


Presented 2 March 2022



Lost and Found:

Reconsidering Chinese Immigration records at 100 years of the Chinese Exclusion Act

Chinese Canadian history

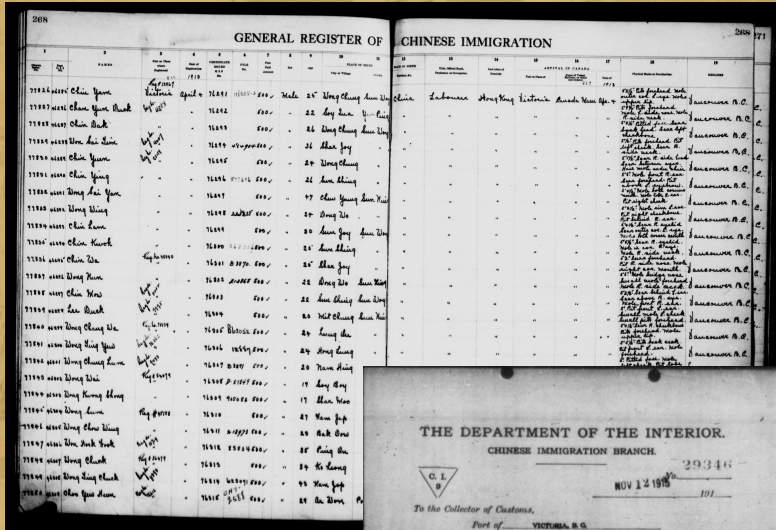
- ❖ 1885
 - Completion of CPR through Chinese labour
 - Chinese Immigration Act passed – created punitive ‘head tax’ as a barrier
- ❖ 1923 – Turned exclusionary – Chinese ‘Exclusion’ Act
- ❖ 1885–1949 (60+ years):
Chinese Immigration (C.I.) records created to process and monitor those Chinese under the discriminatory legislation
 - Immigration records
 - Registration records

History of C.I. records at LAC

- ❖ 2000's: Register of Chinese Immigrants to Canada, 1885-1949
 - Indexed by SSHRC-funded UBC History Henry Yu and Peter Ward
 - Ledger entries, no photos, 97,000 Chinese upon arrival
 - 'Head tax database'
 - (2006 apology of Gov't of Canada and redress to head tax families)

- ❖ 2010's: C.I.9 (travel) series opened through block review
 - Previously restricted due to PII
 - SSHRC-funded York U Lily Cho on the first mass use of identification photography in Canada to monitor and track 'undesirables'
 - 15 microfilm reels/ 41,000 records, **photos**, 'registering out' for travel

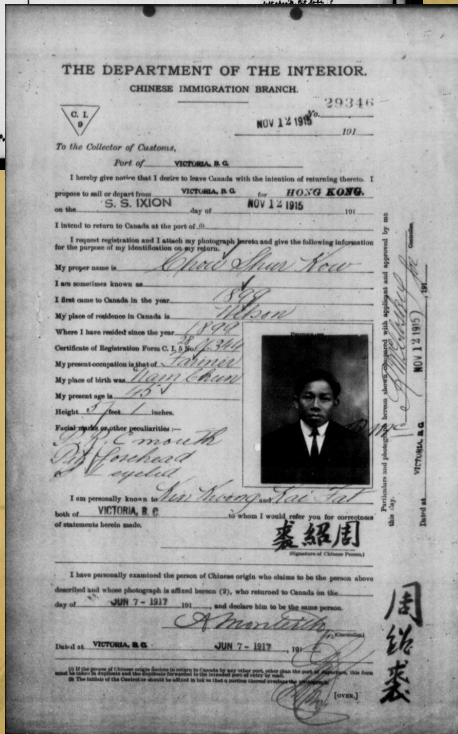
LAC database



GENERAL REGISTER OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION									
No.	Name	Date	Age	Sex	Place of Birth	Place of Residence	Occupation	Remarks	Signature
11111	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11112	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11113	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11114	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11115	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11116	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11117	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11118	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11119	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		
11120	Chen Yuen	1911	25	M	China	Canada	Farmer		

Registers (ledgers)

C.I.9



THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.
CHINESE IMMIGRATION BRANCH.

29346

NOV 12 1915

To the Collector of Customs,
Port of VICTORIA, B.C.

