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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS IN ALBERTA, 1885-1947

by

HILDA MAH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled A HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION OF CHINESE CANADIANS IN ALBERTA, 1885-1947 submitted by HILDA MAH in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in HISTORY OF EDUCATION.

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Supervisor

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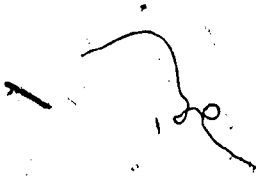
Date 29 June 1987

In Memory of a Chinese Canadian pioneer---

Mah Chiu Lun (Jee Mah)

1888-1982



ABSTRACT

The educational experiences of Chinese Canadians in Alberta from 1885 to 1947, a period of legislated discrimination for this group, are examined in the study. Official restrictions through national immigration policy exacerbated a general negative attitude towards Canadians of Chinese descent and encouraged discriminatory provincial and local reaction to them. Such emotions permeated into the educational scene in the province. The thesis documents the educational revelations through oral history methodology in collaboration with conventional archival resources.

The early Chinese immigrants to Alberta possessed some formal rudimentary schooling from the traditional institutions of learning in China. They brought with them a high regard for education which prompted some to send their children to China for schooling and others to establish Chinese language schools in Canada. The experiences of those who received an education in China are examined together with developments in that country.

The Chinese language schools in Alberta during the period of study were largely affiliated with religious or political groups but they ultimately served to maintain the Chinese culture and language. Self-esteem and a sense of pride in their heritage were nourished through a Chinese education, elements the public schools of Alberta did not

foster.

The kinds of experiences Chinese Canadian students had in the public schools are recreated in the thesis. Their treatment and association with non-Chinese peers tended to be affected by prevailing negative social attitudes towards Chinese Canadians. The experiences prompted varied impressions and responses according to individuals.

Major institutions such as the school and church sought to Canadianize new immigrants and especially the children of the newcomers, but Asian Albertans were not the main focus. A few Chinese benefited from the evening English as a Second Language programs established by public school boards for European immigrants. These classes and those organized by missionary groups for purposes of evangelization are examined. The educational experiences of Chinese Canadians in Alberta prior to 1947 were continually shaped by such external forces.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am indebted to the countless numbers of people throughout Alberta who graciously provided assistance and encouragement during the course of my research and writing. Of utmost significance have been the participants in the oral history interviews who shared their personal experiences and allowed their memories to be recorded for future generations.

I am also most grateful to the members of my Examining Committee for their interest, support, and valuable advice: Professors E. Brian Titley, Brian L. Evans, and Robert S. Patterson. The constructive comments offered by Dr. Titley and Dr. Evans following the completion of each chapter were very much appreciated. The guidance Dr. Titley provided as Supervisor was exemplary.

Lastly, I must express my deepest and heartfelt gratitude to my husband, Michael E. Johns, for not only his assistance in editing and computer processing, but for his moral support and unremitting confidence in me.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a growing awareness and appreciation for our multicultural society has seen a corresponding increase in the scholarly and popular writing of the various ethnic groups of Canada, including Chinese Canadians. Several excellent studies have already been completed on the general history of the Chinese in Canada.[1] Unfortunately the interest in this group has not carried over to historical educational research in Alberta. It is the aim of this thesis to fill the void.

Topic and Scope

The history of the formal education of Chinese Canadians is an area of research that has been long overlooked by educational historians in the province. While Alberta library shelves abound with educational studies of many of the province's other immigrant groups, there are none on the Chinese. Studies of the educational experiences of Oriental communities in coastal centres such as Vancouver, Victoria, and San Francisco have revealed attempts to segregate Chinese children in schools and to curtail equal educational opportunity. My interest to

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[1] For examples, see Edgar Wickberg (ed.), *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982; Anthony Chan, *Gold Mountain*, Vancouver, New Star Books, 1983; or James Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains: The Chinese in British Columbia*, Vancouver, J. J. Douglas Ltd., 1974.

investigate the situation in Alberta arose from reading of these incidents. A statement made in one article claiming that prior to the 1940s few Chinese received an education in Alberta further challenged me to initiate this study.[2]

The readings posed several questions which are to be addressed: Were Chinese Canadian children in Alberta subjected to the same mistreatment as their neighbours in British Columbia? What were the political, economic, and social forces that affected the Chinese experience? To what extent were policies of integration and segregation practiced on Chinese students within the educational system? What educational provisions were made for the Chinese newcomers to adapt to a new language and culture?

The period of legislative discrimination against the Chinese is the one with which this thesis is concerned. From 1885 until 1947, at which time the federal law excluding Chinese immigrants to Canada was finally repealed, various restrictions were imposed on this group. 1885 also marks the year in which the Chinese made their first attempt at permanent residency in Alberta. Their experiences in both the private and public sectors in the urban centres of Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge will be explored. These experiences include those in the Chinese language schools, in the public school systems, and in English as a Second Language classes.

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[2] Paul Voisey, "Two Chinese Communities in Alberta: An Historical Perspective" in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, December 1970, p. 24.

Review of the Literature

The amount of literature available which specifically concerns the education of Chinese Canadians in Alberta is extremely limited. The available information deals primarily with the status in British Columbia. Published works by Mary Ashworth are perhaps the only materials that focus on the public schooling of Chinese Canadians in the country. One major study can be found in a chapter of her book, *The Forces Which Shaped Them: A History of the Education of Minority Group Children in British Columbia.* This detailed and informative work on the Vancouver-Victoria situation and her previous article, "The Segregat of Immigrant Children in British Columbia Schools" have been useful to this thesis for comparative purposes.

The only other comprehensive attempt to record the educational experiences of Chinese Canadians is Gordon R. Taylor's 1933 unpublished Master of Education thesis "An Investigation of Chinese Schools in Canada". Taylor credits these schools in the early twentieth century with making a valuable social and cultural contribution to the Chinese community. His study was particularly useful in providing cross-references and collaboration for the oral histories conducted for the present study.

Some other writings that have been useful references on the development of Chinese schools in Canada are: "History of the Overseas Chinese in Canada" by David T. H. Lee (Lee Tung-hai), *A Survey on Chinese Education in the Prairie*

Region (With Reference to Other Regions in Canada) conducted by the Manitoba Ad Hoc Committee on Chinese Education Studies in 1979, and Edgar Wickberg's "Some Problems in Chinese Organizational Development in Ca[illegible] 1923-1937". Lee's work was published in the Chine[illegible]age but the Secretary of State Translation Bureau has made available a draft in English. The chapter Lee has written on culture and education includes a brief description of the Chinese school in Calgary and accords the one in Edmonton an honourable mention. While information on the Alberta Chinese schools is not extensive, the study reveals the development of schooling for Chinese Canadians in general from the late nineteenth century onwards. The Manitoba Ad Hoc Committee on Chinese Education Studies survey deals primarily with the contemporary situation. Wickberg's article has been instructive concerning influential factors in the formation of Chinese schools.

What is largely available on the education of Chinese Canadians are bits and pieces of information which tend to be repetitive and scattered throughout general works on the history of the Chinese in Canada. An exception to this is *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* edited by Edgar Wickberg which includes a more in-depth overview of the educational scene. For a general history, the type of information it contains on education is substantial and significant but it pertains primarily to the Vancouver-Victoria area. It is written in a scholarly manner

and makes a conscious effort at impartiality.

Ban Seng Hoe's *Structural Changes of Two Chinese Communities in Alberta*, a publication of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, also provided general background information. It is perhaps the only published monograph that is specifically on the Alberta Chinese. In Hoe's examination of the various Chinese associations in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton, he touches briefly on the origins of the Chinese Public School in Calgary and the Chinese United Church School in Edmonton.

The writings of Howard D. Palmer and Paul L. Voisey have been helpful as background material as well. Palmer's studies on nativism and anti-Oriental sentiment in *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* and "Anti-Oriental Sentiment in Alberta 1880-1920" have been valuable. The article mentioned in the previous section regarding the educational attainment of Chinese Canadians prior to the 1940s is the one which Voisey wrote on the Chinese communities of Calgary and Vulcan, entitled "Two Chinese Communities in Alberta: An Historical Perspective".

Among the general works available concerning Chinese Canadians in Alberta are articles by Gunter A. Baureiss and J. Brian Dawson. Baureiss has written "The Chinese Community in Calgary" and Dawson authored "The Chinese Experience in Frontier Calgary: 1885-1910". Their unpublished dissertations also contain information on educational matters. Baureiss' sociological study, "The City and

Sub-community: The Chinese of Calgary" includes a description of the Chinese Public School as it was in the 1970s. In Dawson's urban community history, "Chinese Urban Communities in Southern Alberta 1885-1925", the discussion of education is confined to a limited overview of the Calgary Chinese Public School and the classes provided by the local missions.

The most comprehensive study exclusively on the education of a Chinese community in North America is Victor Low's *The Unimpressible Race: A Century of Educational Struggle by the Chinese in San Francisco*. It is well-documented and well-researched, covering the education of Chinese American youth and their subsequent efforts at gaining entry into the educational profession in that city. Parallel American studies such as this one have been informative and valuable for comparison purposes.

Sources of Data

The findings of this study stem primarily from oral histories of Chinese Canadians who resided in Alberta prior to 1947, and which were collected over the three summers of 1984, 1985, and 1986.[3] The collection includes both Chinese Canadians who immigrated from China and those who were born here but whose forefathers were from China. The task of collecting these oral histories was initiated after an

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[3] See Appendix A for questions used in the oral history interviews. The questionnaire was also translated into Chinese.

investigation into the availability and substance of primary sources relating to the education of Alberta's Chinese citizens proved meagre. What little information is available at the various libraries, media agencies, archival institutions, school boards, and Chinese Canadian organizations has, however, provided sufficient collaboration for the oral histories. Having deduced that the majority of the elders who were early immigrants would be in their 70s, 80s, or older since no Chinese immigration was allowed in Canada after 1923[4], I felt it was imperative that the experiences and impressions of these early pioneers be recorded, not only for the immediate study, but for future generations. Although the oral histories were collected in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge, the three largest urban centres of Alberta, not all the interviewees were native to those cities; some had been small town residents.

Oral history can provide in-depth and revealing information unattainable elsewhere. The nature of this type of research is, however, very time consuming--involving preliminary planning, meetings, the interview itself, post-deliberation, and follow-up meetings. Oral history collecting in the summer of 1984 proved both productive and rewarding but was overwhelming for one person. The extent and success of the oral history collecting would not have been possible if not for the support of the Chinese Canadian

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[4] See Chapter I for more details on the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act.

National Council (Edmonton Chapter). Through this organization, funding was granted by the federal Summer Employment Experience Development (SEED) program for the employment of summer students to carry Oral History Project I (1985) and Oral History Project II (1986).[5] Some funding was also received from the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) in 1986.

Oral History Methodology

Oral history methodology involves the recording and preservation of the knowledge and attitudes of the past as experienced and told by participants.[6] It is a historical research technique that relies on the memories of its subjects.[7] Oral history can exist in the realms of sound[8]

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[5] Oral History Project II's official name for funding purposes was "Historical Tapes Collection Project".

[6] Oral history, as we know it today began only within the past few decades. Broadcasters were the first to record reminiscences of the "movers and shakers" or "elite". For more information, see Neil V. Rosenberg (ed.), *Folklore and Oral History*, St. John's, Newfoundland, Memorial University, Newfoundland, 1978, p. xiii. The first oral history project was one conducted in the 1920s in the United States which interviewed illiterate former slaves. For a thorough discussion of this project, see David Henige, *Oral Historiography*, London, Longman Group, Limited, 1982, p. 116-117.

[7] Jan Vansina, a well noted oral historian points out that in societies where oral rather than written communication is the rule, oral traditions serve not only as artistic expressions which transmit cultural values but also as carefully maintained carriers of specific historical data, Quoted in Ibid., p. xv. Even today it is not uncommon for legends, family history, and historical events to be passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth.

[8] When the tape recorder was made readily available to the public in the 1940s, the idea of "oral history" crystalized. The technological advance meant that the process of sound recording was no longer difficult, costly, or restricted to the broadcasting industry.

and vision as well as printed form. Most oral histories are conducted on reel or cassette tape but a few have been recorded on video tape. The oral histories conducted for this research were captured on cassette tape. There follows a brief discussion of some of the methodological advantages and pitfalls of this research technique.

Ethnic groups make excellent sources for oral history studies because of the drastic changes and adjustments they often have to make in accommodating themselves to North American society.[9] Their history in Canada has too often been neglected and inadequately documented; thus, there is a lack of conventional sources and official records. Immigrants were excluded from the record because they did not have the leisure time to memorialize themselves.[10] Not only was the ethnic experience not recorded, the experience of ethnicity is not easily documented through the regular sources.[11] Oral history is able to reveal emotions that are not readily found in official records. It is the most effective vehicle for collecting opinions, attitudes, and impressions. Our understanding of a people can be greatly enhanced by oral history.

The case of the Chinese Canadians is a good example of a group whose contribution to Canadian society is not often

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[9] James Hoopes, *Oral History: An Introduction for Students*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1979, p. 48.

[10] Robert F. Harney, *Oral Testimony and Ethnic Studies*, The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, n.d., p. 2.

[11] Derek Reimer (ed.), *Voices: A Guide to Oral History*, Victoria, B.C., Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1984, p. 56.

recognized in history books and texts. In the past the Chinese community has not had the resources to record their experiences in Canada, and consequently, as it often happens with reference books, the newcomer is seen through the eyes of the assimilators, controllers, and exploiters and is regarded as a dangerous and unreliable mute.'[12] Coverage of the circumstances of Chinese Canadians was simply not a concern of Canadians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.'[13] Since there are relatively few written records on the Chinese Canadians, it makes the task of recording the oral histories of the survivors of the early period all that more urgent and essential. Their memories are the only remaining source for first hand information on their experiences and those of others that they knew. Dr. J. Widdowson, in describing the value of oral histories to Newfoundland history, states it is possible to reach back a span of 120 years if a person who is in his/her 80s can recall what a grandparent told him/her about the same grandparent's youth.'[14] Ideally this implies that we should be able to collect information on the earliest Chinese immigrant through oral history. Research on the history of the Chinese Canadians would lack depth and be almost impossible without the use of oral history

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'[12] Harney, p. 2.
'[13] For example, the Chinese were not included in statistics reported in the newspapers on men who died working on the Canadian Pacific Railway in the late nineteenth century.
'[14] Dr. John Widdowson, "Oral History in Canada: The Newfoundland Contribution", *Sound Heritage*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Canadian Aural/Oral History Conference, October 1974, p. 51.

techniques.

One area in the field of ethnic studies that can be very successfully pursued through oral history is the issue of the identity problem among minorities.[15] Alice Harris, an oral historian, points out that everyone needs a past of their own:

> " . . . that you can't live in the future unless you know where you come from, and in that sense it's especially important to reconstruct or create myths about your own past which may or may not be true . . . to know where you came from is one of the reasons why immigrants develop and retain stories of their own past."[16]

Oral history can help provide that sense of identity. Questions about the intensity of ethnic feeling and the impact of psychic and cultural baggage from the Old World on all aspects of life in North America are important[17] and can be explored through oral history.

This research technique can be enlightening but some precautions also need to be made. The raw material of oral history is the human memory, and memories may be consciously or unconsciously exaggerated, understated, or forgotten. Just as written sources need to be substantiated, oral sources need to be checked and documented as well. Oral history must never be a substitute for exhaustive analysis of documentary sources; rather, it serves best as a

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[15] Oral history can also provide insight into the related study of cultural and generational gaps between immigrants and their first generational children.

[16] Alice Kessler Harris, in "It's Not the Song, It's the Singing: Panel Discussion on Oral History", 13 April 1973, Chicago, Illinois, in Ronald J. Grele (ed.), *Envelopes of Sound*, Chicago, Precedent Publishing, Inc., 1975, p. 67.

[17] Harney, p. 1.

complement to the written record.'[18] Even if the recollection is of doubtful veracity, how someone recalls the past can still provide revealing insights.'[19]

Oral history, like all other resources, should be scrutinized for its degree of objectivity. The goal of attaining objectivity begins in the preparatory work that precedes the interview.[20] In the creation of a sound document, the interviewer or historian should demonstrate the highest degree of detachment or neutrality.[21] What happens in the course of an interview affects the content and therefore the historical value of the tape.[22] Taking such precautions will help guard objectivity, but the highly personal nature of oral history makes it impossible to remove all subjectivity. However, it is this personal

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[18] Evidence should be found to verify oral data. This can also be done through obtaining dozens of accounts of the same event or experience. For further discussion, see Willa K. Baum, *Oral History for the Local History Society*, Conference of the California Historical Societies, 1969, p. 1.

[19] This issue of whether it is the objective truth, the individual truth, truth in terms of attitude or feeling or the truth of an age that is valuable is explored in "It's Not the Song, . . . ".

[20] For example, the questions to be asked must be carefully worded so as to not reveal biases or make subtle suggestions.

[21] Neutrality, if properly used, expresses interest, not disinterest in a narrator's experiences and ideas. See Hoopes, p. 9. It is important for the interviewer to realize that the sole object is to elicit information from the narrator, and not to correct, debate, or educate. See Cullom Davis, et. al., *Oral History: From Tape to Type*, Chicago, American Library Association, 1977, p. 19. Voice inflections, tonality, and facial and body gestures must be consciously controlled. Even the type of clothes worn and the level of formal language usage may bias the interviewee's words.

[22] Alice Kessler Harris, "Introduction", Ronald J. Grele (ed.), *Envelopes of . . . "*, p. 2.

quality that makes oral history gathering worthwhile. Through it, the inner sources and motives behind a person's thoughts and actions can be more easily revealed. People are more likely to be spontaneous in talking about their feelings than in writing them.[23]

Since oral history is so highly personal and humanistic, not only does it tend to be subjective, it has the potential to violate the privacy and confidentiality of the narrator. This danger of breaking a trust between interviewer and interviewee, and possibly certain points of law, can cause irreparable harm to a variety of people. Friends and relatives of the narrator or even the narrator himself may be psychologically hurt or even physically endangered by candid information gained through an oral history interview. A written guarantee of privacy is always highly recommended to protect both the oral historian/interviewer and the interviewee.[24] Even though the historian may be protected by the written waiver, sometimes certain materials will require further and deeper consideration along ethical lines. Such data may need to be carefully used or perhaps even omitted altogether so as to not hurt certain people. The exciting and revealing evidence that oral history technique provides can be appreciated only

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[23] Hoopes, p. 17.

[24] A consent form printed in English and Chinese was used in the Chinese Canadian National Council oral history interviews. In the agreement permission is granted for the interviewer to use the information. The consent form protects the historian in cases of accusations of copyright infringement.

when it is extracted and synthesized appropriately.

Significance of the Study

The research undertaken for the development of this thesis has not only expanded the data base for the many dimensions of ethnic theory but for social historical research in general. The oral history tapes collected will be a valuable addition to any archival collection.[25] It would be rewarding to this author if the availability of the oral history tapes, or any other part of this study, stimulates and generates future investigations, themselves adding to the body of literature on ethnic studies in multicultural Canada.

Current trends and issues in society are often shaped by historical events. The direction in education today towards the preservation of heritage languages and cultures can be better understood in this light. This historical study will be significant in facilitating such an end. Since school boards often seek the support of the community which they serve, it is to their benefit to increase community understanding of programs offered. Wider awareness of the mainspring and merits of heritage education--such as a bilingual Chinese program which appears to benefit only a

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[25] The oral history tapes of Chinese Canadians will be part of the Chinese Canadian National Council (Edmonton Chapter) Library that is in the process of being established. At the conclusion of this study, copies may also be donated to the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Gertrude McLaren, an archivist at the University of Alberta has expressed an interest in the tapes becoming part of the university's collection.

few but affects a much broader parameter--can bring about reinforced support from the majority.

The present study will benefit individuals within the educational system as well. Not only will it provide substance for effective curriculum updating and upgrading, particularly in the subject area of Social Studies, but hopefully it will help teachers broaden their perspectives when teaching in a classroom of children from various ethnic backgrounds. Improvement in these respects will contribute to the elevation of the teaching profession.

Enlightened instructors, in turn, can be nothing but beneficial for our students. In the homes of second generation children and immigrant parents where cultural gaps may often amplify generational gaps, a better knowledge of one's roots may help avert certain potential conflicts. As one respondent expressed:

> " . . . we need to somehow come to grips with being able to have our younger generation understand Chinese Canadian history. I think without that, someday, if we run into drastic changes in our society, they will become a lost generation."[24]

Moreover, this study will contribute to bringing about the enhancement of students' self-esteem, sense of identity, and cultural pride--all of which, without a doubt, contribute to higher student achievement levels and improved student behavior and morale. Benefits of the study will not be confined to Chinese Canadian students; an increased level of

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[24] Chinese Canadian National Council Oral History Interview (CCNC OHI) 86-34, Edmonton, Chinese Canadian National Council.

tolerance and understanding for differences in our society among ALL youth will help us to live in harmony and for the betterment of Canada.

