

From the Other to the Enemy: Representations of Chinese New Year and Anti-Chinese Sentiment in British Columbia, 1885–1907

Julia Nicolaisen

On the evening of September 7, 1907, the crash of shattering windows began to echo through the streets of Vancouver's Chinatown, signalling the beginning of an anti-Asian riot of unprecedented ferocity that would attract attention on the global stage.¹ White rioters seeking to intimidate and ultimately scare away the city's Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian residents damaged almost all the storefronts and homes in Chinatown and many buildings in the adjacent Little Tokyo.² By the time of the riots, anti-Asian sentiment had been festering in British Columbia (BC) since the mid-1800s, when Chinese communities began to emerge in Canada's West Coast.³ From this point onwards, Chinese Canadians⁴ in BC encountered ongoing prejudice, harassment, and physical violence as well as discriminatory legislation, including the well-known federal *Chinese Immigration Act* (1885), which placed a head tax on the vast majority of Chinese immigrants entering Canada.⁵ When significant numbers of Japanese and South Asian immigrants began to arrive in the 1890s and early 1900s, anti-Chinese sentiment became incorporated into broader anti-Asian racism in the province.⁶ Thus, anti-Chinese sentiment was continuous throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; however, it was neither homogenous nor stable during this early period of Canadian history. In this essay, I explore how anti-Chinese sentiment in BC shifted to create an atmosphere ripe for the outburst of racial hatred in 1907. To do so, I specifically examine the newspaper representation of Chinese New Year celebrations, an important cultural element within BC's early

¹ Peter W. Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia*, 3rd ed., McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 54; John Price, *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific* (University of British Columbia Press, 2011), 20.

² Julie F. Gilmour, *Trouble on Main Street: Mackenzie King, Reason, Race, and the 1907 Vancouver Riots* (Allen Lane, 2014), 16–19; Erika Lee, "Hemispheric Orientalism and the 1907 Pacific Coast Race Riots," *Amerasia Journal* 33, no. 2 (2007), 31.

³ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 14–15.

⁴ Throughout this paper, I typically use the term "Chinese Canadians" for all individuals living in Canada with Chinese origins. This includes both immigrants, who may have only stayed temporarily in the country, as well as families with long histories in Canada and those of Chinese descent born in Canada.

⁵ *The Chinese Immigration Act*, (Ottawa: Parliament of Canada, 1885), from Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, 208–209, pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/the-chinese-immigration-act-1885.

⁶ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 54.

Chinese Canadian communities that frequently attracted the attention of white audiences.

BC newspapers offer a unique entry point into understanding popular anti-Chinese sentiment in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as they reported extensively on Chinese Canadians and Chinese cultural practices. Articles on Chinese New Year are some of the most detailed. The celebration, also known as the Spring Festival, occurs at the beginning of the lunar year, typically in January or February, and usually lasts fifteen days.⁷ As Chinese populations immigrated to BC, they recreated Chinese New Year traditions in their new communities. In settlements within large Chinatowns, such as in Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster, Chinese Canadians hosted celebrations at a grand scale.⁸ This study focuses on newspapers based in these three settlements from when federal immigration restrictions arose in 1885 until 1907.

While early news sources on Chinese New Year already demonstrated strong anti-Chinese prejudice, later reports revealed heightened contempt for local celebrations of the holiday and Chinese Canadian celebrants. Over time, newspapers tended to emphasize the negative impact of Chinese New Year on white residents, reduced their encouragement for participation in the festivities, and firmly framed Chinese Canadian celebrants as unwelcome outsiders. These shifts reflected and reinforced the broader intensification of anti-Chinese sentiment leading up to the 1907 riots, illustrating the significance of everyday expressions of prejudice in shaping the dynamics of racism in Canada.

Scholarship on Chinese Canadian experiences during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries picked up in the 1970s with the emergence of literature on Chinese Canadian communities in BC and immigration politics. One of the most extensive early works is Peter Ward's *White Canada Forever* (1972), which analyzes anti-Chinese stereotypes, demonstrating how discrimination against Chinese Canadians resulted primarily from racism rather than solely economic considerations.⁹ Over the next few decades, other scholars continued to consider how Chinese Canadians experienced racialization — the process in which a group becomes seen as distinctly different from others based on supposed racial

⁷ The Smithsonian, "Lunar New Year," *National Museum of Asian Art*, accessed 13 March 2025, asia.si.edu/whats-on/events/celebrations/lunar-new-year-celebration/.

⁸ David Chuen-Yan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada* (University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 194.

⁹ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, ix–x; Other examples of early works include John A. Munro, "British Columbia and the 'Chinese Evil': Canada's First Anti-Asiatic Immigration Law," *Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue d'études Canadiennes* 6, no. 4 (1971), 42–51; David Chuen-Yan Lai, "Chinese Immigrants into British Columbia and their Distribution, 1858–1970," *Pacific Viewpoint* 14, no. 1 (1973), 102–108; Peter S. Li, "A Historical Approach to Ethnic Stratification: The Case of the Chinese in Canada, 1858–1930," *Canadian Review of Sociology / Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 16, no. 3 (1979), 320–332.

markers.¹⁰ For instance, David Chuen-Yan Lai's *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada* (1988) and Kay Anderson's *Vancouver's Chinatown* (1991) explored how racism impacted the daily realities of life in Chinese Canadian ethnic enclaves from the nineteenth century onwards.¹¹

Despite providing an important foundation of knowledge for future scholars, this scholarship often dedicates less attention to how BC populations, especially Chinese Canadians, resisted and negotiated racism. Responding to this gap, more recent studies have asserted that BC populations did indeed contest anti-Chinese racism throughout the period. Lisa Rose Mar's *Brokering Belonging* (2010) and Timothy J. Stanley's *Contesting White Supremacy* (2011) described how Chinese populations understood, challenged, and coped with racist policies and beliefs during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹² While my study focuses on non-Chinese perspectives and voices, it incorporates the new scholarly emphasis on the nuances of racism in the period by drawing attention to how early ideas about Chinese culture potentially complicated entrenched hierarchical understandings of race. Another stream of recent scholarship has emphasized ideas about identity and Chinese Canadian cultural elements like music, theatre, religion, medicine, and food.¹³ Still, there has yet to be a study specifically dedicated to perceptions of Chinese Canadian celebrations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, let alone a specific work on Chinese New Year. Therefore, by focusing on the complex representation of Chinese New Year celebrations, this study draws together and extends the scholarship on nuanced understandings of anti-Chinese sentiment and Chinese Canadian culture in history. In providing a specific case study of Chinese New Year celebrations, my research uniquely illuminates the granularities of anti-Chinese racism leading up to the 1907 riots. It also offers a stark example of the pervasiveness of anti-Chinese sentiment in BC by showcasing how prejudice toward Chinese Canadians went beyond political debates over immigration, seeping into everyday

¹⁰ Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 18.

