of clergymen. The North West Mounted Police patrol the town for the next three weeks to protect Chinese Canadians against further attacks.

1892

Philip Jaisohn becomes the first Korean to become an American citizen and the first to receive an American medical degree. Four years later, he returns to Korea to establish the first Korean newspaper and becomes one of the leaders in the fight to keep Korea independent of China, and later Japan. His work in medical research and for Korean independence gains him respect in both Korea and the United States.

1895

Chinese Board of Trade is formed in Vancouver. One of Halifax's first Chinese-owned laundries opens.



Thousands of Asians were brought to North America as sources of cheap labour



Mary Bong, also known as 'China Mary' (1900s)



1898

The Treaty of Paris concludes the Spanish-American War. Spain sells the Philippines to the United States for \$20 million. The Philippine Islands become a protectorate of the United States.

United States annexes Hawaii. It is estimated there were almost one million native Hawaiians at the time of contact with the West; at the time of annexation, fewer than 40,000 native Hawaiians were left. In 1897, 29,000 native Hawaiians signed a petition to Congress protesting annexation.

1898-1902

The Filipino-American War. After the Filipino defeat, elite Filipinos are allowed to go the U.S. to attend American universities.

1900

The Boxer Rebellion in China, directed against foreign missionaries, merchants and government representatives. Western powers enter China to put down the uprising. The Chinese government is forced to pay huge amounts in compensation.

Visible minorities faced increasing prejudice as the 19th Century ended and the 20th began. The west coast of North America had large concentrations of Asians making them an economic threat and easy targets. Canada and the United States had relied on Asian workers to build their countries but now wanted these 'strangers' to leave. Restrictions against Asian immigration increased at the same time that Canada and the U.S. were actively recruiting immigration from Europe. Throughout the first half of the 20th Century small numbers of Asian communities existed in pockets along the West Coast. Isolated from society at large, Asians lived on the periphery of North American society. They were seen as a source of cheap labour and provided services that made life better for others but separated by barriers of culture and language. Asians were rarely considered a real part of the countries they lived in. They slowly grew in number and gradually moved east in search of new opportunities and places where they were less of a perceived threat.

1897

After paying for her own passage from China to Canada, 15 year old Mary Bong arrives in Sitka, Alaska, with her husband Ah Bong to operate the Sang Wo Bakery and Restaurant. She becomes the first Chinese woman in Alaska. After the death of Ah Bong in 1902, she marries Fred Johnson, of Swedish and Finnish descent, and together they operate a gold mine, run a dairy and try their hand at trapping and prospecting. In 1917, when the first salmon cannery is established, Mary becomes the first woman troller in the area. She owns an 18-foot open boat and trolls alone. At the age of 70, Mary is still working, as the official matron of the federal jail in Sitka. When the U.S. abolishes the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, Mary becomes an American citizen. She dies in 1958, simply remembered as 'China Mary.'

1899

Dr. Sun Yat-sen, known as the Father of the Chinese Republic, enters North America in July after a dramatic rescue from the Chinese embassy in London. He lands in Montréal and travels across Canada by train. After spending ten days in Victoria, he leaves for Japan. He returns to North America in February 1910, at which time he travels to San Francisco and Hawaii to gather contributions following the failure of the new Army Revolt in Canton. His third and final trip is the most successful. Supported by the Chi Kung Tong (The Chinese Freemasons), he is well received and spends his time promoting the republican cause in Vancouver's Chinatown. Afterwards, he heads a fundraising tour to all the Chinese communities in B.C. before embarking on a U.S. tour.

1900

Ahn Chang-ho, a Korean intellectual, arrives in San Francisco. In 1903, he establishes the *Chinmok-hoe* (Friendship Society), the first Korean organization in the U.S. Ten years later, he founds the *Hung Sa Dang* (Young Koreans Academy), many members of which were active in the Korean National Association. Ahn goes on to become one of the leaders of the Korean independence movement, serving as Secretary of the Interior and later as Secretary of Labor in the provisional government-in-exile set up by expatriate Korean leaders in Shanghai, China, in 1919. He is arrested by the Japanese in 1935 and dies shortly afterwards.

1902

Filipino cannery workers, calling themselves 'Alaskeros,' begin to live permanently in Alas

Takuji Yamashita is among just 10 graduates of the class of 1902 of the University of Washington Law School. At the age of 27, he argues before the state Supreme Court that his exclusion from the bar is unworthy of a nation "founded on the fundamental principles of freedom and equality." Nevertheless, his case was denied. Instead, Yamashita becomes a successful strawberry farmer and oyster cultivator only to lose everything when he and his family are interned during the Second World War. Impoverished, he works as a housekeeper in Seattle and dies in obscurity in 1959, at age 84, at the home of his grandchildren in Japan. Still hanging proudly on the wall was his law degree.

1903

The first Korean labourers arrive in Hawaii aboard the SS Gaelic. Prior to this, the Korean community in the U.S. consisted entirely of exiled intellectuals.

Work begins to lay underwater communication cables between Juneau, other southeast Alaskan communities and Seattle. The crew of the cableship Burnside consists of about 80 Filipinos. The project is completed a year later.



Dr. Sun Yat-sen

1904-05

Japan defeats Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. Japan's ability to modernize and defeat a great western power inspires nationalists and reformers across Asia.

1904

Five thousand Indian men (almost all Sikhs) begin to arrive in B.C. Most find work in lumber mills.

1905

Owen Forrester Browne, whose parental grandfather was Tahitian, becomes the captain of one of B.C.'s most famous paddlewheelers, the *Charlotte*. He later takes command of the new \$53,000 ship the *B.X.*, built by the B.C. Express Company. After the *B.X.* sinks in 1919, he skips the Hudson's Bay Company boat *Northland Echo*, which trades on the Athabaska River in Alberta. He eventually retires to New Westminster, where he dies in 1948.



Sikh immigrants arriving in Vancouver (1905)



The paddlewheeler, *B.X.* on its regular run between Soda Creek and Fort (now Prince) George. The ship remained under the command of Captain Owen Forrester Browne until it was deliberately rammed and sunk in 1919.

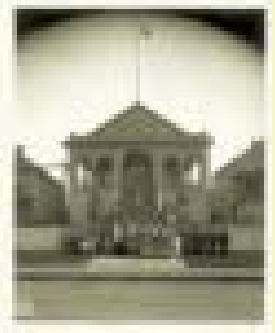
1906

Newfoundland passes a law requiring all Chinese immigrants to pay a head tax of \$300.