Outline of the Study

A study of the history of the education of a people would be incomplete without an account of their origins. Consequently the first chapter is a summary of the history of Chinese Canadians in Alberta. The historical background provides an indication of the type of atmosphere and social environment that the Chinese found themselves compelled to accept in the early years. This is important as it will help us better understand the progress of educational development.

The Chinese came from a society that held education in the highest regard. Chapter Two describes the traditional Chinese educational system that was familiar to the first immigrants and the second generation of Canadian-born children who were sent to China for schooling. It depicts the type of system that affected the attitude and response to Chinese education in Canada.

Chapter Three traces the efforts of the Chinese in Alberta to maintain their culture and language through the formation of their own schools. It deals with their growth in concert with the objectives of their sponsoring organizations.

Chapter Four examines the experiences of Chinese Canadians in the public day schools of Alberta where prejudice and discrimination were not uncommon occurrences for the children.

Chapter Five outlines the services that two major institutions, the school and church, provided for adult immigrants to learn the English language. The chapter also accounts for the development of the public school evening classes and the Chinese mission sessions in light of nationalistic and evangelistic purposes.

The last chapter is the "Conclusion" in which attention is directed to the overall educational experience of the Chinese in Alberta. The significance of political, economic, and social factors is highlighted along with their impact on the Chinese experience.

I. THE CHINESE IN ALBERTA (1885-1947): AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

> "One time when I was working in a restaurant, two white guys asked me for some ketchup. I brought them a whole bottle of it and one of the guys drank the ketchup from the bottle. I told him he shouldn't do that. He didn't listen to me; instead, he got angry and was trying to hit me. One of the guys in the restaurant told him not to hit me because he might get in trouble. . . . Then the guy turned around and told me I shouldn't have said that to the guy. He said, 'You Chinese, we white people. You can't say this to me.'"[1]

Late nineteenth century Western Canada was characterized by an increasing proportion of immigrant settlers who spoke neither English nor French.[2] The Chinese were one of the first immigrant groups to settle in Alberta, making their first efforts at permanent residency in 1885.[3] Although their numbers were never significant as a proportion of the total population, their presence was viewed with suspicion.[4] In fact, the Chinese were perceived as the most undesirable immigrants of all.[5]

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[1] Chinese Canadian National Council Oral History Interview (CCNC OHI) 85-39, Edmonton, Chinese Canadian National Council.

[2] Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976, p. 203. Sutherland includes population figures. See also, Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984, p. 244.

[3] Newspaper references to the Chinese suggest this as the earliest date of settlement.

[4] See Appendix B, Table I for the Chinese population in Alberta, 1901-1941.

[5] Howard D. Palmer, "Anti-Oriental Sentiment in Alberta 1880-1920", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. II, No. 2, December, 1970, p. 31.

Most of the unfavourable attitudes were carry-overs from the earliest days of Chinese immigration in British Columbia. In that province fears were raised that Asian immigrants would undermine a "White Canada". On the grounds of the undesirability of the "yellow peril", and its threat to the Canadian economy, the federal government was steadily pressured to restrict or completely halt Chinese immigration. The result was a string of discriminatory pieces of legislation directed against the Chinese throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These laws had broad and far-reaching ramifications for the political, economic, social, cultural, and educational life of Chinese Canadians. While British Columbia remained the centre of anti-Oriental activity in Canada, attempts were also made in Alberta to restrict that group's freedom.

The Chinese experience in Alberta was strongly affected by official and unofficial forces during the period 1885 to 1947. Sources of hostility were both internal and external to the province. Moreover, anti-Chinese sentiment and the events and institutions arising from it in Alberta were based primarily on grounds of racism. It would not be an exaggeration to say that during this period the Chinese throughout Canada were victims of oppression in varying degrees administered by all levels of government and supported by public opinion.

Early Chinese Immigration 1858-1885

The arrival date of the very first Chinese in North America is unknown. There are reports of expeditions having been sent from China in 458 A.D. and reaching what is now British Columbia but no records exist of any efforts to establish Chinese settlements on Canadian shores.[4] There are also reports of some Chinese arriving in Canada in 1277; these were the troops of the Yuan Dynasty or Mongol Empire carried over by the currents.[5] The first confirmed contact between the Chinese and British Columbia occurred in early June of 1788. Captain John Meares, an independent dealer in the Pacific Rim fur trade sailed from the island of Macau and landed at Nootka Sound with a crew of 30 Chinese. They returned in September of the same year.

The date of arrival of the first Chinese to settle either temporarily or permanently in Canada is generally considered to be 1858. On 25 June 1858, 300 Chinese disembarked at Fort Victoria, Vancouver Island, from the sailing vessel, the "Caribbean". These early immigrants sailed from San Francisco[6] after hearing that gold had been

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[4] *Edmonton Sun*, 25 June 1978; and "Buddhist Columbia" in *Raincoast Chronicles*, Issue No. 2, No. 1-6, 1972-76, p. 15-16. It may have been highly undesirable for these early Chinese explorers to establish settlement since during this period China was enjoying the splendors and benefits of being one of the more advanced and developed civilizations in the world; the frontier shores of British Columbia may have seemed primitive and unworthy of settlement.

[5] Vivian Lai, "The New Chinese Immigrants in Toronto" in Jean Leonard Elliot, *Immigrant Groups, Minority Canadians 2*, Scarborough, Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1971, p. 121.

[6] They had originally emigrated from China to the California gold fields in the 1840s.

discovered on the Fraser River. The Caribou gold rush attracted prospectors from all over the world. Other Chinese prospectors from California undoubtedly made their way north of the forty-ninth parallel by land during this period as well.

Following 1860, Chinese immigrants hoping to strike it rich sailed directly from Hong Kong to Victoria. In the twenty year period between 1860 and 1880, relatively few Chinese emigrated to Canada. By 1866, most of the mines in British Columbia had been exhausted and many Chinese were returning to China or the United States.

The 1880s saw large numbers of Chinese coming to British Columbia to build the Canadian Pacific Railway.' The Dominion government estimated that at least 10,000 able-bodied men were needed to build the British Columbia section alone and the province, with its population of 35,000 whites, could not provide the labour.'° Chinese manpower was used in the building of the American transcontinental railway and had proven economical and efficient.'' Consequently, approximately 15,000 to 17,000 Chinese men were brought in under contract as a source of cheap labour for the construction of the CPR (1881-1885).

' By 1880 there were approximately 5000 Chinese in Canada with the majority residing in British Columbia. See Heather Harris and Mary Sun, *The Chinese Canadians*, Scarborough, Nelson Canada, 1982, p. 8.

'° Pierre Berton, *The Last Spike*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., p. 1970, p. 189.

'' For information on the Chinese contribution in the building of American railway lines see, Jack Chen, *The Chinese of America*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981, p. 65-78.

Their lower wages and dependability'[12] enabled the transcontinental railway to be completed on schedule and at a lower production cost. Consignments from American railway construction companies,'[13] and direct consignments from China were recruited.

The majority of the Chinese labourers who came to Canada can be described as from a "peasant proprietor" background'[14] from the province of Kwangtung in China.'[15] At that time, China was in a state of social and economic disruption as a result of Western military and economic domination which had increased significantly after 1840.'[16]

'[12] See David Lee, "Chinese Construction Workers on the Canadian Pacific", in *Railroad History*, No. 148, Spring 1983, p. 50. Lee reports that employers valued the Chinese because they were tractable, reliable, hard-working, uncomplaining, adaptable, honest, and seldom indisposed. He also includes a comparison of the workers made by a subcontractor of Cache Creek in a diary in 1883: 'I had pay day last week; I've some men on two gangs--Americans, British Columbians and Canadians on my section who have not done a stroke of work since & I don't expect them back till all the money is spent. The Chinese have not lost a day. They have no black Mondays, don't stop because it looks rainy, are ready for special work at nights or on Sundays, have no fete days & altogether, tho physically unequal to the white man are more depended on . . .'

'[13] Veteran Chinese railwaymen from the Southern Pacific and Northern Pacific Railways were enlisted.

'[14] The term peasant is often used to describe the Chinese immigrants but it is not entirely accurate. They were actually members of the agricultural class of which some owned their holdings.

'[15] In Mandarin romanized form, the province is spelled Guangdong. Kwangtung is located on the southern coast of China. For a detailed map of the area from which the early Chinese to Canada emigrated from, see Edgar Wickberg (ed.), *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd. and the Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, 1982, p. 8.

'[16] For a background of China's difficulties during this era see, Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, (Second Edition), New York, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 220-405.

Poor living conditions and overpopulation made it lucrative for Chinese men to leave their families and homes to earn a living in North America, the continent they referred to as "Golden Mountain". Furthermore, China seemed to be in the midst of a series of natural disasters, such as famines and floods, further persuading many to seek a better life elsewhere. The family structure of Chinese society enabled a man to leave, knowing that in his absence his family would be cared for by clan members.[17] These factors encouraged emigration, but those who left usually intended to return one day with sufficient capital for retirement.

In November of 1885, the Canadian transcontinental railway was completed. Thousands of Chinese labourers were left unemployed. Some possessed enough funds to pay for a return passage to China and a few remained in Canada by choice, but many found themselves stranded, with no source of income in a hostile society characterized by a radically different culture.

The commercial guilds that had recruited them, and which had acted as intermediaries during the construction of the railroad, did nothing to remedy the situation. The Canadian government also refused to take part in any effort which would have helped accommodate the displaced Chinese. In fact, in 1885, the very year the CPR was completed and Chinese labour was no longer essential, a head tax of $50

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[17] For a discussion of the Chinese clan structure, see Hui-Chen Wang Liu, *The Traditional Chinese Clan Rules*, Locust Valley, New York, J. J. Augustin Incorporated Publisher, 1959.

was placed on every Chinese person entering the country. Throughout the building of the railroad, there had been much opposition to the Chinese being hired, but the government, realizing the value and necessity of the Chinese, was too pragmatic to exclude them until it was completed.[16] No attempts were made to assimilate the Chinese or even ease their adjustment to Western society. The majority of the Chinese labourers remained in British Columbia with many returning to Vancouver and Victoria. Others settled in a string of towns scattered along the CPR, while still others moved east of the Rockies and settled in what is now Alberta and other provinces.

The Chinese Population in Alberta

The early Chinese settlers who trickled into Alberta from British Columbia in the mid-1880s lived almost exclusively in the larger urban communities with a few scattered in smaller towns. There were Chinese in Calgary and Lethbridge by 1885 and in Edmonton by 1889. In 1926, 85.5 percent of the total Chinese population in Alberta lived in urban centres.[17] Often in the smaller towns, a

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[16] Berton, p. 195.

[17] J. Brian Dawson, "Chinese Urban Communities in Southern Alberta 1885-1925", (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis), Calgary, University of Calgary, 1976, p. 38. Paul Voisey, "Chinatown on the Prairies: The Emergence of an Ethnic Community", in *Selected Papers From the Society For the Study of Architecture in Canada, Annual Meetings, 1975 & 1976*, Ottawa, p. 46, reports that "nearly all the Chinese in the prairie provinces lived in cities or towns from the time of their arrival." He further states that "census figures indicating a steady movement from rural to urban areas simply reflect the incorporation of towns rather than any

Chinese community meant one man who ran the local laundry or restaurant.[20]

In 1885 the Census of the Northwest Territories recorded eight Chinese in the provisional district of Alberta.[21] With the introduction of the head tax that year, Chinese immigration declined slightly and then resurged.[22] The head tax was later increased to $100 in 1900 and $500 in 1903.[23] These actions were meant as deterrents, but when they were found ineffective the government imposed an additional condition that every Chinese was required to have $200 in his possession upon arrival in Canada.[24] The Chinese in Alberta continued to grow in spite of these immigration restrictions. Chinese immigration, on the whole, continued to climb steadily and the measures were considered a

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(cont'd) shift on the part of the Chinese." In 1901, 61 percent of the Chinese population in Canada as a whole was classified as urban; in 1931 it was 80 percent.

[20] Adrienne Clarkson, "Poor No More", *Today*, 7 November 1981, p. 15.

[21] Census of 1885 *Northwest Territories*, p. 10.

[22] See Harris, p. 43, for graph showing immigration trends.

[23] The head taxes did benefit Ottawa and British Columbia in terms of extra revenue which Alberta and other provinces were denied. From 1885 to 1923, about $26.5 million was paid in head taxes by Chinese immigrants. For more information on the revenue generated, see Harris, p. 32; and Peter S. Li, "An Historical Approach to Ethnic Stratification: The Case of the Chinese in Canada, 1858-1920", *British Columbia Studies*, No. 22, Summer 1973, p. 326. The Chinese were allowed to return to China for visits but if the visitation exceeded a certain time period, they were required to pay the head tax again. Upon returning to Canada, they were required to stay in immigration shacks or "pig houses" as the Chinese called them which often resulted in waits of days to weeks while their papers and other documents were verified.

[24] Order in Council, P.C. 926, 9 May 1910, *in Government of Canada, Documents of Canadian External Relations 1909-1918*, Vol. I, Ottawa, Department of External Affairs, 1967, p. 609.

failure.[25] In 1901 the Chinese population in Alberta had grown to 235; ten years later the figure stood at 1,787; and by 1921 it had grown to 3,581. Although the total Chinese population in Alberta increased steadily, it always remained a tiny fraction of the total provincial population.[26] In fact the Chinese population was never more than one percent of the total provincial population in the decades prior to the Second World War. The enactment of the most outrageous piece of anti-Chinese legislation--the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act--caused the percentage to gradually decline.

Alberta supported the series of federal measures which led up to this act but the measures came primarily as a result of constant and intense lobbying from British Columbia where the majority of the Chinese population in Canada still resided.[27] The Chinese Immigration Act or, as

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[25] See letter from Assistant Chief Controller of Chinese Immigration to Secretary, Minister of the Interior, 29 June 1914, in Ibid., p. 653.

[26] See Appendix B, Table I for percentage of population being Chinese.

[27] Anti-Oriental sentiment began in the 1860s in British Columbia, intensifying and spreading throughout the following years. In the mining industry, for example, the Chinese were looked upon as competitors at a time when good mining claims were difficult to find. Social pressures and discrimination restricted the Chinese to mining on claims that had been well-worked over and subsequently abandoned by white miners. Yet even these claims, if they proved the slightest bit productive after long hours of toil by the Chinese, prompted indignant outcries of "Chinese takeover" from the white majority. Those who engaged in other occupations, such as merchants, laundrymen, vegetable peddlers, cooks, and houseboys, were accused of undermining the wages of white workers by accepting lower wages. Industries that took advantage of Chinese labour actually brought on benefits to both white workers and employers; lower wages for the Chinese meant higher wages for the white workers without a cut in profit for the employer. Products produced by Chinese labour at lower production costs placed

it was colloquially referred to, the Chinese Exclusion Act, effectively prevented any Chinese from entering the country with the exception of diplomats, tourists, merchants[28], or students. During the years 1923-1947 only 44 Chinese were officially allowed into Canada. Alberta's Chinese population during this period fluctuated between 3000 and 4000. The legislation now made it impossible for Chinese men to bring their families over, and this was to have a drastic social effect on the Chinese in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada.

The Albertan Response to Chinese Immigration

When the Chinese arrived in Alberta, they found unflattering preconceived images of them already well established.[29] In spite of the fact that there were so few

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[27](cont'd) the employer in an advantageous position over competitors. It also allowed for a higher frequency of white workers to take on intermediary administrative or overseeing positions. When Chinese labour was brought over for work on the CPR, anti-Oriental sentiment grew even more pronounced. It was argued that white labour would be excluded due to the large numbers of available Chinese workers and their lower wage scale. The thought of Canadian dollars leaving the country with those who returned to China further aggravated the anti-Chinese sector. For further discussion of the persecution of the Chinese based on economic terms in British Columbia, see Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever*, Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1978, p. 3-35.

[28] "Merchant" was very narrowly defined: " . . . a person who devoted his undivided attention to mercantile pursuits, who had not less than $2500 invested in an enterprise importing to Canada or exporting to China goods of Chinese or Canadian origin or manufacture and who had conducted such a business for at least three years." See Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration*, Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1972, p. 90.

[29] These images are described by Dawson, p. 130; Palmer, p. 35; and Paul L. Voisey, "Two Chinese Communities in Alberta: An Historical Perspective", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. II, No. 2, December 1970, p. 21.

Chinese in Alberta, they still found themselves the subject of deliberate discrimination although they were spared the frequent virulent outbursts of opposition typical of British Columbia.[30] Howard Palmer attributes this partly to the large-scale influx of Eastern Europeans at that time which tended to draw attention away from the Chinese.[31] Nevertheless, the prevalent attitudes and treatment of the Chinese amounted to delegating them to a position of third class residents. The Chinese of Lethbridge were even listed separately as "Sundry Chinamen" at the back of the 1912 local directory.[32] In complaining about class differences and snobbery in Calgary at the turn of the century a cleaning woman declared she was "neither a pig or a Chinaman".[33] The Chinese were distinctly placed at the bottom of the social scale.

The Chinese in Alberta never posed a threat in numbers but in British Columbia their sheer number, especially during the railway construction years, was itself considered a threat by the white population. It was feared that the "yellow peril" would soon outnumber the whites. The slogan "Keep Canada White" was a favourite among anti-Oriental groups such as the labour unions.[34]

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[30] Palmer, p. 35.
[31] Ibid.
[32] *Directory of the City of Lethbridge 1912*, Compiled and published by the Businessmen's Association, Printers & Stationers, 1912.
[33] Quoted in Catherine Rose Phillip, "The Women of Calgary and District 1875-1914", (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis), Calgary, University of Calgary, 1975, p. 88-89.
[34] The organized labour sector in Alberta was never as large as it was in British Columbia, nor was it ever aroused

Campaigns were launched by the coastal province's Anti-Orientalists to "educate" the east about the Chinese threat to the foundation and security of a white Canada.[35] In 1892 a member of the Vancouver Anti-Chinese League, Locksley Lucus, travelled to Calgary and attempted to form a local chapter.[36] His initial efforts were successful and he even convinced the mayor and two town councillors to serve on a provisional committee for the organization. Before the new branch became soundly established, however, Lucus lost his credibility and his campaign came to a "farcical ending".[37] He was the subject of public ridicule after preaching against employing Chinese labour and then having been discovered patronizing a Chinese laundry. To make matters worse, he was subsequently suspected of a staged suicide attempt and charged with the offence. The whole

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[34](cont'd) against the Chinese to the same extent as in British Columbia. The Alberta Chinese were seldom resorted to as strike breakers as they often were in British Columbia industries. See Ward, p. 48-49 and Palmer, p. 39. Instead of incorporating the Chinese into the unions so that they could not be used as strike-breakers, it was seen as more profitable to use them as scapegoats. The unions hoped that by doing this they would gain increased acceptance and support from the general populace. Palmer, p. 39, reports that while the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada was not to allow Orientals into its organizations until 1927, District 18 of the United Mine Workers of America, which included all of Alberta, decided to allow Orientals to join their union in 1909, as an alternative to exclusion from Canada.

[35] Patricia E. Roy, "Educating the 'East': British Columbia and the Oriental Question in the Interwar Years", in British Columbia Studies, No. 18, Summer 1973, p. 50-69.

[36] See William Beahen, "Mob Law Could Not Prevail", in *Alberta History*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Summer 1981, p. 5; and Palmer, p. 33.

[37] Beahen, p. 5.

affair became a "big joke"[38] and anti-Chinese league did not gain a foothold in Calgary.

The first outburst of physical hostility towards the Chinese in Alberta occurred in June 1892, a few months prior to Lucas' arrival in Calgary. The citizens of Calgary reacted dramatically to the discovery that a Chinese resident had contacted small pox. Strict quarantine measures were immediately enacted and the residence of the unfortunate victim was quickly burned. Despite those measures, nine persons were to contact the disease, of which three died. On the evening of the second of August, a mob of more than three hundred men, blaming the Chinese community as a whole for the deaths, gathered to rid the city of its Chinese population, and destroyed several Chinese residences in the process. Only the interference of the Northwest Mounted Police, who dispersed the riot, prevented a lynching from taking place.[39]

On Christmas Day in 1907 the Chinese of Lethbridge were also victims of physical violence but this incident was not as widely supported as the Calgary riot. The matter arose when a Chinese restaurant owner tried to evict an insolent customer from his premises. In the attempt, the customer was struck on the head with a hammer and false rumors circulated that this led to death. The next evening an intoxicated mob

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[38] Ibid., p. 6.
[39] Gunter Baureiss, "The Chinese Community in Calgary", *Alberta Historical Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring, 1974, p. 3.

demolished two restaurants and reacted violently on some Chinese residents.[40]

The Chinese in Edmonton were more fortunate and did not experience any comparable violent outbursts. The lower population number and the further distance from the intensity of British Columbian influence undoubtedly helped make anti-Oriental sentiment in Edmonton weaker than in the southern part of Alberta.[41]

Local governments in Alberta expressed their intolerance of the Chinese by attempting to restrict their activities largely through taxes and bylaws. In Calgary, the Chinese were subjected to legalized discrimination as early as January 1886. At that time, the town was merely an outpost, yet it already had an appointed district comptroller of Chinese immigration. A fee of $5 was required of every Chinese residing in the area, along with a medical certificate stating that he was free from leprosy and other contagious diseases.[42]

On 23 May 1903 Edmonton Town Council followed the lead of the town of Macleod in imposing a tax exclusively on

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[40] Accounts of this incident can be found in Palmer, p. 38; and Howard D. Palmer, *Land of the Second Chance: A History of Ethnic Groups in Southern Alberta*, Lethbridge, The Lethbridge Herald, 1972, p. 57.