¹¹ Lai, *Chinatowns*; Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*.

¹² Lisa Rose Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1885–1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2010); Timothy J. Stanley, *Contesting White Supremacy: School Segregation, Anti-Racism, and the Making of Chinese Canadians* (University of British Columbia Press, 2011); Also see: Frank Abbott, "The Arches of Chinatown: Identity, Agency, and Belonging in Vancouver 1896–1936," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de La Société Historique Du Canada* 30, no. 2 (2019), 149–81; Patrick A. Dunae et al., "Making the Inscrutable, Scrutable: Race and Space in Victoria's Chinatown, 1891," *BC Studies*, no. 169 (2011), 51.

¹³ For example, see: Nancy Rao, "Inside Chinese Theatre: Cantonese Opera in Canada," *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music / Intersections: Revue Canadienne de Musique* 38, no. 1–2 (2018), 81–104; Lily Cho, *Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2010); Alison R. Marshall, "Early Chinese Migrant Religious Identities in Pre-1947 Canada," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 43 (2023), 235–246; Adrian Ma, *How the Chinese Created Canada* (Dragon Hill Publishing, 2010).

cultural life and moments intended for togetherness and joyful celebration in Chinese Canadian communities.

Factors in the Rise of Anti-Chinese Sentiment in British Columbia

A variety of societal changes, including immigration influxes, growing racial tensions across Canada, and the popularization of scientific racism, drove an upturn in anti-Chinese sentiment in BC beginning in the late nineteenth century. While in the early 1880s white British Columbians expressed fears that BC would be “overrun with Chinese” due to high rates of immigration, the establishment of the federal head tax of 50 dollars in 1885 substantially decreased Chinese immigration.¹⁴ Furthermore, from 1885 to 1891, the Chinese Canadian populace in BC more than halved due to emigration to the United States (US) and China. This movement was likely driven by the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in 1885, as a significant proportion of Chinese Canadian labourers in BC relied on this ambitious building project to make a living.¹⁵ As few Chinese people arrived in BC and many others left, in the eyes of much of the white populace, the “Chinese problem” no longer posed a significant or imminent threat.¹⁶ However, from 1891 and 1892 onwards, Chinese immigration into BC began to steadily increase due to growing employment opportunities for immigrants, reigniting dormant racial tensions.¹⁷ Anti-Chinese racism exploded around the turn of the twentieth century, as both Chinese and Japanese immigrant populations grew drastically. In fact, 20,000 Asian immigrants, including approximately 8,000 Chinese people, arrived in BC from 1899 to 1900.¹⁸ More prohibitive anti-Asian immigration legislation temporarily stifled Chinese immigration by around 1904; however, the influx of thousands of Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigrants in 1906 and 1907 once again fed a sense of urgency in taking action to maintain the province’s “white” identity.¹⁹ Negative reactions against the increased arrival of Asian immigrants were especially strong in 1907 due to BC’s poor economic situation, which conjured up longstanding

¹⁴ The head tax came into effect on January 1, 1886, see: Jin Tan and Patricia Roy, *The Chinese in Canada*, Canada’s Ethnic Groups; Booklet No. 9 (Canadian Historical Association, 1985), 8; Patricia Roy, *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858–1914* (University of British Columbia Press, 1989), 59, 66–67; Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 47–50.

¹⁵ Approximately 17,000 Chinese labourers worked on the CPR, see Tan and Roy, *The Chinese in Canada*, 7; Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 66–67; Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 42–43.

¹⁶ This general shift did not mean animosity fully disappeared. For instance, in 1887, anti-Chinese violence broke out in Vancouver when white residents attempted to destroy Chinese settlements and forcibly remove them from the area, see: Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown*, 67.

¹⁷ Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 59, 66–67.

¹⁸ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 55. Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 92.

¹⁹ Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 150; Lee, *Hemispheric Orientalism*, 24–25.

prejudices that Asian immigrants did not meaningfully contribute to the local economy and, instead, “stole” white employment opportunities.²⁰

The marked increase in Chinese immigration during the late nineteenth century onward coincided with the national validation of anti-Chinese attitudes. In earlier years, the federal government and white Canadians outside of BC remained more hesitant toward the impassioned anti-Chinese prejudice and calls for race-based immigration restrictions coming out of BC; however, the growth of Chinese communities east of the Rocky Mountains beginning in the late nineteenth century sparked anti-Chinese sentiment across Canada, especially based on concerns about “unfair” economic competition.²¹ Newfound encouragement from the people and politicians in eastern Canada, including from Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who promised further restrictions on Chinese immigration in 1896, breathed new life into BC politicians and anti-Asian associations, driving the increased circulation and acceptance of anti-Chinese rhetoric.²²

Lastly, anti-Chinese sentiment became deeply intertwined with the rhetoric of scientific racism, which proposed that race was attached to unchangeable and innate biological differences.²³ While stereotypes of Chinese populations as immoral and backward were pervasive in Canada by the 1880s, anti-Chinese sentiment was not yet completely attached to ideas about intrinsic nature. In fact, in 1885, when Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald used the language of scientific racism to discuss Chinese immigration and explain the supposed need to protect “the Aryan character of the future of British North America,” many members of parliament expressed shock and questioned his attitudes.²⁴ Over time, however, biological arguments against Chinese populations became more widely accepted and commonplace across Canada, including in BC.²⁵ As described by Stanley, this shift in rhetoric “fixed” racialized understandings surrounding all Chinese people in Canada.²⁶

Locating Chinese Canadians and Chinese New Year in the BC Press

To examine the representation of Chinese New Year during this period of growing anti-Chinese racism, I utilized the online archives for one of Victoria’s major papers during my period of study, the *British Colonist*, and the University of British Columbia’s collection *BC Historical*

²⁰ Gilmour, *Trouble on Mainstreet*, 11–12; Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 123–124; Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 10.