1906

The Khalsa Diwan Society is established in Vancouver. The organization becomes the voice for the entire Indian community and a focus for religious, social and political activity. In 1908, the society builds Canada's first gurdwara (temple) at 1866 West 2nd Avenue in Vancouver. This serves as a gathering place for Indians of all faiths.

The Korean Evangelical Society organizes in San Francisco. Many Koreans had become Christians even before leaving their homeland. After their arrival in the United States, they work hard to convert other Koreans to Christianity. Koreans establish the Mutual Assistance Society in San Francisco, which soon began publishing the first Korean-language newspaper.



The 2nd Avenue gurdwara, Vancouver (1906)

1907

"Natives of India not of Anglo-Saxon parents" are denied the right to vote in either provincial or municipal elections in British Columbia. The B.C. legislature passes an act preventing Asians from entering professions, and buying property in parts of Vancouver.

1907

On September 9, a protest rally staged by Vancouver's Asiatic Exclusion League at Vancouver's old city hall at Main and Hastings turns into a riot through Chinatown and Japantown. The riot was immediately followed by a general strike of Vancouver's Asian workers. The city's timber industry, hotels, and private homes suffer from the withdrawal of so many of its workers. W.L. Mackenzie King, then Deputy Minister of Labour, is appointed to head a Royal Commission to assess the damages claimed by Chinese and Japanese merchants. The Chinese are awarded \$3,000 in property damage and over \$20,000 for business losses; \$9,000 is awarded to the Japanese.



Vancouver's Chinatown in the aftermath of the 1907 Anti-Asiatic riot. Notice the boarded up windows. Japantown, on Powell Street a few blocks away, suffered the same amount of destruction.

A violent mob of white Americans drives 400 Sikh workers out of Bellingham.

1908

The Canadian government passes laws to stop immigration from India. The Canadian government tries to remove Sikh Canadians by offering them land in British Honduras. The Sikhs refuse.

1909

Professor Teja Singh establishes the Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Company. This provides an economic foundation for the Sikh community in Canada.



1908

The Japanese and Canadian governments enter into the Hayashi-Lemieux 'Gentleman's Agreement'. Japan agrees to voluntarily restrict the number of passports issued to Japanese male workers and domestic servants to an annual maximum of 400.

Asian immigrants to Canada are required to travel to Canada directly from their countries of origin. This legislation was directed against Indian immigration, as there is no direct travel between India and Canada: the route from India to Canada requires a stop in Hong Kong. The continuous journey requirement had the effect of banning Indian immigration. The regulation remains in place until 1947.

1910  
Japan declares Korea its colony, making its takeover official. Korea remains in Japanese control until 1945.

1911  
The Manchu Dynasty is overthrown. China is declared a republic, and Dr. Sun Yat-sen becomes its President.

## 1911

The United States Department of Agriculture awards its highest honor, the Wilder Medal, to Lue Gim Gong. His creation, the Lue Gim Gong orange makes it possible to establish the Florida and California citrus industry. The Portuguese brought the orange, a native fruit of China, to Europe and eventually found its way to the Americas but had difficulty growing in the New World. In Florida, Gong successfully mates the hardy Mediterranean variety with Chinese oranges to produce a variety suitable for the soil and climate of North America. While Lue Gim Gong oranges have become a staple in North America, the fruit no longer bears his name. Gong lived in obscurity and poverty, and died alone. His grave is untended.

When whites drove 11 Korean apricot workers out of Hemet, California, the Japanese Consul General offers to assist the workers. Korean association leaders, however, are indignant and refuse Japanese assistance.

## 1912

The first Sikh baby born in Canada, Hardial Singh Atwal, is delivered in Vancouver. Hardial is the son of Balwant Singh Atwal, the first priest of the 2nd Avenue gurdwara.

Duke Kahanamoku becomes the first Pacific Asian Olympic hero when he wins a gold medal and sets a world record in the 100-metre freestyle, and wins a silver medal as a member of the 200-metre relay in Stockholm. He wins his second and third gold medals in 1920 during the Antwerp Olympics, again breaking his world record in the 100-metre freestyle and setting a world record on the freestyle relay team. During the 1924 Paris Olympics, he wins a silver medal for the 100-metre freestyle, and is awarded a bronze medal as an alternate on the water polo team at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. After his Olympic career, Kahanamoku goes on to become a longboard surfing legend in Hawaii. Museums and memorials in Australia, California, Florida, New York and Hawaii pay tribute to his worldwide influence on surfing



Lue Gim Gong (ca. 1910), the founder of the Florida citrus industry



Duke Kahanamoku, swimmer, Olympic gold medalist and Hawaiian surfing legend (1930s)

1914-18  
The First World War.

## 1914

Three hundred seventy-six Indian immigrants arrive in Vancouver harbour on the steamer *Komagata Maru*. The Canadian government refuses to allow the Indians to disembark and after a two-month standoff, the naval cruiser *HMCS Rainbow* escorts the vessel out of Canadian waters.

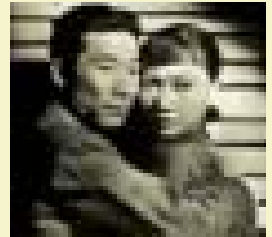
The Asashi Baseball League is formed in Vancouver, B.C. From their home grounds in Oppenheimer Park on Powell Street, they compete at all levels with teams from throughout the city and toured Japan until 1941.

The silent film *The Typhoon*, starring Japanese actor Sessue Hayakawa, is released. Based on a play written by the actor, it signals the start of an illustrious film career. During the silent era Hayakawa became a matinée idol and went on to form his own very successful production companies. As an actor, he was praised by his peers but roles were limited due to his ethnicity. Racism led him to leave the U.S. but he continued to act and produce in Japan and Europe. Hayakawa returned to the U.S. in the late 1940s to resume his movie career, this time as a character actor, mostly in war films about the Second World War. His greatest achievement was his memorable portrayal of the cruel commandant of a POW camp, in David Lean's *The Bridge On the River Kwai* for which he was nominated for an Academy Award.