[41] Palmer also contends that anti-Oriental sentiment was stronger in Southern Alberta. See Palmer, "Anti-Oriental . . .", p. 48; and J. Brian Dawson, "The Chinese Experience in Frontier Calgary: 1885-1910", in A. W. Rasporich and Henry Klassen (eds.), *Frontier Calgary: Town, City and Region 1875-1914*, Calgary, University of Calgary, 1975, p. 132.

[42] *Calgary Herald*, 23 January 1886. (Quoted in Dawson's thesis, p. 8.)

Chinese laundries to discourage Chinese entrepreneurs.[43] The $25 annual tax on all Edmonton laundries, however, was successfully contested by those affected. Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, there were persistent attempts by the non-Chinese citizens of Calgary and Lethbridge to confine Chinese laundries to one area. In 1904, a motion was successfully passed to prohibit any more Chinese laundries on any major business streets in Calgary. The Chinese naturally contested this bylaw and it was never put into effect.[44]

Laundries were not the only operations affected by prejudice and discrimination. There were strenuous objections to the establishment of any Chinese business in 1910, with the citizens of Calgary pressuring City Council to withhold building permits from Chinese applicants. The rationale used was that the presence of Chinese would reduce property values. While most wanted the segregation of the Chinese as long as it was geographically removed from their own residences[45], others preferred to disperse them about the city. And of course, there were those who wanted the Chinese completely driven out of the city.

Other methods of restricting the civil rights of Calgary's Chinese citizens were contemplated by the local government. In 1913, for example, the Calgary Chinese

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[43] In 1901 a $100 tax was levied on Macleod's Chinese laundries.

[44] See Baureiss, p. 5.

[45] Ibid., p. 6; and Dawson, "The Chinese Experience . . . ", p. 138.

successfully convfnced the City Council to discard its plan of assembling all Chinese in the city for the purpose of photographing and finger-printing them as a means of identification. Such measures, coupled with the general social hostility, denied the Chinese the privilege of living freely as other residents did.

Legislative restrictions did not appear at the provincial level in Alberta as they did in many other Canadian provinces.[46] Attempts were made to disenfranchise the Chinese in Alberta but this was unsuccessful.[47] An Albertan of Chinese ancestry can recall with distinction his determination "during the time of Aberhart" to make use of his franchise as soon as he turned 21 years of age specifically because not all Chinese Canadians had the

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[46] British Columbia was the most active of all Canadian provinces in passing discriminatory legislation against Chinese residents. As early as 1878 the Chinese were banned from employment on any public works of that province. The privilege of owning land was later denied in 1884. For more information on British Columbia and other provinces in this respect, see Jin Tan and Patricia E. Roy, *The Chinese in Canada*, (Canada's Ethnic Groups, Booklet No. 9), Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association With the Support of the Multiculturalism Program, Government of Canada, 1985.

[47] See Palmer, *Land of* . . . , p. 57; and Palmer, "Anti-Oriental . . . ", p. 38-39. Many occupations relied on the resident being on the voter's list as a means of issuing licences. In British Columbia, for example, since the Chinese could not vote in the provincial elections, they were excluded from professions such as law, pharmacy, accounting, and public school teaching. Not being on the provincial voter's list also effectively denied them the federal franchise, for the Dominion Elections Act automatically refused anyone the vote who did not have it provincially. Prime Minister John A. Macdonald personally attempted to pass an amendment to the Franchise Act that would prevent any person of "Mongolian" or Chinese race from voting in federal elections. See Ward, p. 40.

privilege.[48] Although he and his siblings were Canadian-born they were still considered Chinese. To this day he still highly values his vote and never misses an opportunity to cast a ballot.

Alberta politicians fully exploited the anti-Chinese sentiment during election times and made it into a popular political issue. Each one claimed to be the most anti-Chinese, as this was found to be a useful method of winning votes. Candidates would accuse each other of trying to win the Chinese vote or would deny accusations that they received or even wanted the Chinese vote.[49] When negative aspects of the Alberta Chinese community could not be found, politicians drew arguments from British Columbia or California propaganda. The fear of losing a white Canada was based more on apprehension than on fact, and consequently seemed much greater than it actually was[50]--especially in Alberta.

The subject of Oriental businessmen employing white females was an issue in Alberta and the town of Lethbridge was successful in implementing an official regulation on it.[51] The inane belief that the Chinese male possessed a certain power over young women[52] and would lead these

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[48] Personal Interview (PI) 27 October 1986.
[49] For examples of such incidents see Palmer, p. 38.
[50] Patricia E. Roy, "The Oriental 'Menace' in British Columbia", in Susan Trofimenkoff, *The Twenties in Western Canada*, Ottawa, National Museums of Canada, 1972, p. 255.
[51] See Palmer, *Land of . . .* , p. 57.
[52] This notion is well developed in Emily Murphy, *The Black Candle*, Toronto, T. Allen, 1922.

innocent beings into white slavery, an addiction to drugs, or other unmentionable deeds prompted Lethbridge to pass such a bylaw, as other provinces did.[53] The act was implemented prior to the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act and at the time when the severe head taxes were in effect. Obviously the head taxes were not considered severe enough for the response of one government official to such legislation was:

> " . . . if it was apparent that the Government had made a serious effort to limit this class of immigration the Provincial Government would be less likely to attempt to enact drastic Legislation."[54]

In reality, the application of head taxes could not help but further degrade the Chinese in Canada and perpetuate further abuse.

Implications For The Chinese in Alberta

The restrictive immigration laws severely distorted the Chinese male and female ratio in Canada prior to the Second World War.[55] In 1911 there were over 1700 Chinese men in Alberta but only 20 Chinese women.[56] This discrepancy continued throughout the decades in all Alberta cities.[57]

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[53] Similar legislation was enacted in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Females in Manitoba were not even permitted to reside or lodge in, or frequent any restaurant, laundry, or other places of business owned, kept or managed by any Chinese or other Oriental person. See, *Documents of Canadian . . . .*, p. 621, 644-645.

[54] Ibid., p. 653.

[55] See Appendix B, Tables I to IV for male to female ratios in three Alberta urban centres--namely, Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge.

[56] See Appendix B, Table I.

[57] See Appendix B, Tables II to IV. Also see, F. Quei Quo, "Chinese Immigrants in the Prairies", (A Preliminary Report

Any possibility for a balancing of the ratio was totally prevented by the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act. As early as 1885, the government had received a Royal Commission report recommending that Chinese women not be allowed to immigrate to Canada.

The head taxes of 1885, 1900, and 1903 made it very expensive and rarely possible for Chinese men to bring their families to Alberta or elsewhere in Canada. Not only was the cost a deterrent, Canada seemed a highly undesirable place for a Chinese man to raise a family in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration recorded these views of a Chinese witness:

> "A large proportion of them would bring their families here were it not for the unfriendly reception they got here during recent years, which creates an unsettled feeling."[58]

Most Chinese men in Alberta were either bachelors or married but separated from their wife and family in China. When enough money could be saved, the "married-bachelors" returned to China to spend short periods of time with their families. Even this practice was capitalized on by the Canadian government. Each Chinese returning to China was required to pay a fee in order to obtain a certificate of leave.

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[57](cont'd) Submitted to the Ministry of the Secretary of State, Ottawa, Canada), Burnaby, Simon Fraser University, 30 November 1977, Table I-2, p. 6.

[58] qf Peter S. Li, "Immigration Laws and Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese Families in Canada 1885-1971", in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 1, 1980, p. 63.

There were few second generation Chinese Canadians in Alberta since the growth in their members was seriously inhibited by the absence of Chinese women. In 1911, for example, only 11 out of 154 Chinese in Edmonton, or 7 percent were born in Canada[59]; in 1931 the percentage declined slightly, with 32 out of 467 being Canadian-born. The foreign-born Chinese remained in the majority even after a century of Chinese presence in Canada.[60] The general absence of Chinese women was to have profound effects on the social and family lives of the Chinese men. The feelings of one elder are expressed: " . . . back then females were not allowed to come to Canada--it was pure torture . . . "[61] Although it was possible for Chinese men to intermarry with non-Chinese women, and a few of these unions did occur, it was largely prevented by social prejudice and hostility. When one such marriage occurred in 1900 in Edmonton, notice was made of it in the local newspaper which reported the event as a "Russo-Chinese Alliance".[62]

Chinese organizations such as the Chinese Benevolent Associations and clan societies[63] arose to provide emotional and social support for the majority of men who were deprived of a family life, as well as for those individuals who were

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[59] See John Patrick Day, "Wong Sing-Fuen and the Sing Lee Laundry", (Paper prepared for the Historical and National Science Services by Edmonton Parks and Recreation), Edmonton, Edmonton City Archives, November 1978, p. 7.
[60] See Appendix B, Table V, on the Nativity of Chinese in Canada, 1881-1971.
[61] CCNC OHI 85-34.
[62] See Day, p. 7.
[63] The first appearance of these organizations in Canada is discussed in Wickberg (ed.), p. 77-79; and Tan, p. 5.

unable to cope with the problems imposed by prejudice and discrimination. In essence, they were formed for social, fraternal, and benevolent purposes. Political groups like the Chinese Freemasons and the Chinese Nationalist Leagues also fulfilled these objectives. Branches of each could be found in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge early in the twentieth century. These organizations served as protector and arbiter in the Chinese community. They provided direction and acted as spokesmen when necessary in dealings with the rest of Canadian society.

The Chinatowns of Alberta urban centres were partially a product of the constant hostility expressed by non-Chinese citizens, not unlike Chinatowns elsewhere in North America. They began as distinct areas of Chinese residence and evolved into refuges from social discrimination. The boundaries of Chinatown provided protection from the persecution wreaked against the Chinese.[‘‘] Chinatown was a place that provided a social life and some features of a familiar culture with a certain amount of security. The Chinese stayed in the Chinatown because they were generally not accepted outside of them. In Chinatown they were assured of protection in numbers and were comforted with sympathy and understanding from others suffering from the same plight. The Chinese were caught in a vicious cycle of suffering from prejudice, clinging together and becoming inbred and fearful, which made them an even readier target

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‘‘ Dawson, "The Chinese Experience . . . ", p. 134.

of hostility.[65]

An unpleasant product of the largely male Chinese society was the formation of gambling dens, brothels, untidy rooming houses, and an involvement in drugs. The image of the Chinese engaging in these vices was soon exaggerated and publicized as typical of all Chinese. In reality, the majority of the Chinese had little time for the pursuit of these, or any other types of leisure activities.[66] They were forced to keep long business hours to meet competition and have any hope of making even a small profit; their daily routine was almost completely made up of working, eating, and sleeping. In order to realize even a small profit, a small cafe on the Prairies had to operate long hours every day for 365 days of the year with substantial cuts in prices to meet competition.

The Chinese of Alberta were recognized as law-abiding citizens despite the sensationalization of their different customs and habits and the involvement of a few in opium and gambling. A Calgary alderman remarked:

> " . . . There is one reason the Chinese are unpopular and that is that they have got along so well . . . Those discriminating are against them on the grounds of religion and race."[67]

In 1907, Edmonton Judge Emily Murphy wrote that it was wrong to keep out law-abiding workers and noted that the Chinese crime rate was below average. She maintained that in reality, the reason for anti-Oriental sentiment was:

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[65] Clarkson, p. 16.
[66] Dawson, p. 133.
[67] qf Dawson, p. 138.

> " . . . the Chinaman is too smart for us. Their industriousness, sobriety, frugality, intelligence, and strength make them formidable competitors. The problem is the Chinaman's virtues rather than his vices."[**]

Thirteen years later, however, in her book *The Black Candle*, Murphy highlighted the Chinese role in drug-trafficking and warned the public of the possibility of the black and yellow races taking over Canada.

Occupational tendencies of the Chinese were largely dictated by the varied expressions of anti-Orientalism. Many professions were slow to accept the Chinese. The job market for the Chinese in Alberta was confined primarily to the service and scattered industrial sectors. Cooking and washing were considered domestic and female work by the predominantly white male society at the time and it was acceptable for the Chinese to take on these duties. Some of the Chinese who did not have the capital to start their own business found jobs as labourers in mining camps or workers in the sugar factories of Southern Alberta. Many others worked in the food service industry as waiters, dishwashers, or any other positions available. Chinese cooks and houseboys could be found in many urban households, farms, and ranches. They were considered indispensable because of their industriousness and also because they were looked upon as status symbols for the wealthy in Alberta. Some were also seasonally employed as cowboys on Alberta ranches.

** qf Palmer, "Anti-Oriental . . . ", p. 41

In Alberta, a general refusal to accept the Chinese at an equal or higher economic or occupational status was prevalent. It had been a popular belief that the Chinese were only useful as a source of industrial labour because of their supposed inferiority. This argument was often used as a defence for Chinese immigration by employers who required Chinese labour in British Columbia. The Chinese in Alberta and throughout the rest of Canada were tolerated as long as they were confined to subservient labour and their own ethnic sector.[69] A tenuous foothold by the Chinese in British Columbia in skilled labour was gradually undermined and they were eventually expelled from it.[70] The Chinese were often forced to leave the regular labour market and enter into the marginal or peripheral market,[71] taking jobs unwanted by the white sector. For example, in Calgary the wages of housemaids at $15 to $30 a month was well over double that of their counterparts in Ontario but they could not attract or hold white workers for long.[72] These vacancies were filled by the Chinese who were willing to accept domestic work.

The Chinese were forced to accept practically any job at lower wages and working conditions. Usually the Chinese men had families in China to support and could not afford to refuse employment. At any rate, the lower wages usually

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[69] Li, "A Historical Approach . . . .", p. 329.
[70] See Ibid., p. 328 for statistics.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Henry C. Klassen, "Life in Frontier Calgary", in Anthony W. Rasporich (ed.), *Western Canada: Past and Present*, Calgary, McClelland and Stewart West, 1975, p. 46.

amounted to more than they would have earned in China, and thus were readily accepted. What made it possible for employers to pay lower wages to the Chinese was also the fact that the Chinese had no bargaining power and employers simply refused to pay equitable wages to a people whom they considered racially inferior. Thus, in Alberta the Chinese came to be labelled as a source of "cheap labour", fulfilling part of the stereotype image British Columbia had promulgated.

Chinese Canadian life in Alberta remained relatively unchanged until the second half of the twentieth century. Chinese Canadian participation in World War II, although reluctantly accepted by the government[73] was instrumental in the successful repeal of the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act in 1947.[74] The 1949 Communist-takeover in China had the effect of convincing those Chinese who had refused to accept Canada as a permanent home to now do so. Moreover, the notion of a superior race was discredited during the war[75] and China had been an ally. The plight of the people in China under Japanese aggressors also won sympathy from Canadians.

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[73] See Patricia E. Roy, "The Soldiers Canada Didn't Want: Her Chinese and Japanese Citizens", in *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 59, Summer 1978, p. 50-69; and Carol F. Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia", in *British Columbia Studies*, Vol. 30, p. 44-76.

[74] The Chinese Canadian role in the Second World War is documented in Government of Canada, *Uncommon Courage: Canadian Secret Agents in the Second World War*, Ottawa, Veteran Affairs Canada, 1985.

[75] Morris Davis and Joseph F. Krauter, *The Other Canadians: Profiles of Six Minorities*, Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1971, p. 67, examines how the deterioration of prejudice has affected the Chinese and Japanese and vice versa.

Consequently, the following years saw the mellowing of Canadian society in its treatment of Chinese Canadians.''

Concluding Remarks

The formal and informal sanctions directed at the Chinese in Alberta during 1885 to 1947 were, by and large, expressions of racism on the part of its white citizens. Anti-Chinese sentiment in the province was perpetuated by the parallel movement in British Columbia where it originated. The threat of "White Canada" and its economic base being disrupted by a "horde of the yellow peril" lacked grounds of substance in Alberta. The Alberta Chinese were small in number and engaged largely in industries shunned by the whites. Still, hostility gave rise to a host of discriminatory measures from federal and local governments, which only reinforced the concept of inequality and promoted prejudice and injustice. All aspects of Chinese Canadian life could not help but be affected. The evolution of the Chinese community and the lifestyle of its members were products of the discrimination. The Chinese in Alberta endured the severe and prolonged era of racial intolerance and adapted the best they could.

'' Laws regulating Chinese immigration were not on equal footing with other racial groups or nationalities until 20 years after the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act. It was not until 1967 that Canada adopted the use of the "point system" for evaluating all persons wishing to immigrate to Canada regardless of race or country of origin.

II. TRADITIONAL EDUCATION IN CHINA AND CHINESE CANADIANS

Prior to the mid-twentieth century, many Chinese Canadians received some or all of their education in Kwangtung, China. These people, and their experiences, may be divided into three distinct groups representing different periods of educational development in China between the later half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

The first group consists of the earliest Chinese arrivals who came before 1898 while the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911) was in power. Although little is known about their actual educational experiences, the school program that was familiar to them would have been centred around China's ancient imperial examination system for recruiting the ruling bureaucracy.

Those immigrants who arrived in Canada from about the turn of the century to 1923 make up the second group. During that period, along with a change in government, China's educational system underwent a transition from classical teachings to a more Westernized curriculum. The rural and village schools of Kwangtung, however, were slow in implementing the modern subjects and new educational practices. Like the first group, attaining a functional level of literacy was about the extent that they received before emigrating.

Receiving a Chinese education retained its importance even after settlement in Canada, as shown by the efforts the Chinese immigrants made in trying to have their children receive similar schooling. One route that was taken to accomplish this was to send their children back to Kwangtung. This first generation of Canadian-born Chinese, who are now middle aged or older, make up the membership of the third and last group who received an education in China. They are largely proficient in both English and Chinese; but having their Canadian education interrupted in order to study in the Chinese Republic has produced mixed feelings regarding their parents' decision on this matter. The experience of schooling in China does, nevertheless, illustrate the transmission across the ocean of the centuries-old high regard for learning, which in effect shaped the upbringing of Canadian youth of Chinese ancestry.

The First Chinese Immigrants: Rudimentary Schooling Under the Traditional Chinese Educational System

The type of education the earliest Chinese immigrants to Canada received,[1] before coming to "Gold Mountain" was undoubtedly that of the traditional system which dates back to the second century A.D. For centuries the Chinese have

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[1] G. R. Taylor in "An Investigation of Chinese schools in Canada", (Unpublished Master of Education Thesis), Montreal, McGill University, 1933, reports that the length of school attendance among the Chinese in Canada at the time varied from a few months to 8 years. The average period of study was 3.76 years. His survey included "some old Chinese" who, it is presumed would have been aged 65 or over at the time. For more information see Taylor, p. 5 & 100.

held education and the educated male[2] in the highest esteem. The educational system was theoretically the only channel for social mobility[3] and governing officials were selected from the literati on the basis of their performance in civil service examinations. The "three great examinations"[4]

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[2] The education of girls in Ancient China was not a priority and only a few from the wealthier classes were literate. Although women were considered inferior to men, education was not completely denied to them. Arthur H. Smith in *Rex Christus: An Outline Study of China*, New York, MacMillan Company, 1907, p. 171 reports that the education of girls was in no way opposed to the theories of the Chinese but only to their practice. Those families that could afford to, educated their girls in China--but only after the education for the boys in the family was provided for. Most Chinese parents were reluctant to send their daughters to schools as they felt that any assets acquired would be lost to the family of the man to whom she would eventually marry. The following analogies were quoted in Pat Barr, *To China With Love: The Lives and Times of Protestant Missionaries in China 1860-1900*, London, Secker and Warburg, 1972, p. 60: "To educate a girl was like sowing a field of some other man or like putting a gold chain around someone else's puppy." Evelyn S.Rawski in *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1979, p. 6, reports that regional variance in female literacy was probably great and cites the province of Kwangtung as an example where high levels of female literacy was existent in the late 1800's. Her assertion is based on 1896 census statistics for Hawaii where 25 percent of the Chinese women immigrants were literate. Sally Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China: The Beginnings of the Modern Era*, Stanford, Stanford University, Hoover Institution Press, 1983, p. 114, notes that South China, and particularly Canton, seems to have been particularly enlightened in its provision of school facilities for the education of women. She points out that a nineteenth century woman missionary had personally visited two Chinese girls' schools in South China and knew of 31 other such schools.

[3] For information on social stratification in China during the Ch'ing Dynasty, see Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1975, p. 337-342; and Immanuel C. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, (Second Edition), New York, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 95-110.

[4] For information on the Imperial Examination System see: F. L. Hawks Pott, *The Emergency in China*, New York, Missionary Educational Movement of the United States and Canada, 1913; Harlan P. Beach. *Dawn on the Hills of Tang*(Rev. ed.), New

standardized the curriculum throughout the empire and were the only avenue to the governing class. Consequently, the nature of the Chinese educational system was to prepare students to write these examinations.

