**ACCT Literature Review**

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| **Theme One: History of Chinese in Canada and Chinese Canadians**  ***Highlights:***  Large groups of Chinese emigration to Canada can be dated back to the 1850s when the gold rush in the Fraser Valley in B.C. brought in thousands of Chinese working as gold miners. Chinese workers were brought to Canada as a cheap source of labour for the gold mining industry and later the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s. 17,000 Chinese arrived in Canada to fill the labour shortage during the railway construction. They were paid half of the wages of the white labourers. Many Chinese died building the railway. “On the 350 miles connecting British Columbia to the rest of Canada alone, 700 Chinese people died. This means that two Chinese workers died for every mile of the railway.”  However, Chinese workers’ contribution to Canada’s economic development was not acknowledged by the white-dominant society. Instead, restrictions, exclusions, and discriminations had accompanied the Chinese Canadians throughout their history of survival and development. Chinese were deprived of the right to vote in 1875; in 1885, upon the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the federal government passed the Chinese Immigration Act which imposed a $50 head tax on virtually every person of Chinese origin entering Canada. Later, the tax was increased to $500 in 1902.The high head tax prevented Chinese men from bringing in a wife or aged parents to Canada. To make things worse, the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923 completely stopped immigration from China for the next 24 years. As a result, men who typically came alone had to live as bachelors in Canada. In 1931, out of a total Chinese population of 46,519, only 3,648 were women.  In order to adapt to a hostile environment, the Chinese had to rely on the limited resources such as kinship ties to survive. They build ethnic businesses such as laundries and Chinese restaurants to make a living and to give employment for their own people. Chinese culture played an important role in their adaptation and survival in Canada. Unfortunately, even within the very limited space of survival, discriminations persisted. For example, in 1882, a smallpox alarm in Calgary led to the destruction of Chinese laundries by a mob of 300. In the next few years, Chinese residents were deprived of the right to vote in the three prairie provinces, and the locations of Chinese laundries were restricted because white residents complained that these laundries lowered the value of their properties.  During the Second World War, 500 Chinese men served in the Canadian army. Chinese Canadians fought bravely with the Canadian armed forces and Chinese Canadian communities raised funds for the war effort. At the end of the war, the Chinese Canadian veterans lobbied for the right to be recognized as Canadian citizens. As a result, the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1947, making it possible for the wives of Chinese Canadians, and their unmarried children under the age of 18, to immigrate to Canada. In the same year, the Chinese Canadians regained the right to vote. One year before that, the Chinese in B.C. were allowed to work in the professions such as lawyers, accountants and doctors. In 1967, the introduction of the “points system” to Canadian immigration allowed more educated Chinese move to Canada, which brought about the end of institutional discrimination in Canada and started a new era of Chinese immigration to Canada. In addition, under much community pressure represented by the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC), on 22 June 2006 Prime Minister [Stephen Harper](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/article/stephen-joseph-harper/) formally apologized to Chinese Canadians for the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act*.* The government offered $20,000 to living Head Tax payers and living spouses of deceased payers. However, by that time, it was estimated that only about 20 Chinese head tax payers were still alive, in comparison to about 4,000 registrants of Head Tax certificate holders (Wikipedia). The later movement that demanded the extension of the redress to first-generation children who were direct victims was not successful.  Since the 1950s, many Chinese Canadians have distinguished themselves in many fields and professions, both nationally and internationally, and Chinese businesses and investments have played a significant role in the prosperous development of Canada. In spite of this, it is important to be aware of the discriminative way of thinking deeply rooted in history and its new manifestations in all walks of life. “Government legislation can only set up legal parameters but has no control in the way people think.” Attitude is more difficult to change than legislation.  **More Readings:** A Brief Chronology of Chinese Canadian History: From Segregation to Integration加拿大华裔历史纪要-从隔离至融合, David Lam Center, Simon Fraser University<http://www.sfu.ca/chinese-canadian-history/chart_en.html>This is a brief review of the history of Chinese migration in a chronological chart of 222 years (1788-2010). It is available in English, Traditional Chinese, and French.  * “In May 1882 Prime Minister John A. Macdonald told the people in B.C. that “If you wish to have the railway finished within any reasonable time, there must be no such step against Chinese labour. At present, it is simply a question of alternative – either you must have this labour or you cannot have the railway.” Although many White Canadians deeply resented the Chinese labourers, failure to complete the railway was unthinkable. As a result, they had to choose the lesser of the two “evils,” and tolerate the employment of the Chinese. By the end of 1882, of the 9,000 railway workers, 6,500 were Chinese. Hundreds of Chinese railway workers died due to accidents, winter cold, illness and malnutrition.”  “The intention of the head tax was to discourage Chinese labourers from coming to Canada by imposing a heavy financial burden on them. The tax was increased to $100 in 1901 and again to $500 in 1903. In those days, the average Chinese labourer could earn only $225 a year. After deducting food, clothing, rent, medicine and other expenses, he could save only $43 a year.”Chinese were segregated socially, economically and politically. For example, they were not permitted to sit on the lower floor of the Victoria Opera House but had to sit in the upper gallery. Chinese people were not permitted to swim in the City's Crystal Swimming Pool. A store manager in Victoria prohibited Chinese customers from entering the store every Saturday night from 7 to 10 p.m., claiming that many White women patronized the store at this time and did not like to see too many Chinamen around staring at them.  * In 1920, the Federal Government passed a bill to disqualify persons from voting federally if they were not permitted to vote provincially. As a result, professional societies could exclude anyone whose name was not on the voting list, without specifying race. Hence, Chinese people could not become lawyers, pharmacists, or doctors in British Columbia and some other provinces.  Chinese-Canadian History **<http://www.rcinet.ca/patrimoine-asiatique-en/le-mois-du-patrimoine-asiatique-au-canada/limmigration-chinoise-au-canada/>** This article provides a brief timeline of Chinese immigration in Canada from 1858 to 2006. **Chinese Canadians**  <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chinese-canadians/>   * “From 1923 to 1947, the Chinese were excluded altogether from immigrating to Canada. While 1 July is celebrated as Canada Day, some Chinese Canadians refer to that date as "National Humiliation Day." This is because the Chinese were the only ethnic group ever to be excluded from emigrating to Canada.” * “The federal government appointed a Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration (1902), which concluded that the Asians were "unfit for full citizenship ... obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state." After the 1903 session of Parliament passed legislation raising the head tax to $500, the number of Chinese who paid the fee in the first fiscal year dropped from 4,719 to eight.” * “Contrary to stereotypes of Chinatowns as “overcrowded ghettos," the communities that developed in the 19th and 20th centuries were significant places for businesses and families. They became the heart and soul of Chinese Canada and were a safe bastion from the hostile and racist environment that surrounded them. In particular, Vancouver's Chinatown during the exclusion era (1923–1947) became a thriving economic and social destination that was home to many Chinese Canadians on the West Coast.”   **History of the Chinese in Canada, Debates of the Senate (Hansard) 1st Session, 36th Parliament, Vol. 137, Tuesday, February 2, 1999** <https://www.mysteriesofcanada.com/canada/history-of-the-chinese-in-canada/>   * “Even though the Chinese were not removed from the voters’ list until 1875, in January 1873 they were prevented from voting in Nanaimo by being physically barred from the polling stations. The *Colonist* applauded the act as sensible, and referred to the Chinese as “heathen” slaves who had no right to stand side by side with other Canadians at the ballot box. This event happened 13 years after the birth of the first Chinese in Canada.” * “According to Sir Matthew Begbie, Chief Justice of British Columbia:   I do not see how people would get on here at all without Chinamen. They do, and do well, what white women cannot do, and do what white men will not do…. They constitute three-fourths of the working hands about every salmon cannery; they are a very large majority of the labourers employed in gold mines; they are the model market gardeners of the province, and produce the greater part of the vegetables grown here; they have been found to be absolutely indispensable in the construction of the railway….”   * “From the beginning until after the Second World War, the Chinese remained marginal in Canadian society. The removal of citizenship rights, their exclusion from immigration and the restrictions on occupational competition were legally sanctioned by the state and were formally institutionalized.” * “In 1979, CTV aired the program, “Campus Give-away,” accusing Canadian universities of accepting Chinese students with higher qualifications than white Canadian students, and thereby spaces in the area of higher education were being taken up by “foreign students.” The program implied that students who looked Chinese were foreign, regardless of whether they were Canadian born, naturalized or visa students.”  Video: Chinese Immigrants Not Welcome Anymore, CBC Digital Archives<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/chinese-immigration-not-welcome-anymore>“In the 1880s, thousands of Chinese immigrants worked to help build Canada's railway. But as soon as their work was over in 1885, the message was clear: Chinese people weren't welcome in Canada anymore. The Canadian government went to great lengths to keep Chinese immigrants out of the country, including an extremely expensive head tax on all Chinese immigrants. This 1997 CBC Television clip examines those difficult early days of Chinese immigration.” **Video: Chinese-Canadians get the vote in 1947, CBC Digital Archives**  <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/chinese-canadians-get-the-vote-in-1947>   * “Harry Ho and Roy Mah both fought for Canada during the Second World War. But because of their Chinese heritage, they couldn’t even vote in a Canadian election at the time. As Mah explains in this CBC Television clip, many Chinese-Canadians believed that fighting for Canada during the war was strategically wise. How could Canada deny Chinese-Canadians the vote after they bravely served the country overseas? They were right —– as of 1947, Chinese-Canadians were finally granted the right to vote in Canadian elections.”  Video: The personal impact of racism for Chinese immigrants, CBC Digital Archives<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/chinese-immigration-the-personal-impact-of-racism>  * Chinese-Canadian Gim Wong reflects on a very sad incident from his childhood. |