Isaac H. Hoahing, an immigrant of Chinese descent from Guyana (formerly called British Guiana), enlists in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and fights in the First World War. Documentation from the time is incomplete and Hoahing is one of the few Chinese soldiers for whom there is a record. It is estimated that up to 300 Chinese Canadians volunteered to serve in the First World War.



sikhs on board the Komogata Maru



Silent screen star Sessue Hayakawa with co-star, Anna May Wong (ca. 1931)

1917  
The Bolshevik Revolution. Russians, led by Vladimir Lenin, establish a socialist state.

1918  
Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia pass laws making it illegal to hire white women in Chinese-owned restaurants and laundries. Chinese communities challenge these laws in the courts.

1919  
Indo-Canadians are allowed to bring their wives and children to Canada.

1916

After being rejected for volunteer military service in the First World War, approximately 200 Japanese British Columbians travel to Alberta to join Canadian battalions of the British army and are shipped to Europe. Fifty-four are killed and 92 are wounded.

Uchida Chitose is the first Japanese Canadian to graduate from a Canadian university. She would later become a schoolteacher.

1919

The Korean independence movement and the news of its brutal suppression by the Japanese energizes Korean American churches and study groups to redouble aid. The School of Aviation is founded in Willows, California, when Kim Chong-nim, a successful Korean American farmer known as the 'Rice King,' donates three airplanes. Pilots are trained there to fight against the Japanese Empire in the Korean struggle for independence.

Japanese fishermen control nearly half of the fishing licenses in Canada. The Department of Fisheries subsequently reduces the number of licenses issued to "other than white residents of British subjects and Canadian Indians". By 1925, close to 1,000 licenses are stripped from Japanese Canadians.

1920

After reclaiming 29,000 acres of uncultivated land, George Shima, the Japanese 'Potato King,' controls 80% of California's potato market.

1921

The School Board of Victoria creates a separate school for all Chinese students following complaints of overcrowding. Chinese parents boycott the special school until the School Board allows the Chinese students to return to the public school system.

Anna May Wong, born Wong Liu-Tsong in Los Angeles' Chinatown on January 3, 1905, above her father's laundry, becomes the first female Asian North American film star when she stars in the movie, *Toll of the Sea*. The movie should have made her a lead actor but racism relegates Wong to supporting roles for most of her career. Wong cements her place in film history when she plays the role of Hui Fei, a prostitute in *Shanghai Express* (1932). Following this success, she lobbies hard for the part O-Lan, in MGM's production of *The Good Earth* (1937). It is one of the few positive, Asian lead female characters and Wong is shattered when Austrian-born actress Luise Rainer is given the part. Wong is offered a supporting role as an unfaithful and deceitful wife, which she flatly refuses. She makes a handful of films in the 1940s but turns to television in the '50s. In addition to guest-starring on other programs, Wong has her own television show, a short-lived crime drama called *The Gallery of Mme. Lui-Tsong*. Her last film project is the 1961 movie *Flower Drum Song*, where she is cast to play Auntie. Unfortunately, she is too ill to complete the film and dies that same year at the age of 56.



Screen legend, Anna May Wong (ca. 1920s)

1923  
The Chinese Immigration Act (Exclusion Act) prevents Chinese from immigrating to Canada. Only diplomats, merchants, students and those who were born in Canada were allowed to enter. During the 24-years that the Act was enforced, only 44 Chinese arrived in Canada.

The Gentleman's Agreement between Canada and Japan is reactivated following intense pressure from the B.C. government on the federal government, and further immigration is limited to 150 per year. British Columbia passes a resolution proposing to limit the activities of all 'Orientals' in the province.

1926-28  
Chiang Kai-shek, a general and protégé of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, unites China under the rule of the Kuomintang (Nationalists) Party.

1929  
The Wall Street Crash. The Depression lasts throughout the 1930s.

1923

Filipino American boxer Francisco Guilledo becomes the World Flyweight Champion.

1925

Filipino American World Boxing Champion Pancho Villa dies at the age of 24 from blood poisoning after winning 103 of 108 fights.

1929

Fazal Muhammad Khan, a rice farmer in Butte County, California, contributes to the growth and development of the rice industry. California subsequently becomes one of the rice farming centers of the country.



Filipino American boxer, Pancho Villa (1920s)

1931  
The B.C. provincial franchise is only extended to Japanese veterans of the First World War.

Japan occupies Manchuria and establishes the puppet state of Manchukuo with Pu-yi, the last Manchu Emperor, as its figurehead.

1936-39  
The Spanish Civil War.

1936-45  
Japan invades and occupies north and central China.

1938  
*Anschluss*, the annexation of Austria by Germany, begins.

1939  
Germany invades Poland. Great Britain and France declare war on Germany. The Second World War begins as allies of both sides are drawn into the war. Chinese Canadian organizations raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for both the Chinese and Canadian war effort.

1930

Anti-Filipino riots erupt in Watsonville, California, and Kent, Washington.

1933

The Chinese Students' Soccer Club wins the B.C. Mainland Cup. The day after victory, Vancouver's Chinese community celebrates with a parade and declares it a holiday. Originally formed in 1919, the club has previously won the Iroquois Cup (1926) and the Wednesday League Cup (1931). They go on to win the Spalding Cup in 1937.



B.C. Mainland Cup Champions (1933)-The Chinese Students' Soccer Club

1936

A delegation from the Japanese Canadian Citizen's League goes to Ottawa to plead for the right to vote. They are unsuccessful.

The Vancouver Jubilee celebrates the city's 50th Anniversary. The Chinese community erects a Chinese Village as part of the celebrations. A replica, seven-story pagoda and a traditional Chinese gate are imported from China for the occasion. The Chinese Village is one of the Jubilee's most popular attractions. For most non-Chinese, it is their first introduction to the Chinese community in their city.

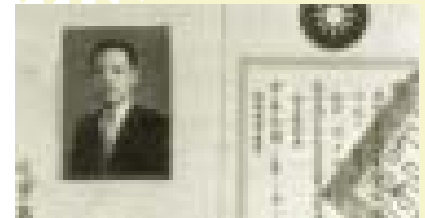
Ahn Ik-t'ae, a Korean composer living in Philadelphia, completes his composition of the Korean national anthem.