Although the early immigrants who came from Kwangtung to Canada received some rudimentary schooling[5] in this system, it is unlikely they had any real aspirations of competing in the examinations; or if they did, their hopes were probably abandoned upon emigrating. On the whole, it was beneficial for even a farmer to have some schooling but ". . . farmers and the poor do not have far-reaching ambitions; they do not expect their sons to do more than several hundred characters and roughly know the meanings."[6] Literacy enabled the common people to defend themselves from extortions of the lettered and to avoid family humiliations.[7] In addition, it facilitated the necessity of reading official documents, receipts, or bills.[8] More importantly, literacy or just even having a son

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[4](cont'd) York, Student Volunteer Movement For Foreign Missions, 1905; Pat Barr, *To China With Love* , . . .; and Charles K. Edmunds, *Modern Education in China*, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1919. A description of the Canton Examination Hall may be found in Rev. John Arthur Turner, *Kwangtung or Five Years in South China*, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 1982, (First published by S. W. Partridge & Co., London, 1894), p. 159-160. For a photograph of the examination halls see, Stephen Endicott, *James G. Endicott: Rebel Out of China*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980.

[5] Taylor, p. 5. Also, see "Jade in the Mosaic: The East Asian Experience in Canada", (Transcript), *Ideas*, Montreal, The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1986, p. 2.

[6] cf Rawski, p. 49. Also see Chinese Canadian National Council Oral History Interview (CCNC OHI) 86-19.

[7] Borthwick, p. 27.

[8] Ibid. See also Rawski, p. 13-22. Rawski provides a

in school,' enhanced not only that person's status but the entire family's standing in the community.

The traditional educational system of Kwangtung required severe discipline and complete submission to a rigid program of studies. It emphasized rote learning and the memorization of Chinese history, Confucian ethics, and the classics. The classics were so highly valued because they represented the ideal to be followed--the golden age of Yao and Shung, usually dated in the third millennium B.C.'[10] As formidable as the rote learning and memorization may seem, school did involve more than book-learning. Appropriate classroom conduct was considered most essential for students. Ethical principles were expressed in ritualistic activities practiced in honour of Confucius or other ancestors at regular intervals by the teacher and his students.'[11] The themes of filial piety and proper behavior toward family members were the basic element of the Confucian teaching conveyed in the elementary schools.'[12] In addition, respect for teachers and other elders was taught. Such values became almost intrinsic through constant reinforcement in everyday life.

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[8](cont'd) thorough discussion on the advantages farmers and villagers saw in being literate and the conditions of the Ch'ing Dynasty that promoted it.

[9] Rawski, p. 21.

[10]Arthur Henderson Smith, *The Uplift of China* (Rev. ed.), New York, Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1912, p. 61.

[11] Ibid., p. 45.

[12] Ibid.

Academically, the course of study was divided into three stages.[13] The first stage was restricted to committing the canonical books[14] to memory and learning how to write characters. A diligent student devoted his entire day to review work, recitation, reading, and writing. Missionaries have observed that school often began at dawn and lasted until 8:00 a.m. when the students went home for breakfast; they returned for further instruction until dinner, which was at 2:00 p.m. and then their time was spent studying until sunset.[15] At some schools meals were served at school expense.[16] One school in Kwangtung was noted to have begun its daily program at sunrise until 5 p.m. with only an hour's interval.[17] A popular teaching method used at the time was termed "backing the books", in which passages were chanted aloud hour after hour by the student and then repeated from memory with his back to the teacher.[18] Few Chinese immigrants to Alberta would have advanced passed this stage as it occupied the first 6 to 7 years of schooling. In fact, few students in China ever got beyond the first or second stage[19] of study where explanations of the textbooks were finally provided and the art of

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[13] Pott, p. 144

[14] These canonical books refer to the "Four Books" which are The Analects of Confucius, Mencius, The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean; and the "Five Classics" which are The Book of Odes, Book of Documents, Book of Rites, Book of Change, and The Spring and Autumn Annals.

[15] Edward Wilson Wallace, *The Heart of Szchuan* (Rev. ed.), Toronto, Methodist Missions Rooms, 1903, p. 146.

[16] Rawski, p. 44.

[17] Turner, p. 157.

[18] Barr, p. 98; and Turner, p. 158.

[19] Pott, p. 144.

composition was taught. The final program of study encouraged students to read more widely, especially the works of famous scholars. At this level students practiced composing the type of essays and poems required by the imperial examinations.

As the government examinations were open to youths of every social rank,[20] educational achievement across the empire was encouraged. Every parent in Kwangtung who could spare the expense would have sent his child to school[21] but since education was a private enterprise, the aristocracy made up the majority of the student class. Those who received an education were considered privileged. Even among the poorest, nevertheless, the slightest sign in a boy of a capacity for book learning was watched for by all in the district.[22] Funds required for continued studies were often readily provided by a patron or members of the clan or district since a candidate for the examination obtained a lasting honour for all by his success.[23]

Alberta's earliest Chinese immigrants attended private schools in Kwangtung. There were four kinds of private schools available: the family school, clan school, village school, and the private academy. Kwangtung was noted for an enormous number of schools during the fifteen century--for

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[20] Only the sons of jailors, executioners, scavengers, and actors were ineligible to compete in the imperial examinations.
[21] Turner, p. 157.
[22] Herbert A. Giles, *The Civilization of China*, London, Williams and Norgate, 1911, p. 127.
[23] Ibid.

every one academy there were 11 schools.[24] Economic and geographic resources dictated the quality of education these private institutions provided. The family school and its tutors catered primarily to the wealthy official and gentry classes, and the clan school was generally open only to children of the same surname. The teacher of the clan school was often a clan elder who possessed sufficient knowledge of Chinese reading and writing to pass on these skills. Fees at the village school were charged according to what the parents could afford. This type of school was the most commonly attended by the early emigrants to Alberta. These schools were organized and sponsored by leading families of the village. They were sometimes referred to as "charity halls" or "charity schools" and were located in such public places as temples and ancestral halls.[25] The last category of private schools, the academies, offered high-level academic studies in large cities or isolated locations of exceptional natural beauty and employed nationally known scholars as instructors. Encompassed with an elaborate network of academies, the Canton[26] basin in Kwangtung was one of the most academically prestigious areas of the

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[24] Frederic Wakeman Jr., *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China 1839-1861*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966, p. 184.

[25] China Handbook Editorial Committee (Compilers), *Education and Science*, Beijing, Foreign Languages Press, 1983, (Translated by Zhou Yicheng, Cai Guanping, and Lou Huzhang.), p. 3. Also see, CCNC OHI 86-18 and 86-10. See Wakeman Jr., p. 64 for information on the usage of school buildings in the militia.

[26] In Mandarin romanized form, Canton is Guangzhou.

country.[27] It contributed to establishing the reputation of the capital city, Canton, as being a lively intellectual centre in the 1820s and 1830s.[28]

Educational Reform and the Persistence of Tradition

The period between 1898 and 1923 saw significant changes in the educational system of traditional China, although not all the emigrants who left for Canada during this period experienced the new curricula because of the tardiness with which the reforms reached rural Kwangtung. Curriculum and methods were slow to change in the rural schools but the emigrants were able to acquire a level of literacy that later enabled them to maintain contact with their family in China when they reached Canada. Steps to change the system were actually initiated decades earlier in response to Western imperialism but were neither extensive nor successful.

Humiliation and losses from the Opium Wars[29] convinced a few progressive-thinking Chinese officials that in order to acquire the superior weapons of the West, the Chinese had

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[27] Wakeman Jr., p. 181. Also see, Rawski, p. 11-12 for information on literacy rates in Canton.
[28] Ibid., p. 181.
[29] China's international policy under the Ch'ing Dynasty was that of a closed door, with the exception of the port of Canton which was open to trade with the West. This restricted access into China remained until the military might of Great Britain, during the Opium War of 1840 forced a change in policy. The series of "Unequal Treaties" that followed opened five ports to Britain and granted a number of other profitable concessions to that country. For more information on the Opium Wars, see Edgar Holt, *The Opium Wars in China*, London, Putnam, 1964.

to be trained in Western learning. For some time, Western learning was available only at mission schools[30] and the few government schools which had been established in 1862.[31] The reformers regretted that the traditional educational system had lost contact with reality, becoming instead an empty literary exercise, inadequate as a basis for recruiting officials to meet China's changing needs.[32]

The process of educational change was an extremely slow one because the newer type of learning did not prepare the students for the civil service examinations which paved the way to the highly desired ruling ranks. A shortage in qualified personnel to teach the new subjects was another

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[30] None of the oral history interviewees received any education in the mission schools. Missionary education in China began in the nineteenth century, offering an unwelcomed alternative to the centuries-old traditional system but did not gain the acceptance of the Chinese until decades later. Its purpose for existence was to evangelize and the program was initially confined to religious teachings and rudimentary Chinese. The student populace at the time was mainly composed of beggar boys. As missions gained more adult converts, the mission schools aimed towards providing an education for the children of the converts. The curriculum gradually expanded to include an increasing number of Western subjects. By the late nineteenth century those wishing to acquire a knowledge of Western subjects sought the services of mission schools. For more information, see Hilda Mah, "The Development of Mission Schools in China in the Nineteenth Century", Unpublished paper, Edmonton, 1984.

[31] Reformers were eventually able to secure government authorization for the establishment of a few military and diplomatic training academies that were based on Western education; these were known as the Tung-wen Kuans. Such innovations were possible only because their promoters were able to justify the importance of the schools to China's national defence. For more information, see: Knight Biggerstaff, *The Earliest Modern Government Schools in China*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1961, p. 75.

[32] William Ayers, *Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform in China*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971, p. x.

handicap to the success of reforms in Kwangtung and elsewhere in China.[33] Any proposal for educational reform was, furthermore, usually resisted at the highest levels of government since the proposals threatened the traditional system through which the the ruling ranks had attained their positions; in essence, their credibility was at stake. In Kwangtung, crucial support from provincial officials and the local gentry was also lacking.[34] Resistance to Western teachings emanated from the populace in Kwangtung.[35] Students of the first non-missionary Western-style school in Canton had to contend with jeering in the streets[36] until that type of schooling became more popular.

Attempts in 1898 by Emperor Kuang Hsu to institute reforms officially were unsuccessful. In the brief period called the Hundred Days Reform from June to September 1898, efforts were made to introduce changes in many areas of Chinese life, including education.[37] The proposals advocated the abolition of the imperial examination system, replacement of the Confucian classics with practical

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[33] For more information, see Edward J. M. Rhoads, *China's Republican Revolution 1895-1913*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 52-54.

[34] Ibid., p. 36.

[35] In contrast, a Western style school in Beijing (Peking) in the 1890s was reported to have attracted more students than it could handle. See Borthwick, p. 63.

[36] Ibid., p. 63 provides an account of a former student's experience during these times. For other revelations of the harassment prevalent in the new schools see, Rhoads, p. 176-177.

[37] Forty reform edicts were issued. Other aspects affected by the Hundred Days Reform lie in the bureaucratic system, the military, media, national budgets, agriculture, roads, and transportation.

subjects, the promotion of study abroad, and the creation of modern schools. The imperial edicts were rescinded by the Empress Dowager.

It was not until seven years later that the Empress reinstated the reforms, prompted by the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 which brought about the slaughter of many Westerners and Chinese Christians, and saw China subsequently invaded by armed foreigners. It took these catastrophic events to convince significant numbers of the Chinese ruling class that traditional ideas, institutions, and methods were no longer capable of protecting the country.[38]

In 1907 modern education was advocated in all government schools.[39] The new system was modelled on the Japanese one which called for specialization after middle school to produce specialists for government service.[40] Changes occurred more readily at the higher levels of education as it was easier to establish colleges than primary schools.[41] Higher education was actually given priority over elementary schooling, in effect, creating a weakness at the base of the system.[42] This, however, did not

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[38] Biggerstaff, p. 93.

[39] The modern government schools continued to be supported by the Republic government that succeeded the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1911.

[40] John K. Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer in *China: Tradition and Transformation*, Boston, Houghton and Mifflin and Company, 1978, p. 393, assert that China looked to Japan for curriculum and teachers because Japan's language, literature, and customs were close to that of China's. Also, China had already established a relationship with Japan since 1896 in terms of Chinese students going to Japan to study. For more information, see Fairbank, p. 393.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

deny literacy to those who acquired primary schooling. It has been determined that students who attended school for 2 or 3 years were equipped to read and write simple materials, since in the first year of schooling as many as 2000 characters could be included in the reading vocabulary.[43] Thus, the majority of Chinese immigrants in Alberta possessed a relatively high degree of functional literacy, a characteristic which had provided the foundation for China's centuries-old complex political, social, and economic institutions.[44]

Under the Chinese Republic which succeeded the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1911, the educational system was subject to further reforms. Efforts to restructure the organization of schools and modify curricula to imitate those of Western nations were hastened by the new government. Foreign ideas and methods were introduced to China by guest lecturers such as John Dewey.[45] Ideas of compulsory education and mass education began to take root, and to aid their development

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[43] Rawski, p. 53.

[44] For further discussion of the role of functional literacy, see Rawski, p. 1-27. Rawski estimates that 30 to 45 percent of the men and 2 to 10 percent of the women in Ch'ing China possessed some ability to read and write. She also notes that in the rural districts of Kwangtung in the early nineteenth century, it was highly probable that not more than 40 to 50 percent of the men could read as compared with an estimated 80 to 90 percent male literacy rate in the provincial capital of Canton.

[45] Lu-Dzai Djung, *A History of Democratic Education in Modern China*, Shanghai, China, The Commercial Press, Limited, 1934, p. 9. Djung reports that other eminent scholars who lectured in China and established contacts with Chinese intellectual leaders and students include Bertrand Russell, Paul Monroe, G. R. Twiss, W. A. McCall, and Helen Parkhurst.

the adoption of pei-hwa[1] in textbooks was encouraged.

Gradually Western learning became more and more desirable and even slowly began appearing in government university examinations. A change in attitude of the Chinese people towards foreigners and modern education contributed to the progress. The fact that the leader of the nation, Sun Yat-sen, was a graduate of Western educational institutions[2] helped to establish the credibility of the educational reforms. By the 1920s many university examinations even included rigid tests in English. Not many of the emigrants, however, received formal instruction in English prior to settling in Alberta.[3]

Under the previous Japanese model, complete schooling from primary school to university was to last 26 years.[4] The new system established by the Republic shortened the length of schooling to 15 years. It consisted of 4 years of compulsory lower primary schooling, 3 years of higher

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[1] Pei-hwa, a version of spoken Chinese, was used to encourage wider literacy. See Djung, p. 9; Edmunds, p. 25; and Wickberg (ed.), p. 171. Chinese books and literature had previously been written in three styles: the Wen-li, the Kwan hwa (Mandarin), and the Tu-hwa. The wen-li consisted of the classics ad commentaries which expressed social, ethical, philosophical, and historical thoughts of the nation. This style could be read only by scholars. The Kwan hwa consisted of novels and kindred literature. The Tu-hwa included the provincial dialects, novels, and kindred literature. See George E. Hartwell, *"Granary of Heaven"*, Toronto, The Committee on Missionary Education, 1939, p. 39.

[2] Sun Yat-sen, father of the Republic attended school in Hawaii and Hong Kong. See Hsu, p. 550-591.

[3] While a few were taught some English vocabulary and how to count in English by visiting overseas Chinese or other people in the village, only one elder claimed to have been taught English as a subject in school.

[4] China Handbook . . ., p. 6.

primary, 4 years of middle school, and between 4 to 7 years of post secondary schooling.[50] The average length of study spent by the second group of emigrants prior to coming to Canada is approximately 5 years, ranging from at least 2 years to 10 years.[51]

The significant aspect of educational development in China during the first two decades of this century is not the actual changes but the fundamental shift in the formulation of educational policy.[52] For the nation as a whole, the traditional pattern persisted, and the modern schools existed in addition to, rather than as substitutions for the traditional schools.[53] It was in the traditional Kwangtung schools before and after the turn of the century that the majority of the Chinese emigrants to Alberta received their schooling. As one elder recalls:

> " . . . We just memorized the words and didn't know the meaning. We had to read a whole chapter without understanding . . . the teachers in China taught us 'dead words', old poems. They didn't even explain them to us. We didn't know what it meant; but I'm sure when you get up to a higher grade, like 7 or 8, they would have explained what it meant."[54]

Even the traditionally long hours of school operation continued during this period:

"As soon as you washed up you went to school. Then

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[50] For an organizational chart, see Edmunds, p. 15.
[51] This figure is based on the oral histories examined, of which 22 interviewees received an education in China before emigrating.
[52] Chang-Tu Hu (ed.), *Chinese Education Under Communism* (Second Edition), New York, Teachers College Press, 1974, p. 19.
[53] Ibid., p. 18.
[54] CCNC OHI 86-30, 85-27. Similar recollections were expressed in CCNC OHI 85-20 and 86-19.

> you went home and got something to eat. After you ate, you would go back until it was dark. Then you would go home and sleep."[55]

Yet it was this rigid school system that the emigrants respected and tried to provide for their children.

A "Broken Education" For the Native-Born Generation

Those early immigrants who could afford to, sent their children back to the homeland for an education. These children attended school in China primarily throughout the 1920s and 1930s during the rule of the Chinese Republic. They spent their time in Kwangtung under a relative's guardianship or under the care of one parent while the other remained in Canada, as this Chinese Canadian experienced:

> " . . . I feel that they wanted us to learn more about Chinese tradition, culture, and customs because if it wasn't, they wouldn't have taken us back to China. My mother took us back, dad stayed here and ran the business.[56]

There have also been cases where the entire family moved to China because a parent passed away. While there were children who travelled to China as preschoolers, more often the children were ones whose Canadian education was "broken off" in the elementary or junior high years in favour of a Chinese one overseas.[57]

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[55] CCNC OHI 85-37. Similar reports of attending school from dawn to dusk were made in CCNC OHI 85-37, 86-23, 86-5, and 86-19.

[56] CCNC OHI 85-8.

[57] Ten of the Canadian born Chinese whose oral histories were collected attended school in China. They were born between 1913 and 1930.

The system of education that they entered after 1922 was particularly American oriented. The organizational structure was modified to follow the American "6-3-3 Plan", that is, 6 years of primary school, 3 years of junior middle school, and 3 years of senior high school.[58] Complete schooling from primary to university in the new system lasted 16-18 years with 4 to 6 years in university.

The curriculum expanded to a multidisciplinary one which included applied sciences, foreign languages, vocational education, and subjects of study having social and industrial significance.[59] Instruction and readings were made in the vernacular instead of the many different classical Chinese forms. The method of instruction that was promoted was learning by rationalization rather than primarily memorization.

Although the Confucian classics were abolished, an emphasis on ethics was maintained. Character development under the Republic was built on the eight cardinal virtues of loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, love, faithfulness, righteousness, peace, and harmony.[60] Ensuring that their children were raised on the proper Confucian principles of filial piety guaranteed that the parents would be looked

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[58] For information on other changes related to education after 1922, see: Djung, p. 36-40, 52-68, 79-81. These include developments in compulsory schooling, women's education, co-ed classes in the primary grades, special education classes, new readers, language policy, and teacher training.

[59] Edmunds, p. 16.

[60] Li-Fu Chen, *Chinese Education During the War (1937-1942)*, n.p., The Ministry of Education, 1942, (Reprinted 1943), p. 15.

after in their old age; as Confucius says, "Of all which a filial son may attain to there is nothing greater than honour in his parents." This was a desirable aspect of the Chinese educational system that caused it to be favoured over the Canadian one.

Providing a Chinese education for their children was also perceived as preparation for the realities of early twentieth century Canadian society which limited Chinese Canadian participation in various areas of social, political, and professional life. One of the many people with a broken education tries to explain his parents' decision to send him to China for schooling:

> ". . . I can give their reasons but I couldn't give you mine because I had no control over it. . . . at the time, they felt from their perception, life in this country was limited in opportunities for their children to really grow, and be able to maximize their training or education; or even to achieve their maximum in the learning process. Because of the heavily structured prejudices that existed . . . they felt that it was impossible to overcome, so they resigned to that fact. . . . if you feel hopeless about a situation, you don't want to fight the system."[61]

While a Chinese education overseas enabled the native born to function successfully within the confines of the Chinese community, some encountered difficulties in readjusting to Canadian society.[62] Being native-born, fluency in English was expected from them but this ability

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[61] CCNC OHI 86-34. Similar sentiments were expressed in CCNC OHI 86-10.