²¹ Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 58–59, 96–97; Price, *Orienteering Canada*, 17.

²² Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 93–94, 96–97, 108,

²³ Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown*, 41–44; Timothy J. Stanley, “Cultural Exclusion and the Transformation of the Cultural Landscape: The Origins of Anti-Chinese Racism in Canada,” *Social Sciences in China* 45, no. 3 (2024), 188.

²⁴ Stanley, “Cultural Exclusion and the Transformation,” 187–188.

²⁵ Stanley, *Contesting White Supremacy*, 87; Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 154.

²⁶ Stanley, “Cultural Exclusion and the Transformation,” 188.

Newspapers.²⁷ I primarily employed keyword searches to identify material related to the celebration of Chinese New Year and conducted close readings of each source to track characteristics, such as word choice, theme, and messaging. While my analysis includes an eclectic collection of papers written for BC's white audiences with different political affiliations, each paper demonstrates prejudice against Chinese Canadians. However, the nuances of their positions on the perceived "issue" of Chinese immigration also varied and were shaped by their unique contexts. Indeed, Victoria's *British Colonist* was a well-established conservative paper that contemporaries seemingly considered to be sympathetic to local Asian populations.²⁸ Yet, even this paper, which one opponent notably dubbed the "Chinese Colonist,"²⁹ othered Chinese Canadians and would come to intensify their rhetoric against this population as time went on.³⁰ I also cite three sources writing for the New Westminster white community: the conservative *British Columbian*,³¹ the liberal *Daily News*,³² and the *Pacific Canadian*.³³ Notably, in the nineteenth century, New Westminster white populations held stronger anti-Asian sentiments than what was seen in Victoria.³⁴ This animosity was likely tied to New Westminster's reliance on the fishing industry, which white populations saw as particularly impacted by competition from Asian workers.³⁵ Lastly, I cite sources from Vancouver's *The Independent*, a labour paper seemingly writing for an audience of white workers.³⁶ Due to preoccupations with the idea of economic competition, BC's trade and labour circles were hotspots of anti-Asian activity and, in Vancouver specifically, labour organizations had a long history of anti-Chinese campaigns and violence.³⁷ Most of these newspapers only have extant sources for a limited part of my period of interest, with the exception of the *Colonist* which has records spanning 1885 to 1907. Yet, when these newspapers' representations of Chinese New Year are pieced together, the atmosphere of intensifying anti-Chinese sentiment comes into focus.

²⁷ University of Victoria Libraries, "The British Colonist: Online Edition, 1858–1980," *British Colonist*, accessed 30 May 2025, britishcolonist.ca; UBC Library, "BC Historical Newspapers - UBC Library Open Collections," *The University of British Columbia*, accessed 30 May 2025, open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers.

²⁸ University of Victoria Libraries, "Context: The British Colonist, 1858–1980," *The British Colonist*, accessed 2 February 2026, britishcolonist.ca/context.php; Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 21, 85, 124, 135–136, 186–187; Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 27.

²⁹ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 135–136.

³⁰ Additionally, as with all the sources discussed in this article, the *Colonist* frequently utilized racist stereotypes and racial slurs when writing on local Chinese Canadian populations.

³¹ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 124.

³² Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 195.

³³ Unfortunately, I could not locate further information on the *Pacific Canadian's* stance for the purposes of this paper.

³⁴ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, xv.

³⁵ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 20, 86; Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 123.

³⁶ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 101.

³⁷ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 44–45.

From Awe to Revulsion

Firstly, articles on Chinese New Year increasingly fixated on how local celebrations of the holiday impacted white society. Specifically, while earlier articles emphasized the celebration's visual appeal, many articles from the late 1890s and early 1900s framed Chinese New Year as a "contaminant" to sight, sound, and smell. This shift demonstrates growing concern surrounding the "state" of Chinese Canadian communities that accompanied the hardening of anti-Chinese attitudes.

The prejudiced perception of Chinese Canadian communities as obnoxious, unsightly, and odorous had roots back to the mid-nineteenth century when the Fraser River Gold Rush led to the rapid settlement of the province by non-Indigenous people.³⁸ Mining work attracted diverse groups of prospectors to BC, including white people from North America, many of whom had already developed anti-Chinese sentiment on mining frontiers across the US, where racism ran rampant.³⁹ It also sparked the first major wave of Chinese immigration into the region.⁴⁰ White settlers and prospectors introduced and circulated the popular view that Chinese immigrants were a nuisance and public health issue due to their supposed improper and inferior living standards.⁴¹ In fact, in 1865, Matthew Macfie, a minister living in BC who wrote on the societal makeup of the region, noted that the domestic practices of Chinese immigrants left "much room for improvement as long as cleanliness is concerned."⁴² This remark illustrates the deep roots of filthiness as a stereotype used against Chinese Canadians in BC. As Chinatowns began to develop across BC in large settlements from the 1860s onward, municipal authorities expressed concern about cramped living quarters and the proliferation of waste in Chinese communities that stemmed from both socioeconomic challenges and anti-Asian racism.⁴³ In addition to the "smell" of unsanitary living conditions, white populations in BC claimed that Chinatowns had a pungent odour due to the presence of opium dens and vegetable markets.⁴⁴

³⁸ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 23.

³⁹ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 24–25; Matthew Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia. Their History, Resources, and Prospects* (London: Spottiswood and Co., 1865), 378–379, open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0222214.

⁴⁰ Stanley, *Contesting White Supremacy*, 54–56.

⁴¹ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 7–8, 13, 24.

⁴² Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, 383; Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871*, *Studies in Gender and History* (University of Toronto Press, 2001), 77.

⁴³ Lai, *Chinatowns*, 40, 46, 196. Many Chinese immigrants had been pushed to settle in undesirable areas like swamps and mudflats vulnerable to sanitation issues as white populations excluded them from primary areas of settlement. Moreover, as Chinese immigrants often worked low-status jobs and received lower wages than white workers, many likely could only afford to live in shared rooms in rudimentary homes.