1937

Jack Shirai, a New York restaurant worker, is killed fighting the fascists in Spain. He was the only Japanese American in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

1938

Acting against orders, Dr. Feng Shan Ho, Consul General of the Chinese Nationalist government in Vienna (1938-1940), helps thousands of Jews escape the Nazis by issuing them visas to Shanghai. As an open port, Shanghai had already become a haven for Jewish refugees from Russia. Following the influx of European Jews fleeing the Nazis, there were close to 30,000 Jewish refugees in Shanghai during the Second World War. In one particularly dramatic incident, an unarmed Dr. Ho confronts Gestapo officers who had arrested the male members of a Jewish family that he had just delivered visas to. Dr. Ho forces the officers to release the men and then immediately escorts the family to the boat for Shanghai. Dr. Ho retires from diplomatic service in 1973 to San Francisco where he is a founding member of the Chinese Lutheran Church. Dr. Ho passes away in 1997 at the age of 96. On July 7, 2000, Dr. Feng Shan Ho is recognized as one of the "Righteous Among Nations" the highest award bestowed by the government of Israel, a ceremony to commemorate the event was conducted at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem.



Diplomatic visa, Dr. Feng Shan Ho (1938)

1939

Chinese Canadians volunteer for military service in the Second World War. The Canadian government refuses to consider them for active combat service. Chinese Canadians are classified as 'allied aliens' and subject to investigation.



Dr. Feng Shan Ho (ca. 1938). In 2000, the Israeli government recognized Dr. Ho as one of the "Righteous Among Nations" for saving thousands of Austrian Jews during the Holocaust.

**1941**  
On December 7, the Japanese attack Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. Germany invades the U.S.S.R. and declares war on the U.S. The U.S. enters the Second World War.

## 1941

Despite citizenship, Japanese Canadians are excluded from military service. All Japanese Canadians are required to report and register with the Register of Enemy Aliens.

## 1942

In January, the Canadian government begins to remove Japanese men from coastal areas as a 'protective' measure. During April and May, Japanese Canadian women and children begin arriving at 'ghost town' detention camps (Greenwood, Kaslo, New Denver, Slokan, Sandon and Tashme) in the British Columbia Interior.

A small number of Chinese Canadian volunteers with special skills were allowed into active service. Most of these men served as pilots and in Special Operations where their language skills allow them to work behind enemy lines in Asia. Chinese Canadians are not generally called into the draft until 1944.

## 1943

Sub-Lieutenant William K. L. Lore becomes the first Chinese Canadian in the Royal Canadian Navy and the first officer of Chinese descent in all the navies of the British Commonwealth. Because of his ability to speak Cantonese, Sub-Lieut. Lore becomes the first British officer to land in Hong Kong at the end of the war. He not only accepts official hand-over of the colony from the surrendering Japanese, he is also the first to liberate the PoWs held by the Japanese at the *Sham Shui Po* prison camp.

## 1944

Agapito Flores invents the fluorescent light.

## 1945

One hundred fifty Japanese Canadians volunteer for service with the Canadian Armed Forces in the Far East. At the same time, a campaign begins to intimidate Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia into moving to Eastern Canada or be deported to Japan.

## 1946

Thomas K. Shoyama is appointed economic advisor to Saskatchewan's pioneer CCF government by Tommy Douglas, future leader of the federal New Democratic Party.

## 1947

William (Bill) Gun Chong becomes the only Chinese Canadian to be awarded the British Empire Medal, the highest military honour given by the British government to non-British citizens. During the Second World War, Chong is known as 'Agent 50.' Working behind enemy lines, Chong is captured by the Japanese three times and escapes each time.

During the 1947-48 season, Larry 'King' Kwong is the first Chinese Canadian to play in the NHL, as a member of the New York Rangers. Also known as the 'China Clipper,' Kwong goes on to become Assistant Captain of the Valleyfield Braves in the Quebec Senior Hockey League where he leads the team to a Canadian Senior Championship, and receives the Byng of Vimy award for sportsmanship. Kwong later accepts an offer to play hockey in England and coach in Lausanne, Switzerland. He would spend the next 15 years in Europe as a hockey and tennis coach. In 1972, Kwong returns to Canada and is now the President of Food Vale in Calgary.



Notice banning Japanese from cities and towns along the B.C. coast, appeared in the Vancouver Province, 1942



Japanese family relocated to detention camp, ca. 1942



Family in front of tar paper shed, Tashme, BC, 1942



Sub-Lieutenant William K. L. Lore (1950s)



Larry 'the China Clipper' Kwong (1950s)

**1945**  
On May 7, Germany surrenders to the Allied powers. On September 2, Japan surrenders following the detonation of two nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Second World War ends. The United Nations is established.

**1946-1949**  
Civil war in China between the Kuomintang forces led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists under Mao Tse-tung. The Kuomintang are defeated by the Communists in 1949 and driven out of Mainland China. They flee to Taiwan and establish a government-in-exile.

**1947**  
Following a long struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi, India and Pakistan become independent nations.

Following intense lobbying by returning Chinese Canadian veterans, the Chinese Immigration (Exclusion Act) is repealed.

Asian Canadians earn the right to vote, provincially and federally. They are also allowed to work as pharmacists, lawyers and accountants. The franchise is not extended to Japanese Canadians until 1948.

The federal cabinet order-in-council on the deportation of Japanese Canadians is repealed following protests by churches, academics, journalists and politicians. The national Japanese Canadian Citizens Association is established at a conference in Toronto.

Things changed dramatically for Asian immigrants after World War II. While Europe was still recovering, North America experienced an economic boom. Contributions by Asians to the war effort led to the revocation of restrictions against Asian immigration and citizenship. The civil rights movement in the U.S. also had repercussions for Asians. As African Americans fought for political and social equality, other minorities also began to press for these same rights. It was a time for social change. Equality and prosperity brought new opportunities to everyone. By now, many Asian families were into their 3rd generation in North America. Many grew up in North American culture and spoke fluent English. Asian ghettos such as Chinatowns emerged from their isolation and soon became centres of tourism and nightlife.

1948  
The Soviet Union invades and takes over Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. NATO is formed as a response.

1949  
Asian Canadians participate in the B.C. provincial election and in the federal election.

1950-53  
The Korean War becomes the first armed conflict of the Cold War.

1951  
The federal quota on South Asian immigration is set at 300 annually.

## 1948

Jennie Wong is the first Chinese Canadian woman disc jockey in Vancouver. Winning a contest judged by Freddie Robbins (a New York City disc jockey), Claude Thornhill (an orchestra leader) and Frank Sinatra, she hosts a half-hour Saturday afternoon program called Jennie's Juke Joint on CKMO. Years later, she works for CBC Edmonton on the morning show.