[62] A reciprocal reaction by the local villagers in China was noted by one interviewee, that is, differential treatment was displayed towards her because of her lack of knowledge of the Chinese culture and language.

was lost during the years in China where there was no chance for them to practice their English.[43] Upon returning to Canada, some found themselves attending English classes like their fathers and grandfathers had done when they first immigrated. A native-born describes her feelings upon returning after an absence of 11 years:

> " . . . you feel like you're sort of reborn. . . . During the years in China, I didn't have anyone to speak English to . . . When they started asking me questions at immigration, I couldn't answer them. Some words I could catch, and some I couldn't. I was scared . . . . It sort of came back to me little by little . . . . I'm glad that I did get some Chinese education, and I think it changed my whole life--being in China . . .(though if I hadn't gone to China) I probably (would have) received a higher education here and gone to better things."[44]

The feeling that the broken education they received hindered their progress and opportunity in Canadian society is expressed by another member:

> "The only thing that bothered me was my (broken) schooling and I felt I didn't have enough so I could improve myself here. (For example . . .) you fill in a job application and they see that your last grade was 7 . . . when I was in the army, I was doing well in every aspect. I was working in officer training school but when they looked at my record, my grade 7, I was out. . . . so I felt handicapped because of my education . . . "[45]

For another native-born who was an honours student in his first six years of schooling in Alberta, an interruption of

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[43] The native-born who had to learn or relearn the English language upon return included Personal Oral History Interview (POHI) 84-7, CCNC OHI 85-41, 85-15, 86-34 and 86-10.

[44] CCNC OHI 86-10. Other interviewees also experienced difficulties in readjusting to Canadian society upon their return. See Personal Interview (PI)25 October 1986 and CCNC OHI 86-31.

[45] CCNC OHI 85-15. Similar views are expressed in CCNC OHI 86-34.

several years in China resulted in a loss of interest to continue his studies upon his return.[65]

The proportion of the native-born who elected to pursue careers in China were either spared such disappointments or did so because of them. Alberta newspapers occasionally reported stories of Chinese Canadians having gone to China to do just that before 1949.[66] This was actually a propensity that the Republic government had hoped for through their efforts in encouraging overseas Chinese to send their children back to study in China. The Chinese Republic saw the potential of the overseas Chinese in the future development of the Republic and the role that education could play in securing loyalties to the home government.[67] The Republic even formed a Commission on Overseas Education which looked after the educational needs of Overseas Chinese both in and out of China. Special classes or schools, often with better standards, were established for the children of these emigrants.[68] The Chinese in Canada themselves have donated generously to the building of many schools and colleges in China.[69] One

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[65] CCNC OHI 86-23. This interviewee completed 3 more years of study in Alberta, reaching grade 9.

[66] Some examples may be found in the following Alberta newspapers: *Edmonton Journal*, 11 September 1911, 12 February 1942, 31 March 1943, 2 April 1943, 22 May 1943, 4 April 1944, 21 June 1944, 9 April 1946, 7 December 1946; *The Albertan*, 23 December 1934; and *Calgary Daily Herald*, 13 April 1923. A report also appeared in *Chinatown News*, 3 December 1976. Also see CCNC OHI 85-6; and PI 27 October 1986.

[67] Chiu-Sam Tsang, *Nationalism in School Education in China*, Hong Kong, Progressive Education Publishers, 1967, p. 133.

[68] PI 24 October 1986; Tsang, p. 133; Chen, p. 14.

[69] For more information, see: Ching Ma, *Chinese Pioneers:*

Canadian-born Chinese interviewed received some schooling at an Overseas Chinese School in Canton.[11] Contributions and support from overseas Chinese for various charitable and political causes date back to the 1880s. The opportunity to educate the overseas children allowed the Republic to promote nationalistic sentiments and contributed to the formation of the bond between the overseas Chinese and the mother country.

Concluding Remarks

The system that provided Chinese immigrants to Canada with a functional level of literacy had a divergent effect on the following generation of native-born. The interruption in their formative years in Canada may have equipped them to succeed within the Chinese social structure, but it placed a handicap on some of those who chose the Canadian setting in which to pursue their careers. Advancement in Canada in terms of socioeconomic benefits and privileges became even more difficult to reach amongst the legislative restrictions and social barriers. The China-educated members of this generation experienced a broken education not unlike the experience of their fathers and grandfathers whose schooling was halted when they first came to Canada. Ultimately, however, the overseas schooling helped Chinese Canadians come to terms with their cultural heritage, facilitating a

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[10](cont'd) *Materials Concerning the Immigration of Chinese to Canada and Sino-Canadian Relations*, Vancouver, Versatile, 1979, p. 63-64; and Wickberg (ed.), p. 195 & 231.
[11] PI 25 October 1986.

need the Canadian educational system did not provide for ethnic group children. As a returned student admitted, "I used to say all sorts of things against the Chinese."[72] The nurturing of one's self-esteem is of the utmost importance and the Chinese education helped develop this pride.

[72] *Edmonton Journal*, 11 September 1941.

III. THE CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN ALBERTA

The early Chinese immigrants who could not afford to send their children to China for an education, or who preferred not to do so, and yet still desired their offspring to acquire certain cultural heritage traits, worked towards the establishment of a Chinese language school in their locality. Such establishments operated independently from the regular school systems, offering only supplementary learning rather than alternative programs.[1] They were sponsored by various organizations, both from within the Chinese community and extraneous to it. In

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[1] The exception to this may be the Chung Hua School founded in Victoria in 1909. It was partly formed because of British Columbia legislation which disallowed Chinese children from attending public schools. The aspect of segregation in the Canadian public school sector will be examined in more detail in Chapter IV. In the United States, private language schools served as alternative schools because Chinese children were not allowed into the public systems. For more information on the American situation, see Kenyon S. Chan and Sau-Lem Tsang, "Overview of the Educational Progress of Chinese Americans", in Don T. Nakanishi and Marsha Hwang-Nakanishi's *The Education of Asian and Pacific Americans: Historical Perspectives and Prescriptions for the Future*, Phoenix, The Oryx Press, 1983, p. 44; Victor Low, *The Unimpressible Race*, San Francisco, East/West Publishing Company, Inc., 1982; Raymond K. Jung, "The Chinese Language School in the United States", *School and Society*, Vol. 100, No. 2342, Summer, 1972, p. 309-312; Mely Gio-lan Tan, *The Chinese in the United States: Social Mobility and Assimilation*, Taipei, Taiwan, The Orient Cultural Service, 1973; Lonnie Chin, "Chinese and Public School Teaching", in *Chinese Americans: School and Community Problems*, Chicago, Integrated Educational Associates, 1972, p. 58-59; and Charles U. Smith and Charles M. Grigg, "Public School Desegregation" in C. Wayne Gordon (ed.), *Uses of the Sociology of Education*, Chicago, The National Society for the Study of Education, 1974.

Alberta, religious and political groups were the most active in this respect. The Chinese schools accorded Chinese Canadian children the opportunity to learn not only the language, but the traditions and customs of their ancestors.[2] It was an opportunity not fully appreciated by the students at the time, but their parents' motives and efforts have since been recognized.

Early Development of the Chinese Language Schools

Chinese language instruction began prior to 1885 in Canada, as indicated by an occupational survey of the Chinese in the province of British Columbia in 1884, which listed eight Chinese teachers living in Victoria, New Westminster, Nanaimo, and Wellington.[3] Wealthy merchants in Chinese communities hired private instructors from the homeland to teach their children the classics and the language. Classes were held in the back rooms of stores or in private homes. It may well have been the intention of these parents to have their children return to China to write the Three Great Examinations in an attempt to gain entry into the ruling class.

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[2] The instruction of language has been found to be inseparable from the imparting of cultural knowledge. See Richard L. Warren, "Schooling, Biculturalism and Ethnic Identity" in George Spindler, *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling: Educational Anthropology in Action*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982, p. 402.

[3] David Lee, "Culture and Education of the Overseas Chinese in Canada" in *A History of the Chinese in Canada*, Vancouver, Freedom Press, 1967, (Translated from Chinese by the Department of the Secretary of State, Translation Bureau, Foreign Language Division, 24 February 1971), p. 2.

A few Chinese clan associations also operated schools in Canada.[4] Children of poor families or small clans, however, were denied this opportunity as the early Chinese were not only deeply class-conscious but also "clan-conscious".[5] Most clan associations merely provided financial assistance to existing schools in the community.[6]

In 1899, a Chinese School open to the public was established by the Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) in Victoria. It was the first Chinese school in Canada, called the Lok Kwen Free School.[7] It did not charge any tuition fee, being completely financed by the CBA and the rest of the Victoria Chinese community. The Lok Kwen Free School began with a staff of two teachers and an enrollment of 40-50 students. Its structure was modelled after the traditional educational system of China, and it served as a model for other Chinese schools in Canada.[7]

Other language schools were founded whenever there was an interest expressed by Chinese residents. Schools were

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[4] The Wong clan in Vancouver, which founded its own school in 1925, claims to be the only clan school in North America in its brief published history. See Lee, p. 13; and Lascelles Ward, *Oriental Missions in British Columbia*, Westminster, B.C., Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1925, p. 77. One person recollects attending a Chinese class operated by the Mah Society in Edmonton as a youth. Personal Communication (PC) 26 October 1936.

[5] Lee, p. 3. Overseas Chinese throughout the world have formed clan associations in their localities, such as the Mah Society, Wong Society, etc. (based on surname) to help their kinsmen adapt and adjust to life in the new land.

[6] In Mandarin romanized form this was the Lequn Yishu.

[7] Lee, p. 3. Also see, Edgar Wickberg (ed.), *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., and Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1982, p. 76.

established in the early decades of this century in cities such as Edmonton, Calgary, Moose Jaw, Winnipeg, Montreal, Toronto, Windsor, Ottawa, London, Hamilton, and Quebec City.[8]

The parents were not the only ones who wished to foster both the Chinese schools and traditional education. The first decade of the twentieth century saw the initial efforts of a Chinese government to participate in Canadian Chinese educational activities. The Ch'ing government, and later the Chinese Republic, despite being thousands of miles removed, encouraged Chinese schools abroad for the same political reasons[9] that educational institutions for overseas Chinese were promoted on the mainland.

In 1908 an inspection of the Chinese schools in British Columbia was conducted by the Chinese educational commissioner Leung Hing-Kwai.[10] Later, the Board of Education of the Republican Government officially recognized three Canadian Chinese schools--those in Victoria, Vancouver, and Toronto--as being comparable to the schools in China. All Chinese schools were encouraged to register with the "Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission"[11] of the

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[8] Taylor, p. 50-51.

[9] See Chapter II regarding the fostering of nationalist sentiments and encouraging contributions from overseas Chinese. More information on the involvement of the Chinese government in Chinese education in Canada may be found in the first chapter of Stephen Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas Chinese: A Study of Peking's Changing Policy (1949-1978)*, Cambridge, University Press, 1972 which covers the period prior to 1949; and Lee, *A History of . . .*.

[10] His name was Liang Qingkui in Mandarin romanized form.

[11] In Taiwan, where the Republican Government retreated following the Communist take-over in 1949, the promotion of

homeland which offered to supply teachers, textbooks, and general expenses. Some schools accepted this aid, especially during the Depression years of the 1930s.[12]

Chinese Canadian political organizations[13] also

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[11](cont'd) overseas Chinese education is still considered one of the most important tasks of this commission. In 1967 a peak of about 5300 overseas Chinese schools was reached. See *A Collection of Articles in Memory of Late President Chiang Kai-shek's (sic)*, Republic of China, Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, 1986, (Published in Chinese and English),p. 39-42, 138-140.

[12] Wickberg(ed.), p. 172.

[13] Chinese Canadians established political societies as early as 1863. See Wickberg(ed.), p. 30. Such organizations provide a kind of "mobility pyramid" that probably adds to the satisfaction and morale of members of the ethnic community. See Andrew M. Greeley, "What is an Ethnic?" in Emanuel Hurtz, Jr. and Charles A. Tesconi, Jr., *Challenges to Education: Readings For Analysis of Major Issues*, New York, Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1972, p. 344. Greeley contends that substructural mobility is very helpful for those who manage to achieve influence, affluence, and prestige that might well be less possible for them in the larger society. Also, since virtually all of the immigrants had families back in China, they were naturally concerned about China's political situation. The interest in China politics was encouraged by Canadian laws that disallowed Chinese participation in Canadian politics. Rejection by Canadian society prompted Chinese Canadians to direct their energy and allegiance to China, the country that welcomed participation from its overseas Chinese. Chinese Canadians not only supplied financial and moral support, they willingly contributed actual manpower to specific causes. Military units were set up in 1915 and perhaps earlier, in Alberta and Saskatchewan to recruit and train volunteers to fight for the Republic. See Wickberg (ed.), p. 105 and F. Quei Quo, "Chinese Immigrants on the Prairies", (A Preliminary Report Submitted to the Secretary of State, Ottawa, Canada), Burnaby, B.C., Simon Fraser University, 30 November 1977, p. 46-47. In March 1917, 210 volunteers went abroad to China prepared for actual battle. Quo, p. 44 identifies two reasons for the North American Chinese interest in politics of the old country: the presence of rebels among the early immigrants and the need of an identity. Furthermore, Gunter Baureiss, "Chinese Organizational Development--A Comment" in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1980, p. 128, points out that "Chinese community dominance was so strong and anti-Chinese feelings so widespread that non-compliance would have meant isolation from Canadians as well as from the Chinese".

expressed support for the formation of language schools. In the early years, the Empire Reform Association was active in providing an education for the Chinese in Victoria. The Chinese Nationalist Leagues of North America, also called the Kuomintang, were prominent supporters of Chinese schools across the continent as well.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s a great number of schools, commonly referred to as the "Patriotic Schools", appeared across Canada. Supply, however, clearly exceeded the demand as many schools had only a few students.[14] During this period China continued experiencing domestic and external difficulties which fostered nationalism and patriotism among the overseas Chinese.[15] In the schools both teachers and students engaged in numerous patriotic activities, such as organized choirs and dramatic troupes performing anti-Japanese propaganda.[16] Politics may have been a reason for the emergence of some of these schools, but ultimately the schools served the Chinese community in a much larger capacity.

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[14] Edgar Wickberg, "Some Problems in Chinese Organizational Development in Canada, 1923-1937" in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XI, No. 1, 1979, p. 94. In Alberta the low enrollments were due to the Chinese being scattered throughout the province. Census figures in Alberta for the year 1936 indicate there were 190 Chinese children between ages 5 and 14; in 1946, there were 90. See Appendix B, Table VI.

[15] Lee, p. 16.

[16] Lee, p. 14. Anti-Japanese propaganda was brought about by the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45).

The Value of a Chinese Education

The value of a Chinese education was indirectly promoted by the social and economic conditions existent for Chinese Canadians in the early decades of the twentieth century. Segregation of the Chinese in the Chinatowns, whether official or unofficial'', was a fact of life in Alberta urban centres which, in effect, restricted not only educational opportunity but the amount of contact with non-Chinese citizens. With social activities and interactions limited to almost entirely other Chinese, the language school represented a practical need.

'' Objections to the Chinese renting or buying houses or businesses in "white areas" were often expressed. See Chapter I regarding the development of the area of Chinese residence known as Chinatown. Also, see George Cho and Roger Leigh, "Patterns of Residence of the Chinese in Vancouver", in Julian V. Minghi, *Peoples of the Living Land: Geography of Cultural Diversity in British Columbia*, Vancouver, Tantalus Research Limited, 1972, p. 67-84; Howard D. Palmer, "Anti-Oriental Sentiment in Alberta 1880-1920" in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. II, No. 2, December 1970, p. 35-36; Gunter Baureiss, "The Chinese Community in Calgary" in *Alberta Historical Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring 1974, p.5; J. Brian Dawson, "The Chinese Experience in Frontier Calgary: 1885-1910" in Anthony W. Rasporich and Henry C. Klassen (eds.), *Frontier Calgary: Town, City and Region 1875-1914*, Calgary, University of Calgary, McClelland and Stewart West, 1975, p. 137-140; Graham E. Johnson, "Chinese Family and Community in Canada: Tradition and Change" in Jean Leonard Elliott (ed.), *Two Nations, Many Cultures: Ethnic Groups in Canada*, Scarborough, Prentice Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1979, p. 360; and Alex Johnson and Andy den Otter, *Lethbridge: A Centennial History*, Lethbridge, City of Lethbridge and the Whoop-up County Chapter, Historical Society of Alberta, 1985, p. 86, 99-100. For an analysis of more recent movements in residential segregation, see T. R. Balakrishman, "Changing Patterns of Ethnic Residential Segregation in the Metropolitan Areas of Canada", in *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1982, p. 92-110.

For those Chinese Canadians who surmounted the many obstacles in the way of an equitable or even just adequate education,[18] there were other barriers to overcome. Until the 1930s or even later, Chinese girls were still not accepted for nurses' training in Calgary and Edmonton hospitals.[19] Oral history interviewees have expressed difficulty in securing positions such as teller, bookkeeper, secretary, and salesman in Alberta. Occupations open to the Chinese in Canada at the time were largely confined to either jobs shunned by white society or those in the Chinatowns that did not require knowledge of English but instead a proficiency in Chinese.[20] The language schools occasionally offered teaching positions to Chinese Canadian graduates of the Canadian normal schools when municipal schools would not employ them.[21]

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[18] See Chapter IV.

[19] Palmer, p. 83; and Wickberg (ed.), p. 185.

[20] Wickberg (ed.), p. 170. For an examination of how institutional racism affected the occupational choices of Chinese Canadians, see Peter S. Li, "A Historical Approach to Ethnic Stratification: The Case of the Chinese in Canada 1858-1930", in *British Columbia Studies*, No. 18, Summer 1979, p. 320-331.

[21] Gordon Taylor, "An Investigation of Chinese Schools in Canada", (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis), Montreal, McGill University, 1933, p. 77. Many professions either denied Chinese Canadians entry to them outright or worded their qualifications policy so that Orientals were excluded. For example, some employers stated that in order to be hired the candidate had to have the right to vote; the Chinese, being denied the franchise, did not meet this criteria and therefore, could not be hired. Consequently, young Chinese Canadians who may have successfully attained the necessary education required for a particular profession were not allowed to practice it due to their racial origin. The job histories of a group of early Chinese immigrants are examined in Peter S. Li, "Chinese Immigrants on the Canadian Prairie, 1910-1947", in *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1982, p. 527-540. See also,

In order to further themselves some Chinese Canadians educated in this country turned to China and sought employment there. In China, their skills and knowledge were respected and welcomed. Feelings of frustration and futility were expressed as one young Chinese Canadian in British Columbia wrote in the 1930s:

> "Even for the most highly educated Chinese there is little desire in many cases to study hard, because if a person intends to stay in this country, the amount of education received will not decide the type of work one will get. There is no choice for the young people here as to what they will do, it's just a matter of taking whatever turns up, or remaining idle. No matter what high ambitions are held by the young people, unless they leave for China to realize them they will never be realized. After many repeated setbacks here they feel disgusted and give up hope. The situation as it stands, where young people live in a state of shattered hopes and ambitions, is deplorable, because instead of an aggressive, quick thinking bunch of Chinese Canadian youths, one finds a submissive fatalistic group of young people. A few do save and go to China in search of better things. The opportunity for university students is no greater. Because they expect more than the average person, they all see a time when they will be in China, using the best of their ability to help both themselves and China. If they remain too long after graduation in this country, they also begin to resign themselves to their fate and lose their ambition. University graduates are granted a prestige in China which they do not receive here.[22]

The Chinese schools in Canada enabled them to acquire a basic knowledge of the language and culture and helped to lessen the difficulties involved in adjusting to Chinese society.

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[21] (cont'd) Li, "A Historical Approach . . . ".

[22] qf W. A. Carruthers, "Oriental Standards of Living", Part II of Charles H. Young and Helen R. Y. Reid, *The Japanese Canadians*, Toronto, Institute of Pacific Relations and Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1938, p. 287.

Chinese Language Schools in Alberta

The Chinese schools in the cities of Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge were primarily sponsored by Chinese Canadian political organizations or religious groups.[23] In comparison to some British Columbia Chinese communities, those east of the Rockies were smaller and therefore had fewer financial resources. Thus, it was not uncommon for the Chinese schools to be connected to some religious or political organization. The schools in Alberta cities were started by these groups but many schools elsewhere sought affiliation with such organizations in order to avoid collapse due to financial or other difficulties.[24]

Women's Missionary Societies in many parts of Canada set up kindergartens and taught elementary characters to the children.[25] During the 1930s and early 1940s in Calgary, the Chinese Mission had a "Kindergarten Room" but the available sources do not reveal whether English or Chinese was used as the language of instruction.[26] The United, Presbyterian, and

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[23] The only exception that this writer has uncovered is a school briefly run by the Mah clan association in Edmonton in the late 1930s. An interviewee (PC 26 October 1986) recalls the private classes were held in the Mah Society Building on 97 Street and 102 Avenue. Another respondent (PC 8 December 1986) stated that there could not have been more than 6 students at the clan school. The existence of the school is highly probable as the Mah's is the largest Chinese clan in Edmonton and the city is known in Chinese communities across Canada as the "horse stable" of the country. ("Mah" means "horse" in Chinese.)

[24] Wickberg (ed.), p. 171.

[25] Taylor, p. 77.

[26] See Alberta Conference Branch, Women's Missionary Society, *Advisory Committee Minutes 1936-1957*, 2 March 1937, Edmonton, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Acc. 75.387; and letter dated 11 May 1942 from Grace M. Tinder to Thomas Underwood, Chinese Mission Correspondence, Thomas Underwood

Catholic Churches were the most active[27] of the religious groups which provided educational services, with the United Church being the most responsive in Edmonton and Calgary.