⁴⁴ Lai, *Chinatowns*, 37; Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 74.

Yet in the 1890s and early 1900s, concerns about the “state” of BC Chinatowns became far more pronounced, feeding off current issues and events.⁴⁵ Throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century, cases of leprosy and smallpox amongst several Chinese immigrants in BC sparked immense panic. This prompted city officials in Vancouver and Victoria to heavily police the sanitation of their local Chinatowns and engage in “clean up” campaigns, which often involved the destruction of dilapidated homes. Especially since these efforts solely targeted Chinese Canadian enclaves, city officials and their activities reinforced the popular belief that Chinese British Columbian communities threatened public health more than any other group in the province.⁴⁶ Municipal efforts, particularly in Victoria, increased again in the early 1900s when reports of outbreaks of bubonic plague in Chinese immigrant communities in Honolulu, Hawaii, reached the West Coast, likely further entrenching the notion that Chinese populations were a “contaminant.”⁴⁷

Mirroring this growing interest in the “state” of Chinese communities in BC, several later accounts of Chinese New Year featured descriptions of appalling and unhygienic scenes within Chinese Canadian communities. In contrast, early sources on Chinese New Year almost exclusively praised the visual appeal of Chinese New Year celebrations. News articles from the 1880s were particularly commendatory of the efforts of Chinese Canadians to decorate Chinatown with eye-catching lanterns, banners, flowers, and flags. For instance, in 1886, the *Colonist* noted that Victoria’s Chinatown had assumed a “gay and festive” appearance during the celebration.⁴⁸ In 1888, the *Columbian* echoed this sentiment, claiming that “the adornments will be very attractive” in Chinatown during Chinese New Year.⁴⁹

Some articles even specifically complimented the cleanliness of Chinatown during the festive season through detailed descriptions of New Year’s cleaning traditions. For instance, in 1885, the *Colonist* drew attention to how local Chinese populations swept their homes meticulously in preparation for the New Year, and in 1886, they bolstered this praise by explaining that the Chinese residents of Victoria additionally ensured that “every store of any importance has been washed from top to bottom” and bathed themselves thoroughly.⁵⁰ While the 1886 article mentioned the perceived unsanitariness of Chinatown outside of the New Year’s season, the presence of almost two entire sections dedicated to high praise of the Chinese residents’ tidiness certainly challenged or at least nuanced the already-widespread stereotype of “filthiness” in white readers’ minds.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 49–50; Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown*, 35.

⁴⁶ Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown*, 84–85.

⁴⁷ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 50; Lai, *Chinatowns*, 227.

⁴⁸ “The Chinese New Year,” *Colonist* (Victoria), February 3, 1886.

⁴⁹ “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian* (New Westminster), February 10, 1888.

⁵⁰ “Kung Hae Fat Tsoi,” *Colonist*, February 14, 1885; “The Chinese New Year,” *Colonist* February 3, 1886.

⁵¹ “The Chinese New Year.”

Many newspaper sources also complimented the appearance of the delicacies enjoyed during Chinese New Year. Articles emphasized “rare and amazing” spreads of confections, nuts, almonds, Chinese oranges, and sweetmeats found in Chinese storefronts and households, conveying both exoticization and awe.⁵²

While many later sources continued to compliment the sights of Chinatown during the festive season, they often simultaneously claimed that the positive appearance of the Chinese celebration was wholly superficial and deceptive. This is perhaps best demonstrated by an article posted in the *Colonist* in 1902 and reprinted with minor edits in 1903. In this source, the writer asserted that festive decorations in Victoria’s Chinatown utterly failed to conceal its “dark, dirty lanes,” “dingy doors,” clearly conveying that Chinese Canadian communities were an eyesore in BC, no matter what attempts were made by the residents to beautify their homes and places of work.⁵³ The *Colonist* also voiced concerns about hidden filth during Chinese New Year in 1904 by admonishing the interior of the local Chinese temple that many locals visited on Chinese New Year. Non-Chinese populations in North America typically referred to these temples as “Joss Houses.”⁵⁴ Indeed, while the 1904 article described the exterior of Chinatown as “gaily belight with bunting and other decorations indicative of joy,” the interior of the Joss House is referred to as a “first-class nightmare.”⁵⁵ Specifically, the author lamented that the statue of the Chinese deity inside the temple was “dirty and excruciatingly ugly,” intertwining prejudice against non-Christian religion and the stereotype of filthiness.⁵⁶ Furthermore, a 1907 article from New Westminster’s *Daily News* emphasized the “negative” side of the once-delicious spreads found in Chinese New Year celebrations. Not only did the article note that some foods were “fearfully” made, it also emphasized that the “slaughter of defenceless poultry” in preparation for New Year’s meals was “appalling.”⁵⁷ These descriptions insisted that Chinese New Year was not just unfamiliar but deeply unacceptable by “proper” white Western standards. The overarching rhetoric of hidden pollution and corruption also reflected and reinforced popular understandings of Chinese populations as secretive and unable to assimilate into Western culture. According to Stanley, many white British Columbians held that even if a Chinese person

⁵² For example, see: “Kung Hae Fat Tsoi,” *Colonist*, February 14, 1885; “Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, January 23, 1887; “The End of the Festival,” *British Columbian*, January 31, 1887; “Chinese New Year,” *Daily British Columbian* (New Westminster), January 20, 1890; “Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, January 22, 1890.

⁵³ “Chinatown Celebrates,” *Colonist*, February 7, 1902; “The Chinese New Years,” *Colonist*, January 28, 1903.

⁵⁴ David Chuen-yan Lai, *The Forbidden City within Victoria* (Orca Book Publishers, 1991), 60–73.

⁵⁵ “The Chinese Big Celebration,” *Colonist*, February 16, 1904.

⁵⁶ “The Chinese Big Celebration.”