At the London Olympics, Filipino American Vicki Manolo Draves becomes the first woman in Olympic history to win the gold medal in high (platform) and low (springboard) diving. Korean American Major Sammy Lee wins the gold medal in men's high diving, and Japanese American Harold Sakata, a native Hawaiian, wins the silver medal in weightlifting.



Two-time Olympic diving gold medalist, Sammy Lee (1940s)



Jennie Wong, Vancouver's first Chinese woman disc jockey

## 1949

Won Alexander Cumyow, who had voted provincially as a young man before the franchise was taken away from the Chinese, casts his ballot in a B.C. provincial election, marking him as the only Asian Canadian to exercise the franchise between the exclusion periods.

Japanese Canadians are free to move anywhere in Canada. This is the last of the restrictions originally imposed on Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.



Won Alexander Cumyow, voting for the first time since the repeal of the Chinese Immigration/Exclusion Act, 1949

## 1950

Naranjan Grewall, Canada's first Sikh city councillor, earns a seat in Mission. In 1954, he makes history again when he is elected mayor of Mission. Grewall owns and operates six sawmill operations, and is a vocal critic of cutting practices and forest management systems in his day. Referring to holders of forest management licenses as 'Timber Maharajahs,' he warns that within 10 years, three or four giant corporations would effectively control the industry in B.C.



Naranjan Grewall, Canada's first Sikh city councillor and mayor (ca. 1950)

## 1952

At the Summer Olympics in Helsinki, Finland, Korean American Sammy Lee becomes the first Olympic diver to win back-to-back gold medals. His second gold medal for men's high diving came on his 32nd birthday. Lee goes on to coach several diving greats, such as Bob Webster and Greg Louganis. During these games, Japanese American Tommy Kono wins the gold in weightlifting, while Ford Konno and Yoshinbu Oyakawa become the first Japanese Americans to win gold medals in swimming.

Dahlip Singh Saund becomes the first Indo-American elected to the U.S. Congress.

## 1954

Margaret Jean Gee becomes the first Chinese Canadian woman lawyer admitted to the bar in Canada. She enrolled as a law student at the University of British Columbia in 1950, only three years after the B.C. Law Society lifted its restriction on bar membership to only those who were eligible to vote. She was also the first Chinese Canadian woman Pilot Officer (Reserves) in the Royal Canadian Air Force.



Margaret Jean Gee, Canada's first Chinese Canadian woman lawyer

1955  
On December 1, Rosa Parks, a black woman, refuses to give up her bus seat to a white man. This act signals the beginning of the civil rights movement in the U.S.

1957  
Civil war erupts in Vietnam.  
The U.S.S.R. successfully launches *Sputnik*, the first satellite to orbit the Earth.

1959  
Fidel Castro and the Communists take over Cuba.

1961  
Fearing a Communist victory in Vietnam, the U.S. enters the conflict.

1962  
The annual quota, or limit, on immigrants from India is removed.

The 1960s was a period of discovery and rebellion, idealism and experimentation. Young people embraced Asian spiritual philosophies in their search for enlightenment. Through the teachings of Indian, Chinese and Japanese spiritual leaders, many had their first real introduction to the culture of the East, and people of Asian descent began to discover their 'roots' and become increasingly proud of their ethnic identities. By the 1970s, the unrest of the 60s took a different form of political activism. The idealists of the 60s organized and focused their energies on specific issues. The legacies of this activism are organizations such as the NAACP and NOW in the U.S. and the National Council of Chinese Canadians and the Japanese Canadian National Association in Canada.

1966  
Mao Tse-tung declares a 'Cultural Revolution' in China.

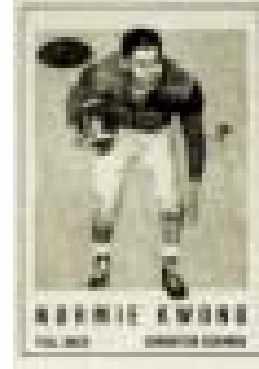
1967  
Canadian immigration laws are changed to a points system and all restrictions specifically directed against Asian immigration are lifted. The universal points system was created to encourage educated professionals and skilled workers from all over the world to immigrate to Canada. As a result, a new, increasingly diverse immigrant population is created.

1969  
On July 20, Neil Armstrong becomes the first man to walk on the moon.

## 1955

Harban Singh (Herb) Doman establishes Doman Industries Ltd. It becomes one of Canada's largest lumber companies.

Normie Kwong is selected as Canada's Athlete of the Year. Nicknamed 'the China Clipper,' he spends 14 seasons with football teams in Calgary and Edmonton. Kwong was in seven Grey Cup finals, including four winners, with Calgary in 1948, Edmonton in 1954, 1955 and 1956. He was twice selected as the Most Outstanding Canadian, being awarded the \$500 Schenley bonus in 1955 and 1956. He was awarded the Eddie James Memorial Trophy as WFC's leading rusher three times and was a five-time All-Star. Kwong scored a career 83 touchdowns and gained 9,022 yards rushing, averaging 5.2 yards per carry (the third highest in league history). He is a member of the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.



Normie 'the China Clipper' Kwong, Fullback with the Edmonton Eskimos (1950s)

## 1957

Douglas Jung, representing Vancouver Centre, becomes the first Chinese Canadian Member of Parliament. Shortly after, he is appointed by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker to be Canada's representative at the United Nations.

Chinese Americans Chen Ning Yang and Tsung Dao Lee win the Nobel Prize in Physics.

Bobby Balcena is the first Filipino American outfielder for the Cincinnati Reds.



Douglas Jung on the campaign trail (1957). Jung was elected as an M.P. under the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker

## 1962

World-renowned conductor Zubin Mehta assumes the post of music director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Already the music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Mehta becomes the first conductor to head two major North American orchestras at the same time. In 1967, the Indian government awarded him its highest cultural honor, *Padma Bhushan* (Order of the Lotus), and in 1976 the Italian government awarded him the honorary title of *Commendatore*.

Wayson Choy's first published work is selected for *The Best American Short Stories*.

## 1967

The City of Vancouver produces a plan for urban renewal that includes a freeway from the suburbs into the downtown core. The planned freeway would have destroyed most of Chinatown and parts of Strathcona. The local residents band together and defeat this proposed destruction of their neighbourhood.