The Edmonton Chinese United Church School

In Edmonton a Chinese school was started in the early 1930s by Reverend Fong Dickman, the third Chinese minister to come to the city.[28] Rev. Dickman arrived in Edmonton in October 1930[29] and served as the first pastor of the Chinese United Church when it opened in 1933.[30] The previous two Chinese ministers to come to Edmonton, Rev. Mah Sung from China and Rev. C. P. Leung from Moose Jaw served as missionaries in the Edmonton Chinese community;[31] and although they were involved in organizing a youth group among the Edmonton Chinese,[32] no recorded efforts were made to initiate language instruction classes.[33]

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[26](cont'd) Papers, Calgary, Glenbow Museum and Archives.
[27] Wickberg (ed.), p. 172.
[28] A short biography of Rev. Dickman can be found in Rev. James Ko, et. al. (eds.), *93rd Anniversary of the Chinese United Church, Vancouver, B.C., 1888-1981*, (English Edition), Vancouver 1981, p. 17.
[29] *Edmonton Journal*, 11 July 1941.
[30] *Edmonton Journal*, 24 June 1964.
[31] *Edmonton Journal*, 11 July 1941.
[32] This was the Chinese Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) formed in 1921. See Ban Seng Hoe, *Structural Changes of Two Chinese Communities in Alberta*, Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1976, p. 209. The existence of such a group was confirmed in PI September 1984.
[33] One interviewee, however, recalls attending a class taught by Rev. Leung before she started primary school, placing its existence prior to Rev. Dickman's arrival. PC 9 December 1986.

Rev. Dickman's first class in 1932 consisted of a few adults and eight children.[34] His daughter, Lavina Dickman helped conduct the class once a week around the dining room table in his house.[35] The physical surroundings of the Chinese school in Alberta have often been described as merely "sitting around a table";[36] this simple yet functional arrangement was possibly due to low enrollment or to insufficient financial resources.[37]

According to a survey taken in the 1930s the majority of Chinese schools in Canada were situated in rooms of buildings used for many other purposes.[38] It stated that the rooms were neither set up nor decorated with the needs of students in mind. The physical environment of the rooms where classes were held was very unattractive and totally unsuited to learning. Most rooms had poor lighting and were poorly ventilated and heated. It also made the observation that the furniture in some schools was comparable to that of schools in China during the Ch'ing Dynasty: the chairs and stools had no backs while tables and stools were built high so

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[34] Hoe, p. 214.
[35] PC 9 December 1986. *Edmonton Journal*, 26 August 1935, reported Dickman's daughter kept house for him.
[36] CCNC OHI 85-4 and 86-29. Also PC 9 December 1986; and PC 26 October 1986.
[37] No records on enrollment or financial status of the Chinese United Church school during the period of concern are available. The earliest written record concerning the Chinese school is dated 13 January 1963. It reveals names of students, fees, financial status, and donations f[illegible] community. PI 1 August 1984 and PI 7 October 1986.
[38] Taylor, p. 61.

that the feet dangled above the floor.[39] Usage of the blackboard was not given much prominence until influence of the Chinese Republic's educational reforms reached Chinese Canadians.

Dickman's Chinese class was disbanded in 1933 due to a poor response from the community.[40] It was not until six years later in 1939 that the Chinese classes were reopened by Rev. Leung when he returned to serve as minister of the church. Rev. Leung's class had an initial enrollment of 20 students. Lessons were given two hours a day, five days a week, in the house where church services were held.[41] There was no charge for the classes and the church supplied all necessary materials. Efforts were made in 1944 to raise funds from within the Chinese community for improving curriculum resources. Over one hundred donations were made, totalling $875.75,[42] reflecting the positive support of the Chinese community for the school. In the mid-1940s the school managed to secure the services of two teachers from China.[43] It was not until 1953 that an actual church building was erected and classes were then held in the basement. The school to this day is still in operation and continues to be run by the church minister

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[39] Taylor, p. 63. Of the schools surveyed, it was noted that the Chinese schools of Victoria and Calgary were exceptions to this arrangement.

[40] Hoe, p. 214.

[41] This house was located on 96 Street and 102 Avenue beside the present church structure.

[42] Hoe, p. 214.

[43] *Edmonton Journal*, 7 December 1946.

and some volunteers from the congregation.

The Calgary Chinese Public School

The Calgary Chinese Public School, established in 1920, was a much more formal organization than the Edmonton Chinese United Church School. It has been the most successful, continuous, and longest-running of all the Alberta Chinese schools and provided a more conventional looking classroom. Its beginnings also lie with the local Chinese United Church, although it was subsequently administered by an independent board.

In April 1920, parents of second generation Chinese Canadian children, who were also members of the church congregation, approached the mission board for space in which to hold Chinese classes. The board agreed to rent the Mission Room " . . . for $10 per month, for the use of teaching Chinese language to the children for the hours from 5 to 7 p.m."[44] The first Chinese class was held five days a week after regular school hours and was reported to have had an enrollment of only six children[45] while mission board minutes have revealed

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[44] Chinese Mission and YMCA *Board Minutes*, 22 April 1920, Calgary, Chinese United Church.

[45] Gunter Baureiss, "The Chinese Community of Calgary" in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. III, No. 1, 1971, p. 51; Gunter Baureiss, "The City and the Subcommunity: The Chinese of Calgary", (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis), Calgary, University of Calgary, 1971, p. 99; John W. Friesen, *Schools as a Medium of Culture*, Lexington, Mass., Ginn Custom Publishing, 1981, p. 118; John W. Friesen, *Schools With a Purpose*, Calgary, Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1983, p. 132; and Frank Dabbs, "Chinatown Development Foundation", (Draft only--Unpublished manuscript for the Oi Kwan Foundation Time Capsule, 1986) p. 6.

there were 11 school age children in the community at the time.[46]

In 1923, classes were held briefly in an old barn behind the Mission property.[47] A more permanent location was sought after the school formed a Society in 1939 under The Alberta Societies Act. Reverend Yee You Tong, the church minister, along with four active members of the congregation initiated the registration.[48] In 1942 a small house which became the Chinese Public School building was purchased.

Since the school's official inception as a non-profit organization in 1939 it has been administered by a Board of Directors that is elected annually. These volunteers make decisions regarding the curriculum, the teaching staff, and the maintenance of the building. For decades the Board of Directors was primarily composed of members of the Chinese United Church. Annual reports reveal that donations from parents of students continued to make up the largest part of the school income.[49] Enrollment for the six years following 1939 fluctuated between 39 and 53 students.[50] Saturday programs which included music lessons were added for various age

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[46] Chinese Mission and YMCA *Board Minutes*, 10 June 1920.
[47] Classes may also have been held temporarily at Knox United Church nearby. See Chinese Canadian National Council Oral History Interview (CCNC OHI) 86-13.
[48] The members were: Ho Lem, manufacturer, Luey Kheong, merchant, David Woon, tailor, and Charlie Lam Kwong, merchant.
[49] Calgary Chinese Public School Society *Annual Reports*, 1943-1948.
[50] Ibid.

groups.

The upstairs of the school served as living accommodations for the teacher while the living room and dining room of the house were used as classrooms. On the walls of these classrooms were hung photographs of the donors to the school treasury.[51] The flag of the Chinese Republic was displayed alongside the Union Jack at the front of at least one classroom near the teacher's stand[52], suggesting the organizers were also sympathetic to that government.[53] In fact, it was not until decades later that the school officially resolved to break its affiliation with the Chinese Nationalist League.[54] The

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[51] This tradition of fund raising where a photograph of the donor is placed on display as acknowledgement is not an uncommon practice among the Chinese in Alberta. The more recent immigrants, however, seem to generally prefer alternative methods such as banquets, raffles, auctions, etc. One source reported that the historical photographs which once graced the walls of the classrooms were discarded by a new board in the 1970s because the photographs were seen as self-serving.

[52] Personal Interview (PI) 27 October 1986.

[53] When the school building was torn down in 1978 to make way for a new structure, many of the school's learning materials were donated to the Glenbow Archives. Included is a Chinese Nationalist flag but upon discovery of this by the serving president at the time, the archives was told that the flag should not have been donated and that "if displayed, it should not be associated with the school in any way". See Frances Roback, "Report on Chinese Public School Materials", 8 November 1978, Cultural History Department, Calgary, Glenbow Museum and Archives.

[54] Ibid. This occurred in 1972. Later in 1979, a highly publicized power struggle occurred within the Calgary Chinese Public School. A group of new immigrants challenged the old directorship that was seen to be controlled by people who were also connected to the church elite. The dispute was also related to politics surrounding the redevelopment of Calgary Chinatown. For more information see *Chinatown News*, 3 April 1979, 18 January 1980, 3 March 1980, and 3 April 1980; Frank W. Dabbs, "The Shaky Throne of George Ho Lem", in *Calgary*, Vol. 1, No. 7, March 1979, p.

Calgary Chinese Public School presently operates out of a new building with modern facilities and continues to be overseen by an elected Board of Directors from the Chinese community.

The Lethbridge Chinese Schools

The Chinese Nationalist League and the Freemasons started Chinese schools in Lethbridge in the 1940s.[55] The hours of operation were very similar to that of the Calgary Chinese Public School. The Freemason Chinese School apparently started with a private tutor teaching the children of the Leong family upstairs above the family store where the Leong Family Association had its office.[54] A class was later opened at the Freemasons Hall and all children of members of the Freemasons were welcomed to attend.

The hiring of tutors by a Chinese resident for his children was probably a more common occurrence in the smaller towns of Alberta where there were fewer Chinese. Other native-born Chinese Canadians in Alberta have

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[54] (cont'd) 23-33; and Friesen, *Schools as a Medium . . .*, p. 122.

[55] Discrepancies exist regarding the exact time period the schools actually started. Daisy Chang, et. al., *Our Chosen Land: A History of Chinese Canadians*, Edmonton, Chinese Canadian National Council, 1984, p. 48, states the schools began in 1944-45. Mary Bailey, "Chinese Language Schools in Lethbridge", (Unpublished paper), Sir Alexander Galt Museum Archives, Lethbridge, alludes the starting date was in the late 1940s to 1950. Primary resources examined do not reveal an exact date but suggest the Freemasons school originated in the late 1930s to 1940s and that the Chinese Nationalist League one started some time after in the 1950s. Also see, Personal Correspondence, 11 April 1987.

[54] CCNC OHI 86-26 and 85-14.

recalled being taught Chinese by a private teacher.[57]

The available sources indicate the Chinese Nationalist League School was started after the Freemasons School. Children of the Freemasons attended the Freemason School and children of the Nationalist League members attended their own school. The basis for the existence of two Chinese schools in Lethbridge was not to accommodate high enrollments, which were in fact non-existent, but was the result of animosity between the Freemasons and the Chinese Nationalist League.[58]

During the first half of the twentieth century a handful of Chinese children, with their families, lived

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[57] CCNC OHI 85-4 and 85-5.

[58] The animosity between the Freemasons and Chinese Nationalist League dates back to the days of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the founding of the Republic. The Freemasons, also called the Chikungtang or Muncheetang has been active for hundreds of years in China. It was formed shortly after the Ch'ing Dynasty was established and was essentially an anti-Manchu organization seeking to restore the Ming Dynasty or Chinese rule. The Freemasons supported Dr. Sun's revolutionary cause to overthrow the Manchus but when the Kuomintang was formed rivalry began. See Jin Tan and Patricia E. Roy, *The Chinese in Canada*, Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association with the support of the Multicultural Program, Government of Canada, 1985, p. 6; Woon Yuen Fong, "Social Discontinuities in North American Chinese Communities: The Case of the Kwan in Vancouver and Victoria 1880-1960" in *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 1978, p. 443-451; and J. B. Dawson, "The Chinese Community of Lethbridge", (Unpublished Synopsis of Interviews of Mr. James Leong, Lethbridge, 1-3 August 1984); Wickberg (ed.), p. 30-32, 226-228; and Bailey, p. 3. In Lethbridge Chinatown the rivalry between the Freemasons and KMT was very evident in the early years. Chinese residents who purchased items from the Freemason storekeeper would be verbally abused by the KMT storekeeper. The Leong children who helped in the family store remember having to deliver groceries for customers because the customer did not want to be seen coming out of the Freemason store holding packages by the KMT storekeeper across the street. CCNC OHI 86-29.

amongst a majority of either single men or married bachelors in Lethbridge Chinatown. A resident who grew up in the 1920s and 1930s of Lethbridge reminiscences about the make-up of the community:

> " . . . In those days, Chinatown--the Chinese community was made up of middle-aged or older men . . . these old men . . . spoiled us kids. They were really good to us. . . Some of them weren't but most of them were . . . it was just like having 16 fathers . . . Everybody used to keep after you."[59]

Both Lethbridge Chinese schools were relatively short-lived compared to those in Edmonton and Calgary. A local newspaper reported their closure in the early 1960s.[60]

The Role of Cultural Transmission

While the schools founded by the religious and political groups may have attempted to pass on their sponsoring organization's ideas and values, the instruction they provided ultimately fulfilled the role of cultural transmission. The textbooks used were ones transplanted from China. Subjects that were included in the Alberta curriculum and taught in the municipal schools were excluded from the Chinese schools.[61] Such subjects included arithmetic, music, physical education, drawing, nature study, hygiene, and world geography.

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[59] CCNC OHI 85-14.
[60] *Lethbridge Herald*, 11 November 1967, reported the schools had closed in 1963.
[61] The only exception to this practice in Canada was perhaps the Victoria Chinese School which taught all subjects.

The exact curriculum varied with each individual school[12], but generally it included instruction in the reading and writing of Chinese characters, China history, geography, and literature. Character writing included tracing, copying, and dictation. Lessons also included using the abacus, bookkeeping, composition, and letter writing. Being able to write a letter appears to have been a common measure by which Chinese Canadians used to determine a person's level of literacy.[13] Homework was assigned regularly. Students were usually let out a couple of weeks earlier than the public school term to allow them to study for the regular examinations. The school term corresponded to that of the municipal schools but a summer session of Chinese school was not uncommon.

In the two or three hours that Chinese classes were held after dismissal from the regular school, the schedule of a beginner's class in the Chinese school usually alternated between a lesson on new characters, tracing (with a Chinese writing brush), reading, paraphrasing the previous lesson, copying, and dictation.[14] The teaching of the philosophy of Confucius, who was considered the "model for all teachers", was continued even in the Canadian Chinese schools. Confucian ethics were emphasized along with

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[12] Schools that followed the Chinese Republic Board of Education guidelines were likely to have had an uniformed curriculum.

[13] This, along with being able to read a newspaper was commonly made reference to in the oral histories. See also, Taylor, p. 81.

[14] For examples, see Taylor, p. 79. Also CCNC OHI 86-28, 85-4, and 86-26.

loyalty, martial spirit, and harmony.

A sense of Chinese nationalism in [redacted] teachings also persisted, as an ex-student of the [redacted]ary Chinese Public School recalls:

> "You hear the older generation Chinese tell you . . .they keep reminding you . . .'Remember, you're not Canadian. You may be born here, got a birth certificate here, but you're not Canadian; so look in the mirror--you don't have a Canadian face . . .I didn't have a WASPY (Anglo-Saxon) look, I guess . . . . we went to Chinese school and I think that had a certain influence . . .(we were) reminded about our background and we felt a stronger loyalty to China than to Canada or to the Commonwealth at the time."[65]

The older generation of Chinese reinforced the view maintained by white society that the Chinese were not real Canadians.

Since the majority of the older generation came from the province of Kwangtung, that province's prevalent dialects of either Toi-Sunese[66] or Cantonese were most likely used as the language of instruction in the schools. Supplementary instruction in English was first provided by instructors who knew how to speak English themselves and likely had Eurasian students in their classrooms.[67] For the most part, the instructors insisted on using Chinese only, even though some of the native-born had difficulty understanding.[68] One ex-student from a small Alberta town

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[65] CCNC OHI 85-6.
[66] In Mandarin romanized form this is Taishanese. The Toi-sun county is one of the Say-Yup (Sze-yap or "Four Districts") from which an overwhelming majority of the early immigrants originated.
[67] Taylor, p. 72.
[68] Ibid.

recalls using the English phonetic system to help her remember the Chinese characters:

> "We'd write our English beside it (the Chinese characters). We memorized it, and the next lesson, he'd (the teacher) ask us what it's all about. He didn't know we had written English beside it and we memorized it just like we knew it by heart."[69]

Chinese readers or textbooks preserved at the Glenbow Archives reveal that students of the Calgary Chinese Public School also wrote translations in English beside the Chinese characters.

The conservative method of rote-learning popularized in the traditional Chinese educational system persisted throughout the Alberta Chinese schools. It involved substantial memorizing and reciting on an individual and class basis. An ex-student describes his experience:

> "You have a book, you take it, and you read. And you read it to yourself, you read it out loud, he (the teacher) reads it, (and) you read it (again). Then after a while, you start writing the characters. And that's all you do over and over again. It's all memory; they drill it into you. Here's how you say it, here's how you do it, (and) here's how you write it. Again, again, and again."[70]

This practice seems to have been very widespread[71] throughout Chinese schools in North America, as illustrated by an American writer in recalling her childhood days during the 1930-40s in the United States:

> "After American school, we picked up our cigar boxes, in which we had arranged books, brushes, and an inkbox neatly, and went to Chinese school, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. There we chanted together, voices

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[69] CCNC OHI 85-4.
[70] CCNC OHI 86-28. Similar descriptions were made in CCNC OHI 86-6, 86-28, and 85-4.
[71] See also, Taylor, p. 76.

> rising and falling, loud and soft, some boys shouting, everybody reading together, reciting together and not alone with one voice. When we had a memorization test, the teacher let each of us come to his desk and say the lesson to him privately, while the rest of the class practiced copying or tracing.'[72]

This description closely parallels the Chinese Canadian experience in Alberta.

Various techniques for supplementing the memorizing-reciting method were introduced by teachers who enjoyed some professional training in one of the normal schools but were considered unwelcome innovations by the older instructors.[73] Such devices included cutting out pictures and writing the characters below, crayon and free-hand drawing, and 'other elementary activities'[74] that are considered quite common and ordinary by today's pedagogical standards.

In spite of the rigid program of studies which the Chinese schools advocated, some did offer non-academic activities for their students. The Edmonton and Calgary schools often held various extra-curricular events in conjunction with the affiliated churches. Although there was no Sports Day or Track and Field Day, picnics which included non-competitive games and races were held for parents, teachers, and students. Other occasions involved choir singing, Chinese-dancing, various team sports and drama

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[72] Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1977, p. 167.
[73] Taylor, p. 77.
[74] Ibid.

productions. While one or two schools in Canada had a Students' Council, the Alberta Chinese schools never had enough students to support one.[75]

The Students and Teachers

The students who attended the Chinese schools were of three different backgrounds: the native-born, the Eurasians, and the China-born. Their ages ranged from five to mid-teens. Of the oral histories of Chinese Canadians examined, 15 interviewees received Chinese instruction in Alberta at some time during their early life, ranging from a half a year of instruction to no more than 4-6 years.[76] They are all Canadian-born of Chinese parentage with the exception of one Eurasian. This finding corresponds to a study completed in the early 1930s that found the largest group of students in the Chinese schools was the native-born followed by the Eurasian children.[77] In the case of the Eurasians, it was almost always the father who was Chinese. The oral histories do not reveal any China-born students and Taylor's study did note that they were few in number.[78] The China-born students were the boys who managed to enter Canada before 1923 when the doors to Chinese immigration closed completely. They came primarily to work but some did make an attempt to continue their Chinese studies in the

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[75] Taylor, p. 87.
[76] Only four native-born stated they had not ever attended Chinese classes in either China or Canada.
[77] Taylor, p. 32.
[78] Ibid., p. 70.

language schools.

A hierarchy appears to have existed amongst the three groups. The native-born regarded themselves as infinitely superior to the Eurasians, and the China-born regarded the native-born "with a pity amounting almost to scorn when they recall that the native-born have been denied the opportunity of even a little schooling in China."[7] The derisive label "juk sing", meaning "hollow bamboo" has been used to describe the native-born who look Chinese but generally lack a thorough knowledge of their parents' culture and who are not proficient in the Chinese language.[8] Today, third and fourth generation descendants of the old immigrants are still held in contempt to some extent by the elders for the same reason.

The elders of any Chinese community have always been highly respected. They were often consulted regarding

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[7] Taylor, p. 71. A confidential personal communication with a Chinese Canadian of mixed parentage confirmed the differential treatment the Eurasians in Edmonton received from both the Chinese and non-Chinese communities. The hurtful incidents as a young child were many and they still bring about unpleasant memories. Eurasian children were subjected to the racial slurs of the nationalities of both the mother and father. (PC 10 December 1986). See also, CCNC OHI 85-28; and W. A. Carruthers, "Oriental Standards of Living", Part II of C. H. Young and Helen R. Y. Reid, *The Japanese Canadians*, Toronto, Institute of Pacific Relations and Canadian Institute of International Affairs, University of Toronto Press, 1938, p. 287.