⁵⁷ “Chinese New Year Brings Much Joy,” *Daily News* (New Westminster), February 12, 1907. The representation of Chinese goods as “fearful” only seems to appear once prior to the 1900s in the sources used: “Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, February 16, 1893.

outwardly conformed to Western ways of life, they remained Chinese internally and thus could never truly move beyond their “inferior” habits.⁵⁸

BC newspapers also increasingly framed the celebration of Chinese New Year as an auditory pollutant. During the New Year’s festival, it was common for Chinese British Columbians to carry out the tradition of lighting off large quantities of firecrackers, also referred to as “punks,” as a deterrent for evil.⁵⁹ New Year’s celebrations also often featured performances from traditional Chinese musicians in public and later in theatre spaces. When BC news sources discussed the soundscape of Chinese New Year from 1885 until 1890, they came to varied conclusions but generally approached the topic without fervour.⁶⁰ For example, some sources described the celebration as noisy, using words like “racket” and “rattle,” but did not outright condemn the sounds of the celebration.⁶¹ In fact, one *British Columbian* article from 1888 claimed that while the fireworks during Chinese New Year were loud and should be regulated, “the noise does not disturb us at all.”⁶² In 1889, the *Columbian* even praised how Chinese celebrants did not “parade [around] the city singing and shouting” like white residents did during their holidays, suggesting that the celebration was even less noisy than Anglo-Canadian festivities.⁶³ When specifically referring to music, sources from the 1880s and early 1890s also demonstrated uncertainty and framed performances as unusual or unpleasant. This uncertainty is best demonstrated by the *Columbian*’s description of Chinese New Year’s music as “sweet (?)” illustrating confusion but not outright condemnation.⁶⁴ Noise initially appeared as a minor problem, if one at all.

Descriptions of the sounds of Chinese New Year became far more homogenously negative overtime. In 1903, Vancouver’s the *Independent* shared a report from Portland claiming that Chinese New Year was “an awful nuisance for those who do not take part in the festivities,” thereby drawing on American accounts to demonstrate the negative impact of Chinese festivities on predominantly white populations.⁶⁵ Further, in 1906, the *Colonist* explained that all Chinese New Year festivities continued into the night because “your Chinese loves noise,” demonstrating that noisiness

⁵⁸ Stanley, *Contesting White Supremacy*, 87–88.

⁵⁹ Lai, *Chinatowns*, 194; “Chinese New Year Traditions,” *Timothy S. Y. Lam Museum of Anthropology*, accessed 15 March 2025, lammuseum.wfu.edu/education/teachers/chinese-new-year/chinese-new-year-traditions/.

⁶⁰ Some early sources also compliment the extravagance of fireworks displays. For example, see: “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, February 10, 1888; “Local Items in Brief,” *British Columbian*, January 23, 1890.

⁶¹ For example, see: “Town Topics Tersely Told,” *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), January 25, 1889; “The End of the Festival,” *Daily British Columbian*, January 31, 1887; “Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, January 23, 1887; “Chinese New Year Closed,” *Colonist*, February 24, 1893.

⁶² “Monday Evening,” *British Columbian*, February 13, 1888.

⁶³ “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, February 1, 1889.

⁶⁴ “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, February 4, 1889.

⁶⁵ “The Chinese New Year,” *Independent* (Vancouver), February 7, 1903.

had become adopted as a characteristic inherent to Chinese populations, opposing earlier praises.⁶⁶ One *Daily News* article from 1907 is perhaps the most striking, showcasing a drastic shift from earlier understanding of the Chinese New Year soundscape in New Westminster voiced by the *British Columbian*. In this text, the *Daily News* writer labelled the celebration “smote upon the ears of citizens in the surrounding districts,” strongly emphasizing the intensity and effect of the noise.⁶⁷

The smells of Chinese New Year celebrations also began to elicit strong negative responses from news sources after the turn of the century. Only one source from before 1900, an article from the *Columbian*, mentioned odour in conjunction with Chinese New Year.⁶⁸ In contrast, later BC newspapers drew attention to the supposedly unusual and unpleasant smell of firecrackers and burning incense (or “joss sticks”). For instance, in the 1902/1903 article on Chinese New Year from the *Colonist* discussed above, the author claimed that Chinatowns’ streets during Chinese New Year were “as picturesque as they are malodourous” and noted that the festivities were overwhelmed by the smell of the “pungent joss stick,” framing odour as a central component of Chinese New Year celebrations.⁶⁹ The author added that the smoke of the joss sticks was “perfume to the nostrils of Chinese,” asserting the idea that Chinese cultural standards and bodily senses were incompatible with those of local white populations.⁷⁰ By 1904, the supposed foul odour of Chinese New Year even served as a headline in the *Colonist*: “Chinatown gay with bunting, red with crackers, and odorous with punks,” demonstrating the emphasis placed on the “terrible” smell of the festivities, which had only very rarely come to note in earlier years.⁷¹ Overall, the insistence on allegedly unseemly aspects of Chinese New Year celebrations, in terms of sight, sound, and smell, painted Chinese New Year and Chinese Canadian communities as “contaminants” at odds with white society.

From Inclusion to Separation

Moreover, while many early sources demonstrated interest in Chinese New Year and an openness to participating in the holiday’s celebration, this image of positive engagement became far less frequent over time, coinciding with a shift towards racial segregation in the province.

Indeed, discriminatory practices in British Columbia had long distanced Chinese communities from white populations in many aspects of everyday life; however, the insistence on separation became fervent by 1907. Indeed, at the turn of the century, school segregation became a major

⁶⁶ “Festive Season of the Chinese,” *Colonist*, January 25, 1906.

⁶⁷ “Chinese New Year Brings Much Joy,” *Daily News*, February 12, 1907.

⁶⁸ “Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, January 20, 1890.

⁶⁹ “Chinatown Celebrates,” *Colonist*, February 7, 1902; “The Chinese New Years,” *Colonist*, January 28, 1903.

⁷⁰ “Chinatown Celebrates,”; “The Chinese New Years.”