## 1968

American geneticist Har Gobind Khorana is a co-winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his studies in genetics. Khorana held posts at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland, the University of Cambridge, the University of British Columbia in 1952 (working with Dr. Gordon Shrum), and the Rockefeller Institute in New York City. In 1960, Khorana joins the Enzyme Institute at the University of Wisconsin, eventually becoming its co-director.



Nobel prize winner Har Gobind Khorana with Gordon Shrum, at UBC to accept an honorary Doctorate in 1971

## 1969

Roman Gabriel, a Filipino American quarterback for the Los Angeles Rams (1962-1973) wins the 1969 NFL MVP and Player of the Year.

## 1970

Sri Lankan born Michael Ondaatje is the most celebrated contemporary Canadian author winning a Governor General's Award in 1970 for *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, an account of the factual and fictional life of the notorious outlaw. His collection of poems, *There's a Trick with a*



1971

The People's Republic of China emerges from self-imposed political exile. It joins the United Nations and assumes China's seat on the Security Council. They take over the seat from the Republic of China (Taiwan), which had been recognized as the official representative of the Chinese government. Taiwan now exists in political limbo and is not recognized as an independent nation by any major power.

The Liberal government under Prime Minister Pierre Eliot Trudeau makes "multiculturalism" official government policy. This recognizes the diversity of the Canadian population and was designed to preserve and promote cultural pluralism.

1973

Recession in the U.S. and Canada is triggered by the oil crisis and continues until the 1980s.

1975

With the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam in 1975 and the collapse of the governments of Laos and Cambodia, over two million refugees flee the former Indochina, fearing Communist reprisals. Although these refugees have resettled all over the world, the largest number (over 1,250,000) have been admitted to the United States.

1978

The second wave of Vietnamese refugees begins arriving, continuing to immigrate through the mid-1980s. Known as 'the boat people,' they took to the seas in rickety, overcrowded boats. Those who escaped death by drowning or at the hands of pirates, ended up in camps in Southeast Asia or Hong Kong; others traveled by a dangerous land route through Cambodia to Thailand. This latter group included many ethnic Chinese who were persecuted by the Vietnamese government, as well as Vietnamese who faced being sent to re-education camps or forced evacuation to the 'new economic zones' in the countryside. Both Canada and the United States open their doors to 'the boat people.'

1971

*Knife I'm Learning to Do*, won him a second Governor General's Award in 1979. *The English Patient*, Ondaatje's most acclaimed novel to date, won the Governor General's Award for fiction in 1992 and earned Ondaatje a share of the prestigious Booker Prize, the first ever awarded to a Canadian. In 2000 he won the Kiriayama Pacific Rim Book Prize for fiction and shortlisted for the Booker Prize.



Michael Ondaatje

1972

The B.C. government designates Vancouver's Chinatown as a protected historic area, the only one of its kind in North America.

1973

Ismaili Muslims arrived in Canada from East Africa.

Promod Puri launches the *Indo-Canadian Link* newspaper in Vancouver.

Vancouver's Chinese Cultural Centre is established

Bruce Lee's only English language movie, *Enter the Dragon*, is released posthumously and makes him an international superstar. A Chinese American martial artist, Lee was born in San Francisco. Lee was a child actor in Hong Kong and tried to establish a performing career in the United States. After appearing as the sidekick Kato in the *Green Hornet* series, Lee returned to Hong Kong after being turned down for the starring role in the series *Kung-Fu* in favour of a Caucasian actor with no experience in martial arts. Lee is also remembered as the creator of the martial arts philosophy *jeet kune do*.

1975

From 1975 to 1980 Alannah Ong worked for the Canadian Central Band as a pianist for the Governor General of Canada. She was the first woman (and first Chinese Canadian) musician for the Canadian Armed Forces. The government had to design a special uniform for her.

1977

Japanese Canadians commemorate the centennial of the first Japanese person to immigrate to Canada, Manzo Nagano. The centennial celebrations are closely followed by the organization of informal groups to discuss seeking redress. In Vancouver, the Japanese Canadian community celebrates the centennial with the Powell Street Festival. The festival continues today and, in 2001, celebrates its 25th anniversary.

1978

A restaurant called "Kanaka Place" opens on Saltspring Island. Even today there are quite a few Kanaka descendants remaining on the island, but the only conspicuous signs of Kanaka heritage are in street names such as Roland Road and Kanaka Road, and the Kanaka Restaurant in Ganges.

Ellison Onizuka, a Japanese American aerospace engineer, becomes an astronaut candidate. He is assigned to film Halley's comet with a handheld camera on the fatal space shuttle *Challenger* mission in 1986.



Alannah Ong, pianist

1979

CTV airs a W5 report called "Campus Giveaway", portraying Chinese Canadian citizens and immigrants as foreigners who take university seats away from white Canadians. The ensuing national protest leads to the creation of the Chinese Canadian National Council.

*The Nature of Things*, a CBC science television series, goes on the air with its host Dr. David Suzuki, a Japanese Canadian scientist and environmental activist. An internationally respected geneticist, Dr. Suzuki has received numerous awards for his work, including a UNESCO prize for science, a United Nations Environment Program medal and the Order of Canada. In 1990, he establishes the David Suzuki Foundation to "find and communicate ways in which we can achieve a balance between social, economic, and ecological needs."



Dr. David Suzuki, scientist, environmentalist & broadcaster

1980

The Canadian Ismaili community established the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, a non-profit international development agency and a part of the world-wide network of Aga Khan Foundation, it supports social development projects designed to benefit the poor in Africa and Asia without regard to race, religion or political affiliation.

1981

*Obasan* by Joy Kogawa is published. A fictional account of the internment told from the perspective of a young girl, the novel significantly raises awareness of the Japanese Canadian internment experience. For *Obasan*, Kogawa wins the First Novel Award (Books in Canada) and the Book of the Year (Canadian Authors' Association).

1983

Indian American physicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar wins the Nobel Prize in physics for his theoretical studies of the physical processes related to the structure and evolution of the stars. On July 23, 1999, NASA's Advanced X-ray Astrophysics Facility was renamed the "Chandra X-ray Observatory" in his honor and launched by the space shuttle *Columbia*.

A Sikh Chair is established at the University of British Columbia. In 1994, a Sikh Chair is established at the University of Toronto.