[8] Other labels used to describe the native-born include "Siwashes" and "Ny doy". The term Siwashes compared the native-born to the Canadian Indians who were losing their culture and original ways of life. The term "ny doy" compared them to the Ukrainians whose culture was encroached upon by the Russians or perhaps the Ukrainian immigrants in Canada who were being assimilated by aggressive government policy.

various school matters, such as the hiring of teachers. The teachers of the Edmonton Chinese school, for the most part, have been volunteers from the community--usually the minister or some other church member. The school's existence continued to be mainly due to "the desire of grandparents or parents."[11]

Most Chinese schools east of the Rockies usually selected their teachers from the local Chinese community. These instructors were chosen either because of their superior education, their prominence in the community, or (in the case of schools operated by political groups) for their devotion to party principles and interests.[12] Qualified and professionally trained Chinese teachers were scarce. Many ex-students, particularly the ones from Lethbridge and other little towns, have described their Chinese teacher as just someone in the community who was a bit more versed than the rest and willing to teach the local children.[13] The Chinese schools in Alberta were not recognized by the Chinese Republic's Board of Education, but those elsewhere in Canada that were, had to employ only teachers whose qualifications the Board recognized. Graduates of Victoria's Overseas Primary School were popular candidates across Canada when teacher supply was low.

Teachers brought in from China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to serve an engagement were

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[11] PI 4 August 1984.
[12] Taylor, p. 68.
[13] CCNC OHI 85-3, 85-4, 86-29, 86-26, 86-25, and 85-4.

likely scholars who studied unsuccessfully for the Three Great Examinations. These men of knowledge, despite failing the examinations, were still highly respected by Chinese society and held positions of influence.

The Calgary Chinese Public School, from its beginning, was concerned with securing experienced or trained teachers. At the board meeting of the Chinese Mission in which classroom space was officially granted for holding instruction, another motion was made,

> ". . . that the Board undertake to see the Government-authorities in regard to importing two Chinese ladies from Canton, as teachers for the Chinese children in Calgary and District and that all the expenses necessary in connection be borne by the Chinese School Authorities".[34]

Two months later a board discussion of this matter revealed that a meeting of the Chinese families had been held and the consensus was that the expenses of securing bonds and guarantee for the teachers from China would be very heavy as there were few children of school age at the time.[35]

The salary of teachers from abroad during the 1920-1930s ranged from eight hundred to twelve hundred dollars a year while those hired from the community received two hundred to three hundred dollars less.[36] Transportation from Hong Kong to the school in Canada was usually paid for by the school. The teacher's first year was usually a probationary year. Some schools paid the return transportation to China if the teacher's services were no

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[34] Chinese Mission and YMCA *Board Minutes*, 22 April 1920.
[35] Chinese Mission and YMCA *Board Minutes*, 10 June 1920.
[36] See Taylor, p. 69.

-longer required in the following year.

Reflections on the Chinese School Experience

The type of teachers that taught at the Chinese schools and even the physical setting of the school had some bearing on the opinions of students regarding the classes. One ex-student describes his experiences in the late 1940s in Lethbridge as:

> " . . . . it wasn't really like a school. I think it was more like a baby-sitting service for a couple of hours everyday . . . . we all just sat at the main room, around a few tables. There might be, say, a dozen or 20 of us kids and the teacher went from one person to another. We all did the same thing. There's these words that were already printed in the book, and you just go over them with a brush to learn the strokes . . .There was no recess or anything. It wasn't really a school, but they just tried to teach us a few Chinese things."[*]

An ex-teacher who taught at this particular school cited incidents related to discipline as his reasons for leaving the position after a brief engagement.[**] The respect the older generation had for the educated individual, that is, Chinese-educated was not adopted by the generation of Canadian-born.[***]

The Calgary school also was not without its difficulties in staffing and discipline. One interviewee

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[*] CCNC OHI 86-29.

[**] PI 28 October 1986. The fact that some of the students were his own brothers and sisters may have affected this decision.

[***] Oral histories of ex-students from the Calgary Chinese Public School contradict Taylor's claim that the pupils there had not "forgotten the reverence which has always characterized the Chinese in their attitude to their teachers." Taylor, p. 85-86.

recalls:

> "The Chinese teachers were . . . chosen because they knew a few words and they could write and read a little better than anybody else . . but they weren't formally trained teachers and I don't think they got their respect from us . . . They had a lot of discipline problems."[10]

On several occasions the Calgary school was closed because no teacher was available.[11] The high turn-over in the training staff which occurred almost every year resulted in a lack of continuity in what was being taught.'[12]

Moreover, the task of having to sit attentively in Chinese class after several hours of strenuous regular school probably accounted for some of the unrest, as expressed in the following quotations:

> "Well, it was quite natural, too, because after . . . you go to school from 9 o'clock in the morning to 4 (o'clock) and . . . start (Chinese School) at 5 o'clock . . . we never have supper until 8 o'clock at night . . . so you're anxious to get out . . . we went through that all the way through our primary grades."[13]

> "We got an empty room at the Chinese Freemasons Hall and everyday after school, now, we got off at 4:00 (from regular school) and by 4:30, we had to be up in the Chinese school . . . It was much too difficult because it was too close together and we didn't have enough time . . . we were going to English school all day and then you have to tear home and you can't even do your homework or anything yet; . . . "[14]

> "You don't even have enough time to dump off all your English stuff and then turn your mind around to gear into Chinese. Dad realized that too, because one time he said, 'It's pretty tough, isn't it?' I said, 'I don't know about the others--but for me, it

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[10] CCNC OHI 85-4. See also CCNC OHI 86-11.
[11] Baureiss, "The City and . . . .", p. 99.
[12] CCNC OHI 85-12.
[13] CCNC OHI 85-4.
[14] CCNC OHI 85-14.

is, Dad.'"[15]

Another student expressed her feelings about attending Chinese school:

> "(I) went to the Chinese school . . . yuk! (laughs) That puts a big dent into your playing hours, doesn't it? 7-9 (o'clock)every night for three years . . For a kid, that's the pits because you want to go out and play. Saturday mornings—9 to 11. What a day! It didn't really hurt, but I mean, as a child, you wanted to go out and play."[16]

One reason given for the dislike of the Chinese lessons was not wanting to be different from their non-Chinese peers:

> "We wanted to be like everybody else . . . We felt we were like anybody else. We didn't feel we were different than anybody else when we were younger. (We) played with the same kids all the time, so . . ? that's why we didn't want (to learn Chinese)."[17]

However, there was little or no reaction expressed by the non-Chinese friends about the native-born having to attend Chinese school other than feeling sorry for their friends having the commitment.[18]

The value of a Chinese education was not generally recognized by the students during their childhood. While several are indifferent about their Chinese school experiences, some have mentioned their regrets of not being fluent in a Chinese dialect or not being able to read and write Chinese.[19] A few Chinese Albertans who studied the language actually did so as teenagers or adults and of their

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[15] CCNC OHI 85-17.
[16] CCNC OHI 86-28.
[17] CCNC OHI 85-4.
[18] CCNC OHI 86-31, 85-4 and 86-14.
[19] CCNC OHI 85-12, PC 10 December 1986, and CCNC OHI 86-14.

own accord.[100] Most students in the language schools and private tutorials did not acquire the ability to read and write Chinese to any significant degree. At best, a former student can recognize enough characters to understand the gist of a sentence.

To the older generation, however, what mattered more was not the teaching of reading and writing but rather the instilling of a sense of pride and dignity in the Chinese heritage and a sense of personal identity in their children. An interviewee recalls her father's pride:

> " . . . Dad, in his gentle way always impressed upon us, our culture. He was very, very proud of our culture and being old-fashioned like he was, he always had the time to sit and talk to us . . . all I know is, that he was very proud of our heritage. He wanted us to . . . learn what we could of it."[101]

Chinese Canadians withstood systematic prejudice with tolerance and refuted the ideas of inferiority imposed by Canadian society. It is not to be wondered at then, that the Chinese parents were adamant about their children learning the thousands-of-years old culture and language. Many parents did not allow English to be used at home, insisting their children communicate in Chinese. Sing Lim's account of his childhood on the West Coast in the early part of the twentieth century is representative of the experience and attitude of many Chinese Canadians in Alberta:

> "I was not allowed to speak English at home or with other children. Our parents suffered so much racial intolerance they did not want to be part of Canadian

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[100] CCNC OHI 86-32 and 85-40.
[101] CCNC OHI 85-14.

culture."[102]

While their reluctance to be part of Canadian culture, or attempts to preserve the Chinese one through the Chinese school, have been interpreted as resistance to total assimilation[103], it was partly a response made to adapt to discrimination.

Concluding Remarks

The Chinese language schools in Alberta served to facilitate the transmission of Chinese culture to young Chinese Canadians who might otherwise have been ignorant and possibly even resentful of their cultural heritage. It provided the additional training for those who found it necessary to travel abroad or remain within the Chinese community to pursue a career. The teachings of the school extended beyond reading and writing--encompassing traditional ethics and more importantly, a sense of pride and self-respect at a time when the Chinese and other ethnic groups were looked upon and treated as second-class citizens. Given the milieu of early twentieth century Canada that denied Chinese Canadians many rights and benefits the language school represented an essential institution to the Chinese community.

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[102] Sing Lim, *West Coast China Boy*, Montreal, Tundra Books, 1979, p. 26. See also CCNC OHI 86-31, 85-14, and 86-28.

[103] Kwok-hung Leung, "Ethnic Schools and Public Education: A Study of the Relationship Between Ethnic Schools and Public Education in Alberta", (Unpublished Master of Education Thesis), Calgary, University of Calgary, 1984, p.1.

IV. CHINESE CANADIANS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ALBERTA

"Tormented by Whites--Chinese Pupil Stabs

The practice, which has apparently been prevalent for some time, of the white scholars of the Public School, annoying the Chinese scholars, was this morning severely condemned in the police court. Waen Quong How, a fourteen-year-old Chinese boy, appeared before Justices MacDonald and Heap on a charge of stabbing William McDougall in the back with a knife.

Pleading guilty to the charge, the boy said that the four boys in the court, William McDougall, George Dowson, Wilbert Scheer and Donald Ringland, licked him and he got scared and used his knife as there were too many boys on him. He also further alleged that on other occasions the white boys kicked and beat him. Chief of Police Lawson, in a statement to the Court, said that no doubt the knife was used under great provocation at the time, and he himself had noticed that the Chinese children were being continually pestered by the white boys. He, however, wished the Chinamen to clearly understand that they cannot use the knife.

Both the Justices then gave the four white boys present a severe lecture on the practice of tormenting the Chinese and told them that if the practice were not stopped they would be severely dealt with. The accused boy was then told that he would be let out on suspended sentence on this occasion, but that he must not use the knife again, and in the event of anyone tormenting him, he was to tell the Chief of Police.

Dr. Bruce and Mr. Matthews, two of the School Trustees were also present in Court and at the close of the case Dr. Bruce addressed the court, saying that he was very pleased to see the attitude the court had taken in the matter, and added that every boy in the school, with the exception of the four then in the court, had been severely reprimanded about the continual abusing of the Chinese scholars and had been informed that if a further repetition of this sort of thing takes place, the offenders will be severely dealt with, either by the school trustees or the Court.

The wound received by young McDougall was not of a serious nature, having only penetrated the flesh a short distance."

--*Macleod Spectator*, 2 April 1914

Waen Quong How was just one of many Chinese victims of racial discrimination and prejudice in the public schools of Alberta although few known instances of physical retaliation were as violent as this one. Chinese Canadians were subject to differential treatment throughout the school systems because of their racial origin. A derogatory, stereotypical image of the Chinese promoted abusive treatment of the Chinese in everyday life.

Unlike segregation movements which formed in British Columbia, the relatively small Chinese population in Alberta helped prevent popular nativist views from becoming translated into official policy in the province's public school systems. The issue was relatively short-lived compared to the situation in British Columbia and did not command much attention in the press. School authorities in Alberta at the time were beset with meeting the educational needs[1] of large numbers of eastern European immigrants, leaving the Chinese to adapt themselves as best they could within the regular program. The school experience for Chinese students in Alberta was a mixed one, varying according to individuals.

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[1] It should be noted that in doing so, however, it was not policy to seek the approval of minority groups regarding the education of their children. Ethnic groups were not provided the opportunity for participation in decision-making in school systems or other educational processes.

A Background of School Segregation: The Schools of British Columbia

Chinese Canadians in British Columbia were systematically denied equal access to public education, either directly through policy, or indirectly as a result of the ethnic stratification[2] that existed in society. Since the early 1880s there have been Chinese children in the public schools of British Columbia.[3] In Vancouver and Victoria, Chinese parents were forced to fight for the rights of their children to receive an adequate education in the public schools. During the first two decades of the twentieth century the issue of school segregation for Asian children was repeatedly debated.[4] An outcry for segregation was first heard publicly in 1901 in the Victoria area but it

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[2] For a discussion on the status of the Chinese and other immigrant groups in Canadian society, see: Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1985; W. G. Smith, *A Study in Canadian Immigration*, Toronto, The Ryerson Press, 1920; D. H. Avery, "The Immigrant Industrial Worker in Canada 1896-1919: The Vertical Mosaic as an Historical Reality" in Wsevolod Isajiw (ed.), *Identities: The Impact of Ethnicity on Canadian Society*, (Canadian Ethnic Studies Association, Vol. V), Toronto, Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1977, p. 15; C. J. Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient: A Study in International Relations*, Toronto, MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1941, p. 91, 289; and W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978, p. 5, 20.

[3] Mary Ashworth, "The Segregation of Immigrant Children in British Columbia Schools", in *Working Teacher*, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 7.

[4] The issue of segregating Chinese children was also prevalent in the United States. In the U.S. segregation of the Chinese in public schools continued as late as 1926 and segregated schools were not outlawed until 1947. See Lonnie Chin, "Chinese and Public School Teaching", in *Chinese-Americans: School and Community Problems*, Chicago, Integrated Educational Association, 1972, p. 58.

failed to arouse much 'public interest' until the labour organizations turned it into a serious political issue the following year.[4] The issue was raised over the presence of about sixteen Chinese children in attendance out of 108 Chinese children of school age in the city.[7]

Anti-Orientalists put forward various arguments purporting to show the "dangers" and "evils" of permitting Chinese children to remain in the public schools. These accusations included stories of the Chinese being unsanitary, demoralizing, carriers of "loathsome diseases", and initiators of crime who would "lower the surrounding influences of school life".[8] Little heed was paid to the report of the Superintendent of Schools which declared the Chinese children to be "obedient, attentive, studious, and often setting a good example to other children."[9]

Early efforts to place Chinese children in separate classrooms did not satisfy the more radical Anti-Orientalists who felt separate buildings were needed. The creation of a new school district in Victoria's

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[5] Ward, p. 62.
[6] Mary Ashworth, *The Forces Which Shaped Them: A History of the Education of Minority Group Children in British Columbia*, Vancouver, New Star Books, 1979, p. 58.
[7] Ashworth, "The Segregation . . . ", p. 7. By 1907 there were 50 Chinese students in Victoria's public schools and 240 by 1921. See Edgar Wickberg(ed.), *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, McClelland and Stewart., 1982, p.133. Wickberg also includes figures for Vancouver schools in the same years.
[8] Ibid., p. 56-58. More arguments for segregation may be found in Patricia E. Roy, "Introduction" in Hilda Glynn-Ward, *The Writing on the Wall*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974, (Originally published in 1921).
[9] Ashworth, *The Forces* . . . , p. 59.

Chinatown in 1904 was an attempt on the part of the school board to segregate the Chinese without admitting that intent, as school boards were advised not to discriminate between children in regard to colour, creed, or race;[10] the reason given for the move was "overcrowding" in other schools. In 1905, just one year after opening, the segregated school was forced to close because of the refusal by many Chinese parents to send their children to it.

Two years later, the segregation crisis in Victoria prompted the Chinese community to examine seriously the possibility of assuming complete responsibility for educating their own children if they were to be barred from public facilities.[11] Thus began the foundations of the Victoria Chung Hua School, operated by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, offering both English and Chinese language instruction.[12] Further efforts to exclude the Chinese from public schools were made in a 1907 motion which stated pupils who did not understand English could not be admitted. The act was directed solely at the local Chinese population. The Chinese pursued legal action and were successful in halting legislated segregation but unsuccessful in rescinding the above-mentioned act.

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[10] This was advised in a communication from the Council of Public Instruction. See Ibid., p. 62.

[11] Meanwhile the Chinese were still required to pay the regular property taxes to support public education.

[12] This school has also been referred to as the Victoria Chinese Public School and Wah-kiu Hokhao (Overseas Chinese School). Its Mandarin romanized spelling is Huaqiao Xuexiao. For information on this school, see Wickberg (ed.), p. 77 & 129.

Other stipulations which Chinese students in Victoria had to contend with included: only senior Chinese students were allowed to go to the white schools without interference of any kind, students had to reach the fourth grade before being permitted to join the white classes, Chinese students below the fourth grade who were able to speak English well could receive a special permit to attend the white school, and special permits could be given to students in the segregated schools whom the teacher thought would profit by going to a white school.[13] During this same period the segregation issue surfaced in Vancouver as well, and measures of partial segregation were implemented.[14]

Fifteen years later, in 1922, talk of segregation reappeared in both cities. Anti-Orientalists were not successful in implementing the policy in Vancouver, but another boycott of segregated facilities (or the "chicken coop"[15] as the Chinese derisively called it) occurred in Victoria. When principals tried to implement the policy in September they were met with determined resistance from the Chinese for the entire school year. It was not until the following September when the Board conceded not to segregate all Chinese students but only those who were truly behind in their work, that Chinese students returned to the public schools.[16]

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[13] Ashworth, p. 78.
[14] See Wickberg, p. 129.
[15] qf Ibid.
[16] Ashworth, p. 80. It was noted that not all students who had enrolled in June 1922--before the segregation issue had arisen--returned in September 1923. An examination of

Discriminatory practices in British Columbia directed against Chinese Canadian school children were not limited to school segregation. Other overt acts of prejudice were existent within its school systems. For example, during the Depression Years all elementary school children were provided milk for nutritional purposes except the Oriental children.[17] Similarly, all children with the exception of Orientals received arrangements for dental care if an examination by a dentist revealed any defects. The Oriental children were merely told to pass on a message to their parents.[18] The school experience in British Columbia was indeed a challenging one for Chinese students.

The Chinese in Alberta Schools

Alberta's small Chinese population, and thus even smaller school-aged Chinese population, helped keep agitation at a minimum.[19] Prevailing attitudes to immigration, that is, the "hierarchy of preferred immigrants"[20] in which the Asian rested on the bottom as the

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'(cont'd) student enrollment figures of Victoria's Chinese schools during these months would probably reveal a corresponding increase.

[17] See Rev. James Ko, et. al., (eds.), *93rd Anniversary of The Chinese United Church, Vancouver, British Columbia 1888-1981*, Vancouver, 5 May 1981, (English Edition), p. 5.

[18] Ibid.

[19] See Appendix B, Table VI for the number of Chinese under 21 years of age in the cities of Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge in 1926; and Appendix B, Table VII for the distribution of Chinese in Alberta according to age groups. In Victoria schools in 1902, however, a mere total of only 20 Chinese students in attendance did not deter the white citizens from advocating for segregated schools.

[20] This hierarchy seemed to be based on skin pigmentation with the British on top, followed in respective order, by

"undesired" immigrant, set the climate in which educational provisions were administered. School authorities did not concern themselves with the small numbers of Chinese scattered throughout Alberta schools. Moreover, it was commonly believed throughout Canada that the Chinese were, unlike other immigrants, non-assimilable, nor was such a process desirable.[21] The attitude was that "even if the Chinese is intelligent and educated to Canadian customs and standards, ' . . . the barrier of race is insurmountable, and he will never be assimilated.'"[22] Governments and school authorities were preoccupied with Canadianizing the Eastern and Southern European groups who immigrated in large numbers to Canada before the First World War.[23] With the exception

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[20](cont'd) the Northern Europeans, Eastern and Southern Europeans, religious groups, Blacks and then the Asians. For more information on immigration policy, see Palmer, p. 22-37.

[21] Jin Tan and Patricia E. Roy, *The Chinese in Canada*, (Canada's Ethnic Groups, Booklet No. 9), Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association with the support of the Multiculturalism Program, Government of Canada), 1985, p. 21; also see, K. Paupst, "A Note on Anti-Chinese Sentiment in Toronto Before the First World War" in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 9, 1977, p. 56; and Roy, p. xxii; and W. G. Smith, "Can the Oriental Be Assimilated?" in *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Church's Relation to the Immigrants*, Toronto, Canadian Council of Missionary Education Movement, 1922, p. 143-149.

[22] Roy, p. xxii.

[23] There was tremendous growth and diversity in Canada's population during this period. By 1921, persons "having both parents alien born" formed 41 percent of the total population of children under ten in Alberta. See Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984, p. 242-273; and Neil Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976, p. 202-215. The concern of school authorities over the education of these immigrants was enough to establish the role of 'Supervisor of Schools Among Foreigners' to ensure that non-English speaking European

of reports on schools in the large ethnic settlements[24] and the Japanese Evacuee Children in the 1940s[25], the Department of Education *Annual Reports* seldom mentioned the racial or ethnic backgrounds of children attending the day schools, usually referring to them as simply "New Canadians" or "foreigners".