I hereby give notice that I desire to leave Canada with the intention of returning therein. I propose to sail or depart from VICTORIA, B.C. on the S. S. IXION day of NOV 12 1915.

I intend to return to Canada at the port of B.C.

I request registration and I attach my photograph hereto and give the following information for the purpose of my identification on my return.

My proper name is CHONG KONG.

I am sometimes known as.

I first came to Canada in the year.

My place of residence in Canada is.

Where I have resided since the year.

Certificate of Registration Form C. 1, 2, 3.

My present occupation is that of.

My place of birth was.

My present age is.

Height.

Facial marks or other peculiarities.

I am personally known to the Collector of Customs and the Collector of Customs has examined the person of Chinese origin who claims to be the person above described and whose photograph is affixed hereto (2), who returned to Canada in the day of JUN 7 - 1917 and declares him to be the same person.

Subscribed at VICTORIA, B.C. JUN 7 - 1917.

Signature of Chinese Person.

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Immigrants from China, 1885-1949

The records

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Name

Date of Registration (1938 or 1938-11 or 1938-11-30)

Certificate Number

Search

Clear

2020's: New Research & Records

- ❖ URGENCY: 2023 (July 1st) will mark the 100th anniversary of the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act
- ❖ Community commemorative project of *The Paper Trail to the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act*:
 - Community recovery and collection of C.I. series of photo identification certificates
 - Public exhibition in 2023 in Vancouver Chinatown curated upon “paper trail” of C.I. records
 - Discovery, opening and access to C.I.44 (registration) series at LAC

C.I.44 record series

- ❖ Newly released through ATIP/block review
- ❖ 29 microfilm reels (forms and index)
- ❖ Photo identification
- ❖ Records created 1923-1924 to carry out Section 18 of the Chinese Exclusion Act
 - Mandatory registration of **ALL** Chinese in Canada (immigrant AND born-in-Canada)
- ❖ Most comprehensive set of records of early Chinese community in Canada

Department of Immigration and Colonization
CHINESE IMMIGRATION SERVICE

This is to certify that the party described below registered at this office pursuant to Section 18, Chinese Immigration Act, Chapter 38, 13-14 George V.

Name: **MAH YEE GEE**
Otherwise known as: **WILLIE MAH**
Address: **619, Hep. Chow, P.O. Box 555 - Cranbrook - British Columbia**
Present Occupation: **None** Age: **5** Male
if (wife) in Canada give name and address. Also names and addresses of children, if in Canada. (father) **MAH GEE SU - P.O. Box 555, Cranbrook, B.C.**
(mother) **WOO SHEE**
Born at: **Cranbrook British Columbia**
Originally admitted to Canada at the port of: **Ex. 88** Date of Birth: **11th day of March 1919**
Amount Head Tax Paid \$: **Is in possession of certificate C.I. No.**
Height: **5** feet **4 1/2** inches.
Facial Marks and Physical Peculiarities: **None**
Remarks: **Birth registered at Cranbrook, B.C.**
Signature of Registrar: **Benison**
Title: **Corporal, P.O. Box 555** Place and date: **Cranbrook, B.C. June 26th 1923**
Arrival verified: **C.I. 4 No.**
C.I. No.: **5571**
Pyle No.: **30**
This space for use of Department: **REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE No. 5571**
MAH YEE GEE
June 30 1923
Benison

LO BING FU C.I. 36/00712 864269
C.I. 44/57530
34
Jun. 15, 1925

Relationship with LAC

- ❖ ATIP/block review was prioritized and passed (Fall 2021)
- ❖ Next Step to digitize 29 microfilm reels is being prioritized
- ❖ Interest in and previous experience partnering with community and UBC on access to C.I. records (e.g. indexing)
- ❖ Contacts in Public Services Branch: Marnie Burnham, Melanie Brown, Caitlin Webster

Community & User Needs

- ❖ Commemoration of 100 years since the passing of the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act
 - Darkest and most despairing period of Chinese Canadian history (lasted an entire generation)
- ❖ Genealogical research
 - C.I.44 series with potential to be the most comprehensive and of highest research value among C.I. records at LAC or **anywhere**
 - Almost all C.I. record subjects are deceased

Issues & Unknowns

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1923-chinese-exclusion.ca