⁷¹ “The Chinese Big Celebration,” *Colonist*, February 16, 1904.

point of contention after several Chinese families attempted to enrol their children in public schools.⁷² This “influx” of Chinese students prompted outrage from parents and the press in 1901, leading to the establishment of “Chinese-only” classrooms. While some of these calls for school segregation appear to have centred the issue of language, assuming pupils of Chinese descent would lack sufficient knowledge of English, many cited more explicitly racist beliefs about Chinese people. Indeed, some British Columbians believed that Chinese Canadian pupils posed a health hazard to white students due to poor hygiene, while others drew attention to their supposed moral inadequacy and the corrupting influence that Chinese students would supposedly have on white children.⁷³ People of Chinese origin were also shunned from certain white businesses and workplaces.⁷⁴ In fact, in 1906, white labourers in a North Vancouver shingle-making business quit when the company hired a Chinese cook. These events demonstrate the sharpness of segregationist attitudes during the early 1900s.⁷⁵

While some early articles deemed Chinese New Year celebrations peculiar and commented negatively about certain practices, such as alleged “exorbitant” spending on firecrackers, many sources also promoted various Chinese values and customs to their predominantly white audiences.⁷⁶ Specifically, sources from the 1880s to early 1890s frequently praised New Year's season debt-paying, washing, and hospitality. Indeed, an 1887 article from the *Colonist* deemed these practices a “general good.”⁷⁷ Similarly, in 1888, the *British Columbian* claimed that the practice of debt paying was a virtue “that might be copied to advantage by those who claim a higher degree of civilization,” referring to white readers and, therefore, very openly and explicitly challenging the existing notions of racial hierarchy in BC.⁷⁸ The *Columbian*'s 1889 article on Chinese New Year again promoted debt-paying, stating that the white population “might borrow at least one custom from the Flowery Kingdom [China]” when explaining the Chinese

⁷² Prior to this point, many Chinese families had privately educated their children, but some were accepted into British Columbian schools. See Stanley, *Contesting White Supremacy*, 98.

⁷³ Stanley, *Contesting White Supremacy*, 98–100; Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 62–63.

⁷⁴ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 49; See also: “Where Overalls are Made,” *Independent*, February 16, 1901; “Chemanus Company Turns Out Chinamen,” *Daily News*, March 8, 1906; “Group the Chinese,” *Independent*, February 14, 1903; “The Board of Trade,” *Express* (North Vancouver), October 19, 1906.

⁷⁵ “A Strike,” *Express*, June 15, 1906.

⁷⁶ For examples of the early exotification of Chinese New Year, see: “Kung Hae Fat Tsoi,” *Colonist*, February 14, 1885; “Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, January 23, 1887. For examples of reports on the cost of firecrackers see: “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, February 6, 1889, 7; “Chinese Firecrackers,” *Colonist*, February 5, 1892; Later, complaints about fireworks in connection with cost became more negative in one article, see: “City and District,” *Pacific Canadian* (New Westminster), February 10, 1894. Some sources also complained about the theft of chickens for New Year's meals. For example, see: “Chicken Stealing Begins,” *British Columbian*, February 8, 1888.

⁷⁷ “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, February 6, 1889.

⁷⁸ “The Chinese New Year.”

practice of entering the new year debt-free.⁷⁹ Other sources complimented how Chinese Canadians received their guests during the festive season. Indeed, a *Colonist* article from 1890 suggested that Chinese hospitality “should put to blush some of the white population who can but do not treat their fellow men in nearly so liberal a manner.”⁸⁰ The admiration for Chinese practices, especially when combined with comparisons with white populations, challenged prevalent notions of Chinese people and culture as wholly inferior. At the same time, these praises reveal an openness and desire to learn about and from Chinese Canadians rather than closing them off completely from white society.

Further demonstrating interest and engagement, news sources from the early period additionally expressed well wishes for the new year. For instance, at the end of the *Colonist*’s 1885 article on Chinese New Year, the author wrote “we wish them [the Chinese community] and our readers a very happy ‘Kung hae fat tsoi,’” utilizing a romanization of a common Chinese expression to bid someone a Happy New Year.⁸¹ Notably, by including white readers, this statement conveyed the idea that Chinese New Year did not have to be restricted to Chinese populations only. Another article from the *Colonist* in 1893 exclaimed, “A great day is Chinese New Year!”⁸² The general nature of this statement similarly implied that Chinese New Year could be enjoyed by all. Various early papers even more directly urged readers to get involved in local celebrations of Chinese New Year. For instance, an 1886 article from the *Colonist* claimed that Chinatown was “well worth a visit,” while, in 1890, *British Columbian* exclaimed that Chinatown “is a sight worth seeing.”⁸³ Other news sources reported on the diverse attendance to Chinatown during the New Year’s season.⁸⁴ In fact, the same 1890 *Columbian* article reported that it was common for white and Indigenous people to travel to the Chinatown in New Westminster from Vancouver to wish their Chinese merchant “friends” well, reinforcing a sense of normalcy in genuine intercultural interaction.⁸⁵

Over time, journalists continued to note the presence of non-Chinese people in Chinese New Year celebrations; however, remarks revealing admiration for Chinese customs became few and far between.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ “New Advertisements This Day,” *British Columbian*, January 21, 1889.

⁸⁰ “Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, January 23, 1887.

⁸¹ “Kung Hae Fat Tsoi,” *Colonist*, February 14, 1885.

⁸² “Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, February 16, 1893.

⁸³ “Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, January 22, 1890; “The Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, February 3, 1886.

⁸⁴ For example, see: “The End of the Festival,” *British Columbian*, January 31, 1887; “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, February 10, 1888; “The Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, February 10, 1888; “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, February 1, 1889; “The Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, February 6, 1889; “Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, February 16, 1893.

⁸⁵ “Chinese New Year,” *British Columbian*, January 22, 1890.

⁸⁶ One example of an exception to this change is the *Colonist*’s 1902/1903 article that includes a short, positive comment about debt paying. Yet, this source still does not as

In their place, the papers distanced white populations from the action of Chinese New Year by more clearly positioning them as mere spectators or less meaningfully engaged. Encapsulating this shift, one 1899 article from the *Colonist* noted that Chinese New Year offered white residents an opportunity to “study Orientals at their best” rather than engage with their culture and participate, as equals, in the celebration. Furthermore, in 1903, the *Colonist* categorized Chinatown’s visitors into two types of people: the “curious sightseer” and “the lounge of the slums [who] takes advantage of the Chinaman’s hospitality.” This statement additionally attached a negative connotation to those who were “too involved” with Chinese New Year and the Chinese Canadian community.⁸⁷ Indeed, being considered a “lounge of the slums” would likely have evoked images of gambling, opium use, and prostitution, vices stereotypically associated with Chinatown in BC at the time.⁸⁸ Notably missing from this article and the one in 1899 is the mention of non-Chinese visitors who had close or amicable relationships with Chinese populations, demonstrating a discernible shift away from the desire and excitement for seemingly genuine participation exemplified in earlier sources.