1984

Art Miki becomes President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians and begins a concerted campaign for redress. A brief entitled, *Democracy Betrayed: the Case for Redress* is presented to the government.

Vancouver-born Lori Fung wins the first ever gold medal in rhythmic gymnastics at the Los Angeles Olympic Games. Fung is later inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame and the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame.

1985

Mr. Justice Wallace (Wally) Oppal, an Indo-Canadian, is appointed to the B.C. Supreme Court.

1986

Monmohan (Moe) Sihota becomes the first Indo-Canadian Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Murad Velshi, the Liberal Party member for Don Mills, is the first Ismaili Muslim elected to the Ontario Provincial Government.

1988

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announces the Canadian government's formal apology for the wrongful incarceration, seizure of property and the disenfranchisement of thousands of Japanese Canadians.

Philanthropist David C. Lam becomes the first Chinese Canadian to be appointed the Lieutenant-governor of a Canadian province.



Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and National Association of Japanese Canadians President Art Miki signing the Redress Agreement with members of the negotiation team looking on, September 22, 1988

The late 1980s brought on a series of profound political changes in Europe and Asia. The Cold War, which dominated the world following World War II, disappeared as the Eastern Bloc collapsed and communist nations in Asia either fell or introduced democratic reforms. Huge advances in communications and travel meant that the 'global village' was an increasing reality. Political activism took on a more international view. Increased awareness of what was happening around the world meant that people in North America cared as much about issues at home as they did abroad.

1985  
Mikhail Gorbachev becomes leader of the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. Under his regime, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. negotiate two arms limitation treaties (1987 and 1990) effectively ending the Cold War.

1986  
Vancouver hosts the World's Fair, Expo 86. The event is a success and gives Vancouver a greater international profile.

The Dr. Sun Yat-sen Classical Chinese Garden opens in Vancouver, B.C. It is the first traditional Chinese garden ever to be built outside of Asia.

1989

Democratic elections are held in the U.S.S.R. Boris Yeltsin becomes the first elected president of Russia. Soviet regimes in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Poland topple. The Berlin Wall falls.

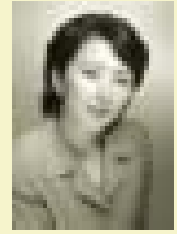
The Tiananmen Square Massacre in China galvanizes many Chinese North Americans' dedication to democracy and human rights.

1989

Chinese American Michael Chang wins the French Open at the age of 17. He is the youngest man to ever win the French Open, a Grand Slam and the youngest to be ranked among the top five professional tennis players in the world.

1990

Mi-Jung Lee, the first Korean Canadian media personality, launches her television journalism career in 1990 as a reporter and part-time anchor at CHEK-TV in Victoria. She moves to BCTV in November 1992. At BCTV, Mi-Jung produces and anchors the "Weekend News Hour". In August 1998, Mi-Jung joins VTV as the co-anchor of "Live @ 6". She now anchors and helps produce "VTV News at 5" with Mi-Jung Lee.

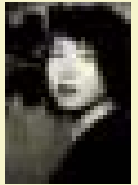


Mi-jung Lee

Evelyn Lau becomes the youngest Canadian to be nominated for a Governor General's Award for Poetry, at age 21.

1991

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police introduce new regulations to allow Sikh constables to wear elements of their religious attire as part of their official uniform. Constable Baltej Singh Bhillon is the first RCMP officer to wear a turban and other Sikh symbols.



Evelyn Lau

1992

Kristi Yamaguchi, a Japanese American, wins the gold medal for figure skating at the Albertville Olympics.

1993

Harbance (Herb) Dhaliwal from Vancouver, B.C., and Gurbax Singh Malhi from Malton, Ontario, are the first Indo-Canadians elected to Parliament. Malhi is the first turbaned Sikh to do so. Herb Dhaliwal later becomes the first Indo-Canadian to assume a Cabinet post when he is appointed Minister of National Revenue in 1997. Since 1999, Dhaliwal has been the Minister of Fish and Oceans.



RCMP Constable Baltej Singh Bhillon

After playing college hockey at the University of Maine, Paul Kariya was drafted fourth overall in the first round of the National Hockey League draft by the Anaheim Mighty Ducks. Kariya was born in Vancouver, B.C., on October 16, 1974, to a Japanese Canadian father and a Caucasian mother. Kariya has firmly established himself as one of the most skillful athletes of the NHL, having won Hockey East Player of the Year (1993), Hockey East Rookie of the Year (1993), Hobey Baker Memorial Award (1993), a silver medal with the Canadian Olympic team (1994), and the Lady Byng Memorial Trophy (1997). He led the NHL with 429 shots during the 2000 season, shooting 86 more times than anybody else in the league.



Paul Tetsuhiko Kariya, Left Wing, Anaheim Mighty Ducks

1994

Margaret Cho, of Korean descent, becomes the first Asian American woman with her own TV sitcom, *All-American Girl*. The show aired for two seasons on ABC.

Over 300 Kanaka descendants gather on Saltspring Island for a modern-day luau during which a bronze plaque (since installed at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church) giving a brief history of the Kanakas on Saltspring and the Gulf Islands is dedicated.



Margaret Cho, author and comedian

1995

Mina Shum's film *Double Happiness*, starring Korean Canadian Sandra Oh, wins the Best First Film prize at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Rohinton Mistry wins the Giller Prize (Canada's richest literary award) for his novel *A Fine Balance*. His first novel, *Such a Long Journey* (1991), wins the Governor General's Award and is shortlisted for the prestigious Booker Prize.

Multimedia artist Paul Wong is given a major solo retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery, Ottawa.



Rohinton Mistry

1997

Tiger Woods becomes the youngest man ever to win the Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club. Born on December 30, 1975, in Cypress, California, to parents Earl Woods (half black, one-quarter American Indian, and one-quarter Chinese) and Kultida Woods (half Thai, one-quarter Chinese, and one-quarter white), Eldrick 'Tiger' Woods has become one of golf's most accomplished players. After winning numerous titles as a junior and amateur golfer, Tiger turns pro in August 1996. In 2001, Tiger Woods becomes the only golfer to win all the major golfing titles (the PGA Championship, the British Open, the U.S. Open and the Masters) in one tournament year.



Tiger Woods

Rahim Jaffer becomes the first Ismaili Muslim to be elected to the Canadian Parliament.