From Neighbours to ‘Intruders’

The language used to describe Chinese populations in articles on Chinese New Year reflected the increasingly prominent belief that Chinese populations did not belong in BC at all, even if separated from white populations in everyday life.

The growing potency of exclusionary attitudes during this period of heightened anti-Chinese sentiment is clearly illustrated by legislative activity against Chinese immigration and employment beginning around the turn of the century. Firstly, while the head tax had remained relatively unchanged since 1885, the rise of Chinese and Japanese immigration during the 1890s led the federal government to hike the tax up to 100 dollars in 1900.⁸⁹ This was not enough for BC politicians, who pressured the federal government again in 1901 to ramp up efforts for exclusion, leading to the *Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration*.⁹⁰ Notably, as explained by historian John Price, the commissioners “deepened the critique of Chinese unassimilability,” oftentimes basing this belief on testimony from white Victorians and Vancouverites.⁹¹ Unlike the previous royal commission from 1884-1885, which found laws to exclude Chinese immigrants rather unsubstantiated due to the benefits of Chinese immigration on BC’s development and economy, the commissioners in

explicitly challenge the racial hierarchy: “Chinatown Celebrates,” *Colonist*, February 7, 1902; “The Chinese New Years,” *Colonist*, January 28, 1903.

⁸⁷ “The Chinese New Years,” *Colonist*, January 28, 1903.

⁸⁸ Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown*, 92–93.

⁸⁹ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 55.

⁹⁰ Price, *Orienteering Canada*, 17.

⁹¹ Price, *Orienteering Canada*, 17.

1901 recommended a full ban on Chinese labourers.⁹² As such, by 1903, the federal head tax had quintupled, reaching 500 dollars, demonstrating a firm insistence on exclusion.⁹³ Around the turn of the century, the BC government also carried out their major “systematic” efforts to limit employment opportunities for Asian residents by banning them from work in various sectors, likely playing into longstanding fears over economic competition.⁹⁴ These employment restrictions could seemingly affect Chinese Canadian citizens who had, by this point, called the province home for multiple generations. Though the federal government overrode BC’s employment laws for their racial bias, the BC legislature persisted in placing limits on Chinese and Japanese employment in railway projects.⁹⁵ These discriminatory political moves demonstrate that people of Chinese origin were fully unwanted and unwelcome in BC by the early twentieth century, whether they were hoping to immigrate or were already living in the province.

Similarly, articles on Chinese New Year from 1900 onward tended to represent the Chinese Canadian community as “aliens,” contrasting earlier sources which presented Chinese Canadians as a part of the larger BC community. While some early BC newspapers simply described celebrants as “Chinese,” others utilized variations of the phrases “the Chinese portion of our community” or “our celestial/Chinese citizens,” situating Chinese Canadians firmly within broader BC society.⁹⁶ Interestingly, the use of “citizen” indicates a sense of validity and permanence to the Chinese presence in the emergent nation. Throughout the 1890s, authors typically utilized “Chinese,” “Mongolian,” or “Celestial,” with one notable mention of “Celestial friends” in the *Colonist* in 1893.⁹⁷ However, just as attempts to exclude Chinese populations increased in the early 1900s, so did mentions of Chinese Canadians as foreigners. Chinese populations became temporary residents or solely referred to as a homogenized entity known as “Chinatown,” rather than friends, neighbours, and community members.⁹⁸ In 1901, the *Colonist* referred to the celebrants as “strangers within our gates.”⁹⁹ Likewise, in 1902 and 1903, the conservative newspaper called Chinatown, the hub of Chinese

⁹² Price, *Orienting Canada*, 17; Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 39–40; Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 58–59.

⁹³ Price, *Orienting Canada*, 17.

⁹⁴ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 55.

⁹⁵ Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 55.

⁹⁶ For example, see: “Chinese New Year,” *Colonist*, January 23, 1887; “Town Topics Tersely Told,” *Colonist*, January 25, 1889; “The Chinese New Year,” *Daily British Columbian*, February 1, 1889; “Chinese New Year,” *Daily British Columbian*, January 22, 1890.

⁹⁷ “Chinese New Year Closed,” *Colonist*, February 24, 1893.

⁹⁸ For example, see: “The Chinese Big Celebration,” *Colonist*, February 16, 1904; “Festive Season of the Chinese,” *Colonist*, January 25, 1906; “Chinese New Year If Duly Ushered In,” *Colonist*, February 12, 1907.

⁹⁹ “Chinese Holiday,” *Colonist*, February 19, 1901.

New Year celebrations, “the alien city within our city.”¹⁰⁰ Both phrases emphasized the idea that Chinese Canadians did not belong in BC. Similarly, in 1903, the *Independent* even suggested that the factory shutdowns experienced due to the absence of Chinese workers on Chinese New Year were indicative of a foreign government takeover: “Next thing we will hear is that the Mongolian government at Ottawa will make the celebration of the Chinese new year a statutory holiday,” thereby using Chinese New Year to assert that the Chinese presence was a perilous invasion.¹⁰¹ In these sources, Chinese celebrants increasingly became seen as outsiders.

Conclusion

The festive season of Chinese New Year shined a spotlight on Chinese communities in BC annually, prompting journalists from papers from New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria to report fervently on Chinese Canadians and their cultural practices. While always through a lens of othering and exoticism, this attention frequently translated to awe, praise, and openness in early sources, challenging widespread assumptions about Chinese. However, along with other marked changes in perceptions of Chinese Canadian populations in BC, this positivity deteriorated and was replaced with the rhetoric of ostracization. News sources framed Chinese Canadians as a nuisance and threat to white society, correlating with broader emphases on Chinese Canadians as pollutants. Newspapers also showed less interest in white populations participating in Chinese New Year festivities and learning from them, correlating with a shift towards segregation. Lastly, as attempts to fully ban Chinese immigration spiked, the language used to describe Chinese Canadian celebrants became increasingly exclusionary. These three shifts both reflected and fed the broader intensification and entrenchment of anti-Chinese sentiment in BC by the early 1900s.

For locals in Vancouver who witnessed the 1907 riots unfold and for people around the world who heard about them in the coming days, the sheer hatefulness of the white rioters came as a shock.¹⁰² Today, this act of racial hatred may still be shocking, as Canada has long been positioned as a cultural mosaic in the popular imagination. Often, Canada is seen as distanced from overt demonstrations of racial violence that are often associated with the US. However, in studying newspaper sources, it becomes clear that riots did not come out of nowhere; instead, the context from which they emerged had been building for decades in BC. As white British Columbians perused their daily news, they were consistently exposed to increasingly inflammatory statements directed toward their

¹⁰⁰ “The Chinese New Years,” *Colonist*, January 28, 1903.

¹⁰¹ “The Chinese New Year,” *Independent*, February 7, 1903.

¹⁰² Howard H. Sugimoto, “The Vancouver Riot and Its International Significance,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (1973), 163.

Chinese Canadian neighbours, coworkers, employees, and friends. The fertile ground for hatred in the early 1900s developed through well-known discriminatory legislation and major events, but was also deeply intertwined with small-scale, casual expressions of prejudice that simply became a part of “normal” life. Thus, it is crucial to consider the everyday and mundane, like the act of reading the local news, in illuminating the inner workings of anti-Chinese racism in Canadian society.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

“BC Historical Newspapers.” University of British Columbia. Accessed 2 February 2026. open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers.

The British Columbian (New Westminster)

The Colonist (Victoria)

The Daily Colonist (Victoria)

The Daily News (New Westminster)

The Express (North Vancouver)

The Independent (Vancouver)

The Pacific Canadian (New Westminster)

The Week (Victoria)

“The British Colonist - Online Edition: 1858–1980.” University of Victoria. Accessed 2 February 2026. britishcolonist.ca/.

The Chinese Immigration Act. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada, 1885. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/the-chinese-immigration-act-1885.

Macfie, Matthew. *Vancouver Island and British Columbia. Their History, Resources, and Prospects*. London: Spottiswood and Co., 1865. open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0222214.

Secondary Sources

Abbott, Frank. “The Arches of Chinatown: Identity, Agency, and Belonging in Vancouver 1896–1936.” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de La Société Historique Du Canada* 30, no. 2 (2019): 149–181.

Anderson, Kay. *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980*. McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991.

Cho, Lily. *Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada*. University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Dunae, Patrick A., John S. Lutz, Donald J. Lafreniere, and Jason A. Gilliland. “Making the Inscrutable, Scrutable: Race and Space in Victoria’s Chinatown, 1891.” *BC Studies*, no. 169 (2011): 51–80.

Gilmour, Julie F. *Trouble on Main Street: Mackenzie King, Reason, Race, and the 1907 Vancouver Riots*. Allen Lane, 2014.

Lai, David Chuen-Yan. “Chinese Immigrants into British Columbia and their Distribution, 1858–1970.” *Pacific Viewpoint* 14, no. 1 (1973): 102–108.

———. *Chinatowns Towns within Cities in Canada*. 1st ed. University of British Columbia Press, 1988.

———. *The Forbidden City within Victoria*. Orca Book Publishers, 1991.

Lee, Erika. “Hemispheric Orientalism and the 1907 Pacific Coast Race Riots.” *Amerasia Journal* 33, no. 2 (2007): 19–48.

Lei, Daphne. “The Production and Consumption of Chinese Theatre in Nineteenth-Century California.” *Theatre Research International* 28, no. 3 (2003): 289–302.

- Li, Peter S. "A Historical Approach to Ethnic Stratification: The Case of the Chinese in Canada, 1858–1930." *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 16, no. 3 (1979): 320–332.
- Library of Congress. "Chinese American Song." Accessed 17 March 2025. [loc.gov/collections/songs-of-america/articles-and-essays/musical-styles/ethnic/chinese-american-song/](https://www.loc.gov/collections/songs-of-america/articles-and-essays/musical-styles/ethnic/chinese-american-song/).
- Ma, Adrian. *How the Chinese Created Canada*. Dragon Hill Publishing, 2010.
- Mar, Lisa Rose. *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1885–1945*. University of Toronto Press, 2010.
- Marshall, Alison R. "Early Chinese Migrant Religious Identities in Pre–1947 Canada." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 43 (2023): 235–246.
- Munro, John A. "British Columbia and the 'Chinese Evil': Canada's First Anti-Asiatic Immigration Law." *Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue d'études Canadiennes* 6, no. 4 (1971): 42–51.
- Perry, Adele. *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871*. University of Toronto Press, 2001.
- Price, John. *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific*. University of British Columbia Press, 2011.
- Rao, Nancy. "Inside Chinese Theatre: Cantonese Opera in Canada." *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music / Intersections: Revue Canadienne de Musique* 38, no. 1–2 (2018): 81–104.
- Roy, Patricia. *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858–1914*. University of British Columbia Press, 1989.
- The Smithsonian. "Lunar New Year." National Museum of Asian Art. Accessed 15 March 2025. asia.si.edu/whats-on/events/celebrations/lunar-new-year-celebration/.
- Stanley, Timothy J. *Contesting White Supremacy: School Segregation, Anti-Racism, and the Making of Chinese Canadians*. University of British Columbia Press, 2011.
- . "Cultural Exclusion and the Transformation of the Cultural Landscape: The Origins of Anti-Chinese Racism in Canada." *Social Sciences in China* 45, no. 3 (2024): 181–202.
- Sugimoto, Howard H. "The Vancouver Riot and Its International Significance." *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (1973): 163–174.
- Tan, Jin, and Patricia Roy. *The Chinese in Canada*. Canada's Ethnic Groups Booklet No. 9. Canadian Historical Association, 1985.
- Timothy S. Y. Lam Museum of Anthropology. "Chinese New Year Traditions." Accessed 15 March 2025. lammuseum.wfu.edu/education/teachers/chinese-new-year/chinese-new-year-traditions/.
- Ward, Peter W. *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia*. 3rd ed. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.