Rahim Jaffer, MP  
Alliance Party

1998

Vivienne Poy, entrepreneur and philanthropist, is appointed to the Senate by Prime Minister Jean Chretien. She is the first Chinese Canadian to serve in this capacity.

Jenny Wai Ching Kwan becomes the first Chinese Canadian appointed to the B.C. Cabinet when she becomes Minister of Municipal Affairs. Since then, she has served as Minister of Women's Equality and Minister of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers. Before being elected to provincial office, Kwan was the youngest person elected to Vancouver City Council.



Senator Vivienne Poy

1999

Journalist and broadcaster Adrienne Clarkson becomes the first Chinese Canadian Governor General.

Steve Kariya is signed by the Vancouver Canucks. Steve, along with his brother Paul Kariya of the Anaheim Mighty Ducks, became the first Asian Canadian siblings playing in the National Hockey League.



Adrienne Clarkson,  
Governor General of  
Canada

2000

Ujjal Dosanjh, the first Indo-Canadian to serve as provincial Attorney General, is sworn in as B.C.'s 33rd Premier.

Sheni Dossa becomes the first Ismaili Muslim to be appointed as Provincial Court judge in British Columbia.

The National Nikkei Heritage Centre and the Japanese Canadian National Museum officially open their doors in their new facility in Nikkei Place, Burnaby, B.C.



Ujjal Dosanjh, B.C.'s 33rd Premier, 2000

2001

Dr. Rey Pagtakhan, MP from Winnipeg, becomes the first Filipino Canadian to hold a federal cabinet post when he is appointed Secretary of State for the Asia-Pacific Region.

Emmanuel Sandhu becomes the first Indo-Canadian to win a Canadian Figure Skating Championship.

*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a Chinese-language film directed and written by Taiwanese American Director Ang Lee, is nominated for 10 Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Foreign Film. The movie wins the awards for Best Foreign Language Film, Best Cinematography, Best Art Direction and Best Original Score. Lee had previously received Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations for his first film, *The Wedding Banquet*.



Dr. Rey Pagtakhan, Secretary of State for the Asian Pacific Region

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<http://www.najc.ca/nexus/>

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<http://people.colgate.edu/emulhare/puebla.html>


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<http://www.ahm.bc.ca>

Rice Paper Magazine  
<http://www.ricepaperonline.com>

Banana Magazine  
<http://www.bananamag.com>

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Jim Wong-Chu and K. Linda Tzang

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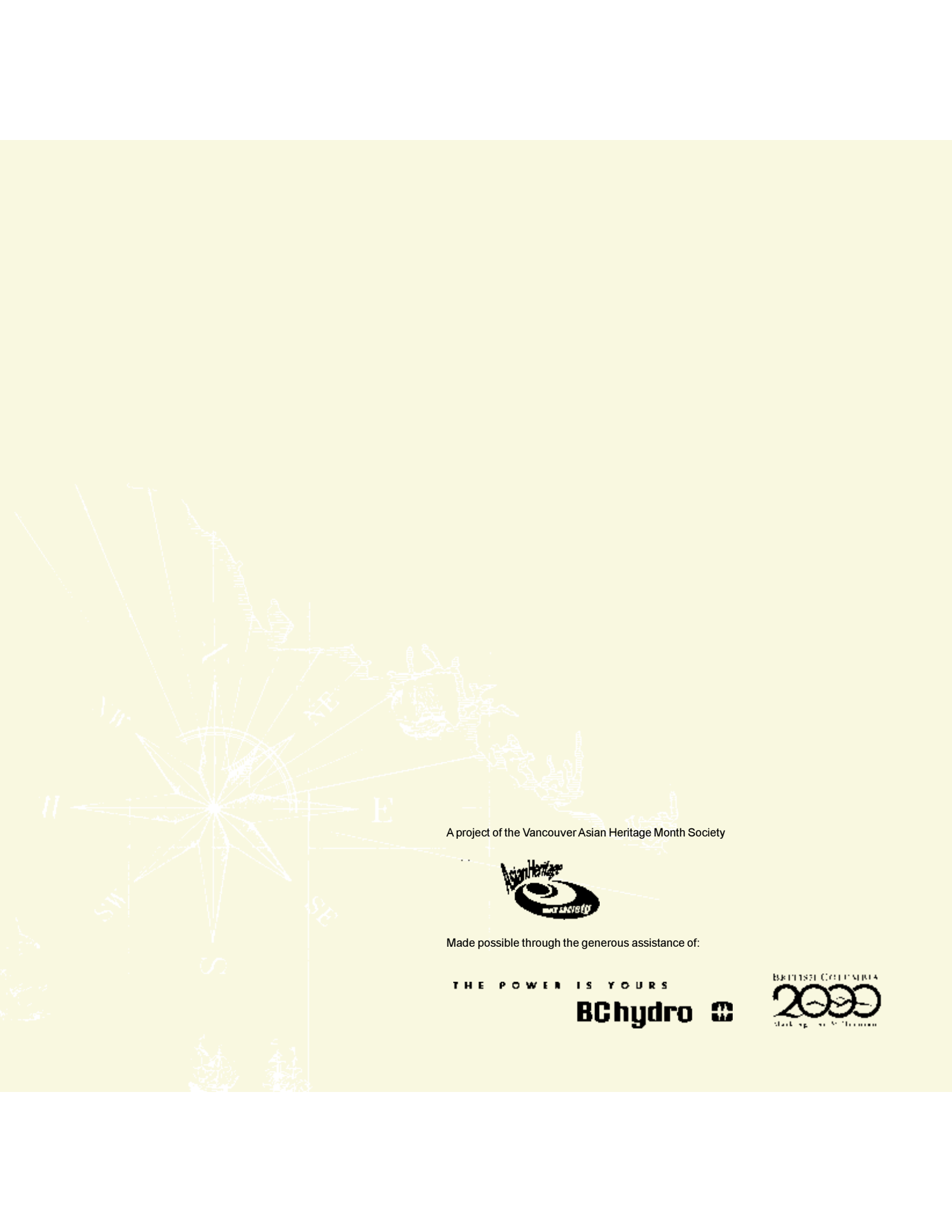
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For further information, please contact the authors or  
Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society,  
P.O. Box 74157, Hillcrest R.P.O.,  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V5V 5C8



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