The number of Chinese in Alberta was miniscule compared to British Columbia.[26] For example, in 1901, British Columbia's Chinese population of 14,995 was 63 times greater than Alberta's count of 235 Chinese. The coastal province's Chinese population prior to World War II always remained at least six times larger.[27] School-aged Chinese children on the Prairies were relatively few during the first two decades but a contemporary journal of the early twentieth century remarked that "almost every town school numbered six or more Orientals among its pupils".[28]

In 1926 Alberta had 341 Chinese between the ages of 5 to 19 (who may or may not all have been attending school) compared to a total of 150,014 school-aged students between the ages of 6 and 21 who were enrolled in public schools.[29]

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[23](cont'd) immigrants established the proper school systems in their communities. This position was initiated in 1907 and eventually phased out in the early 1920s. See Province of Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Reports*, 1906-1930.

[24] *Annual Reports*, 1907-1922.

[25] *Annual Reports*, 1945-1946.

[26] See Appendix B, Table VIII for a comparison of the Chinese population in British Columbia and Alberta.

[27] Based on Census of 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, and 1941.

[28] Irene Keane, "The Foreign Element in Our Schools" in *The Farm and Ranch Review*, 20 April 1914, p. 319.

[29] *Census of the Prairie Provinces*, 1926; and *Annual Report*, 1926.

With restrictions on Chinese immigration via the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act and the general disproportionate male to female ratio[30] the population figures of those under 21 began to decline. Ten years later in 1936 the figure was down to 257 and by 1946 it had dwindled to 144.[31]

Population figures for urban centres suggest that the Calgary school district likely had a higher proportion of Chinese students than the school districts of Edmonton or Lethbridge.[32] In 1926 there were 99 Chinese under the age of 21 in Calgary while only 56 resided in Edmonton. Lethbridge's school-aged Chinese population was just 16 and

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[30] See Chapter I.

[31] *Census of the Prairie Provinces*, 1936, 1946.

[32] See Appendix B, Table VI. The Calgary and Edmonton school districts were organized in 1885. The Lethbridge School District No. 51 was organized in 1886. The burst of activity in education was caused by an ordinance passed in the 1884 Legislative Assembly of the North West Territories--the "Ordinance Providing for the Organization of Schools in the NWT". It allowed communities with ten children or more between the ages of five and twenty to create their own school districts supported by compulsory taxation. For a history of the Edmonton School District No. 7, see M. A. Kostek, *Looking Back: A Century of Education in Edmonton Public Schools*, Edmonton, Edmonton Public School Board, 1982; and G. A. McKee, *Edmonton School District No. 7, 1885-1935*, Edmonton, Edmonton Public School Board, 1935. For a history of Calgary School District No. 19, see "Historical Notes on Calgary's Schools", Unpublished Manuscript, Calgary, Calgary Board of Education; *Calgary School Division 19, 1885-1935*, (50 Years Anniversary Booklet), Calgary, Calgary Board of Education; Phyllis Ellen Weston, "The History of Education in Calgary", (Unpublished Master of Education Thesis), Edmonton, University of Alberta, 1951; and Robert M. Stamp, *School Days: A Century of Memories*, Calgary, Calgary Board of Education, McClelland and Stewart West, 1975. For a history of the Lethbridge School District No. 51, see Tetsuo Aoki, "The Development of Lethbridge School District No. 51 to 1960", (Unpublished Master of Education Thesis), Edmonton, University of Alberta, 1963; and Audrey S. Baines, *Lethbridge School District No. 51: The First 100 Years from Cottage to Composite 1886-1986*, Lethbridge, Lethbridge School District No. 51, 1985.

if all were attending schools they would have constituted 0.65% of the student population.[33]

Chinese pupils were attending Edmonton public schools by 1910 or perhaps even earlier.[34] No less than 178 Chinese pupils attended Edmonton public schools between 1912 and 1947. A large proportion of these students had the surname "Mah".[35] Those schools closest to the local Chinatown naturally had the highest enrollment of Chinese students, but there were Chinese students attending schools in other parts of the city.[36] Of these students, those born in China

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[33] Calculated from the total enrollment reported in *Annual Report*, 1926.

[34] This was as indicated by a manual search by common Chinese surnames through the Edmonton Public Schools Pupil Attendance and Progress Cards, 1900-1949. Students who attended earlier may have been omitted in the files. The curator of the Edmonton Public School Archives pointed out that cards may be missing from the very early years when the school board implemented the card system and from the 'end years' when a new system began. (Marlene Smith, Curator, Personal Conversation, 16 January 1987.) It should also be noted that surnames which are not common may have been overlooked. To add to the difficulty, very often the Chinese student's name was phonetically translated into English with the common or first name mistaken by school authorities as the surname. In Chinese the surname comes first, followed by the middle name and then the common name. For example: "Moon" in the name Mah Ngyok Moon may have become the family name in school and even in immigration records, when "Mah" is actually the correct surname. Since the record cards indicated the nationalities of both father and mother, the problem of mistaking names which are common to both Chinese and non-Chinese families was avoided. (For example, the names Lee and Gee.)

[35] Eighty-six of the 178 Chinese students counted were Mah's. The label of Edmonton being the "Mah (Horse) Stable" of Canada undoubtedly originated from the very early years.

[36] Queen's Avenue School which has since been torn down had the greatest number of Chinese students registered during the 35 year period of 1912-1947 followed by Alex Taylor School, McKay Avenue School, and then King Edward School located on the south side of the city.

outnumbered the native-born.[37] The native-born seemed to have remained in school longer than the foreign-born Chinese students.[38] Post-secondary education in an university, college, or vocational and technical institution, however, was a luxury that few Chinese Canadians could afford in Alberta before the mid-twentieth century. In 1935 an Edmonton newspaper reported there were 74 Chinese students in Canadian universities of whom two were at the University of Alberta, 14 at McGill, and 28 at the University of British Columbia.[39] There were Chinese students registered at the University of Alberta in 1923 and perhaps even earlier.[40] The lack of financial resources prevented many who would have liked to have pursued higher education from doing so. A shortage of funds in the family even coerced some to join the work force as a teenager, preventing them from completing an high school education.

The China-born students were often recent arrivals to Canada. Even though many of them were already in their teens they were usually placed in primary classes which had children much younger than them in not just age but social, mental, and physical development. Little attention was paid to the determinatior of the specific educational needs of Oriental children. It was highly likely that the native-born

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[37] Seventy-three were Canadian born, 98 were China-born, and the rest were of unknown origin.
[38] Based on oral history interviews and Edmonton Public Schools Student Attendance and Progress Records.
[39] *Edmonton Journal*, 3 September 1935.
[40] *Report of the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta*, Edmonton, University of Alberta Archives, 1923.

did not require any special programs, as they adapted well in the integrated classroom, but attention was needed for the new arrivals who came to learn English. Their presence and progress, however, did not go entirely unnoticed by school authorities. The 1915 Inspector's Report to the Trustees in Edmonton indicates such awareness. Miss McKay's Queen Avenue class was described as,

> ". . .a large class and contains a number of foreigners, among whom are four Chinamen. The Chinese are older than any of the other pupils and are better up in number work than all the others, but they have the language difficulty to contend with, and with the exception of one of them they read poorly."

The attendance of these older boys in a classroom of much younger students left an impression on a non-Chinese student of the early 1920s in Lethbridge:

> "I can remember in Grade IV, I can see the classroom and I can see the teacher but her name escapes me at the moment. . . . At that time we had four Chinese boys in the class and they were not boys, they were young men--(aged)19, 20, 21. They were obviously there to learn English and it seemed so strange to us at the age of 10 being in the same class as these tall . . . Chinese . . . and being so surprised because you don't expect to see . . . you certainly expect to see Chinese children but these weren't children . . . dressed in western suits."[42]

Being placed in a younger, or the "baby class" as it was often referred to by the teenagers was an undesirable but necessary exercise in order to learn English. The students born in China, on average, remained in school from a few months to two or three years with very few finishing high school. Financial status was a crucial factor in

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[41] cf Kostek, p. 227.
[42] Personal Interview (PI), Lethbridge, 28 October 1986.

determining the duration of schooling for these young men who often wanted to pursue an education but could not because they had to work to support themselves and a family in China:

> "Everyone wanted an education. My generation did not get the chance. We had to work to make money and (make) a living to raise a family."[43]

Another common reason given for quitting school was the fact that they were placed in unsuitable classes:

> " . . . When you('re) 20 (years old), it was difficult to be in a classroom of 10 years old and 12 years old."[44]

> "I was in school for about one to two years, why I stopped after the first couple of years is because in a small town, when I came, I was 13 years old, and about this tall. (Demonstrates height.) The kids in Grade I were about this tall (much shorter than he was), so I said, 'Forget it--I'm not going to school anymore.' That's why I started working. When I first started working I was paid $35 a month."[45]

> "I spent two years at school and then I worked. I was quite old when I started school here. My classmates were much younger than me. I always felt ashamed of myself, so I quit and started working."[46]

> "I only attended two years (of) elementary school. Two to three years (and) then I quit because they said I was too big . . . I learned the alphabet first and their pronunciation. I spent one year in Macleod learning English. I spent another year in Lethbridge. I was 16 when I was in Lethbridge. I was asked to skip a few grades because I got high marks in arithmetic. I was promoted to Grade VII. However, my English was bad; I couldn't catch up with the requirement. At recess time, a classmate came and talked to me. He said I was much bigger than the teachers. I was big enough to go to work. So I quit school and went to work."[47]

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[43] Chinese Canadian National Council Oral History Interview (CCNC OHI) 86-38.
[44] Personal Oral History Interview (POHI) 84-3.
[45] CCNC OHI 85-27.
[46] CCNC OHI 86-30.
[47] CCNC OHI 86-19.

The China-born who attended school to learn the English language were to cause an attempt to segregate all Chinese children in the public schools of a southern Alberta city.

An Attempt at School Segregation in Alberta

Efforts in Alberta to keep Chinese children separated from their white peers in the public schools were never as intense or severe as the measures which British Columbians employed. Objections to Chinese renting or buying in "white" areas resulted in their physical and social confinement to a certain sector of Alberta urban centres[1], namely the Chinatowns, producing a deprivation in educational opportunities. Residential segregation determines such factors as access to certain schools[2]--schools which may have better facilities, higher operating budgets, lower teacher-pupil ratios, or better qualified teaching personnel.

An overt attempt in southern Alberta in 1914 to segregate the Chinese students was made over a concern of

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[1] See Chapter I.

[2] Other elements affected are student achievement, the development of student attitudes and their sense of control over the environment. See Ann Parker Parelius and Robert J. Parelius, *The Sociology of Education*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1978, p. 306; George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, *Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination (4th ed.)*, New York, Harper and Row Publishers, 1972, p. 205; Vivian Tong Nagy,"Family Characteristics, Attitudes and Values", in Harold B. Gerard and Norman Miller, *School Desegregation: A Long Term Study*, New York, Plenum Press, 1975, p. 261; and Hilda Mah, "Schooling as it Affects the Community and Political Involvement of Chinese Canadians", (Unpublished paper in possession of author.), Edmonton, 1984.

the age difference between Chinese and white scholars; and it was rife with racist overtones. It was the Lethbridge Women's Civic Club that raised the question of whether Chinese children should be allowed to attend public schools along with children of the white population. The Club advocated that the Chinese students be taught by a special teacher in a special room.

The members of the Club admitted that they had no specific case on which to base their request; they merely objected to the Chinese boys mixing indiscriminately with white children, particularly the girls. An excerpt of their communication to the Lethbridge School Board reads as follows:

> "One of our members made a point of watching the children going home from school and found there were five Chinese boys, who were practically young men, in one of the primary classes, this class being dismissed at 11:30 and 3:30, and upon each occasion found these boys going home with the same little girls. The conduct was perfectly all right and the play and fun quite harmless, but it was what this would lead to that caused us alarm.
>
> These Chinese boys, or young men, are not governed by the same standards of morals as we are and we cannot attempt to judge them, and furthermore they are brought up with men only, and we feel it is not right to have them mix in this way even with our small boys, let alone the girls.
>
> I might state here another case brought up was where one of our members stated her son had complained that the odor from one of these Chinamen who sat next (to) him was so offensive it made him sick.
>
> We wish to find out if something could not be done to have these Chinamen in a class by themselves with a special teacher, or same equally good method adopted whereby they would not mix so freely with our children."[50]

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[50] *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, 10 January 1914.

Their fears of the Chinese were not recognized by the school board.

The response of the board as a whole to their proposal was non-supportive and school *Board Minutes* reveal that the letter from the Women's Club was merely acknowledged an filed for record.[51] Some comments made by board members in the discussion of the issue were as follows:

> "Superintendent Hamilton--I hardly think it could be done. We have Chinese pupils all the way from Grade I to Grade VIII. Next year we will have a Chinese pupil in the High School. I think this latter pupil is as highly regarded by his class members as it would be possible for any pupil to be. If it is the problem of the schools to assimilate the foreign population, I don't think we should put them in a refrigerator away by themselves.
>
> Dr. Thomson--I don't think the question is one that should be discussed at all.
>
> Chairman Higinbotham--The very fact that they attend the public schools shows their stamina. They know they will have to stand a certain amount of persecution from white children. I think as a whole they are probably better behaved than our own children."[52]

ese views contrasted sharply with those of many school trustees in British Columbia during the same era. The response of the local media was also tame in comparison to our neighbour province.[53] The *Lethbridge Daily Herald* reported the incident with the headline: "Chinese Will Be Treated As White" and without negative editorial comments.

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[51] Lethbridge School District No. 51, *Board Minutes*, 7 January 1914.
[52] *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, 7 January 1914.
[53] For examples of British Columbia media reports, see Ashworth, p. 58-84.

The Lethbridge attempt to segregate the Chinese in schools was likely influenced by racist activities in British Columbia. No similar efforts were made in either the Edmonton or Calgary school districts despite their higher Chinese pupil enrollments.[54] The coal-mining element of the Lethbridge economy and that industry's closeness to labour unions, which very often publicly voiced their anti-Oriental stand, may have been a factor in this incident.[55]

Informal and Subtle Discrimination in Schools

The absence of legal acts of segregation did not deter some white citizens from mistreating the Chinese children in the school system. The children were often informally discouraged from attending public school. As the Lethbridge School Board Chairman pointed out in a quotation previously mentioned, the Chinese children probably did indeed expect "a certain amount of persecution from white children". Some

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[54] None of the Alberta teachers and administrators interviewed who taught in the first half of the twentieth century can recall any proposals to segregate the Chinese children. Their claims are confirmed by school board minutes in both cities which do not contain any reference to such incidents. See Edmonton Public School Board, *Board Minutes*, 1914-1951; and Calgary Board of Education, *Board Minutes*, 1894-1947; Calgary Board of Education, *Annual Reports*, 1925-1947.

[55] Aoki, p. 33, reports that the influence of labour union tendencies was felt early in Lethbridge history. J. Brian Dawson, "Chinese Urban Communities in Southern Alberta, 1885-1925", (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis), Calgary, University of Calgary, 1976, p. 23, reports that " . . . readily distinguished ethnic group sentiment was pronounced in the Lethbridge area." Lethbridge expressed not only anti-Oriental sentiment but anti-Mormon, anti-Mennonite, and basically anti-non-Anglo-Saxon sentiment. For information on the anti-Chinese activities of labour unions see Ward, p. 48-49, 120-122, 136, 163.

children considered it part of the process of growing up:

> "But we used to wonder when we went home, why does it happen? . . . Well, I suppose in those days I took things with a grain of salt because we knew it was there, and we accepted it as a fact of life. . . . It became part of life, part of our growing up, and part of reality. I was optimistic things would change."[56]

Racial name-calling was a common occurrence in Alberta schools and the reaction to it ranged from ignoring the incident to physical confrontation.[57] Those who tried to overlook the racial name-calling as "just teasing", "minor incidents", or "nothing to complain about" did not consider it derogatory and did not allow such incidents to set up barriers in their association with non-Chinese peers. A respondent recalls a practice commonly employed in her family to not let the prejudice bother them:

> " . . . these little rhymes and songs . . . that they used to sing about you (the Chinese)--when I was really little, it used to bother me. Then, as I grew up . . . I tried, you know, you put up a barrier and you think they're ignorant . . . My dad used to always say, 'Well, consider the source. Just pretend they are a mental case and they don't know what they're saying.' . . . It's just like he says: 'They're crazy, they're foolish. Don't listen to what they say. Just close off your ears and you don't have to fear.' So that's what we always used to do . . . every time somebody would make fun of us or something, this would go through our head, 'Stick your fingers in your ears and just pretend they're nuts. They don't know what they're talking about.'"[58]

One interviewee recalls not reacting to the acts of discrimination simply to avoid further conflict:

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[56] CCNC OHI 86-9.
[57] This was experienced by virtually all Chinese Canadians who were interviewed for their oral histories.
[58] CCNC OHI 85-14.

> "Once in a while, they'll call you names and all that. But you just ignore it and it would all go away. You didn't retaliate. There's no use retaliating because when you retaliate all you have is a problem. You just let it go in one ear and out the other and it solves the problem. The problem will go away."[59]

Not all Chinese children took the petty insults calmly:

> "Once a white boy called me 'Chink Chung Chinaman'. I fought him. That was in winter time. We fought in the snow. A Mr. Mah from a Chinese restaurant came out and asked the white boy to release me. In those days people always called us 'Chink Chung Chinaman'."[60]

> " . . . in public schools from Grades I to VI, I used to highly resent name-calling and things like that, and I can remember getting into the odd fight and hassle, and having my father have to explain to the other parent why I beat him up or things like that . . . As I got older, of course, it got less and less. I was able to take out frustrations like that . . . (in football and other sports)."[61]

> "I fought a lot when I was a child, but I didn't when I was an adult. When people poured water over me or called me names, (I fought them). (As an adult), I just forgot about them. If I knew how to fight (as a child), I would have fought many (more) whites."[62]

Much of what white children said and thought, whether they fully comprehended their actions or not, was a carry-over of existing ethnic tensions particularly between adults. Some incidents have been described as ones of common antagonism between playmates:

> "I sometimes fought with others when I was a student . . . After the fight we were friends again . . . they laughed at me because I was Chinese. They called me names, so I fought them."[63]

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[59] CCNC OHI 86-24.
[60] CCNC OHI 86-19.
[61] CCNC OHI 85-12.
[62] CCNC OHI 86-19.
[63] CCNC OHI 86-5.

On occasion some Chinese children were excluded from social events or other activities. Such an experience is described:

> "Her best friend had invited her to a birthday party and she was so happy. Because she was going to this party, she had bought the present, signed (the card) and given it to the girl to take home. Her (the birthday girl's) mother looked at the card and said, 'Leong? What kind of name is that?' She replied, 'Chinese', and the girl apparently came to school crying saying, 'My mother says you can't come to my party.'"[44]

Chinese students who did not adopt contemporary Western fashion was subjected to further abuse:

> " . . . Just usual . . . they teased you. They sing their funny little songs, hymns, and of course, I suppose in those days, I looked a little bit stranger than the other kids because of my typical bowl haircuts, clothes that weren't really what you would call the latest style, or whatever, you know, kids tended to pick on you a little bit . . . Lots of kids wouldn't play with you at that time."[45]

Although there were not any dress codes in the public schools, the Chinese girls and boys at Norwood School in Edmonton have been noted as "usually dressed in western clothing but would wear Chinese slippers".[46] Square haircuts were typical of the girls while the boys often sported crewcuts.[47] Chinese children who used to wear traditional clothing to the Lethbridge school at the beginning of the century sparked a local folk tale entitled "The Ghost At Bowman School" which has even been broadcasted on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Radio.[48]

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[44] CCNC OHI 85-17.
[45] CCNC OHI 85-14.
[46] Lenore C. Holychuk, "Norwood: Then and Now", Unpublished Manuscript, Edmonton, Edmonton Public Schools Archives, November 1983.
[47] Ibid.
[48] See Appendix C for the story.

Albertans' Perceptions of the Chinese Student

The image of the Chinese that was passed on to white children by their parents was of the threatening coolie dressed in a traditional long gown with a gleaming smile, Fu Manchu mustache, long fingernails, and a cleaver drawn from a wide sleeve.'' White children were warned against going to Chinatown or a Chinese friend's house for fear of "never getting out" or "just dropping out of sight". It was felt by some that this was something the white children learned from adults and didn't really understand:

> "Well, they would make derogative remarks but I don't think they meant what they said. It was more in fun and jest than mean or that sort of thing."[70]

> "The only bad parts are what the children get probably from their parents because children can't make up things like that. (For example,) Once in a while I'd say to some of my friends, 'Well, I can't come over to your place to play because my mom says we have to come home in 10 minutes and we have chores and things to do. But would you like, maybe, to come to my place and I'll ask my mom if you can come over and play?' And they'd say, 'Oh, no! My mom would never allow that. You know, you guys got these great big trap doors and when we walk through there, they'll open up and drop you in there and you'll never be seen again.'"[71]

A non-Chinese Albertan recalls chanting a racist ditty with friends as a young boy and not really understanding why they did it:

'' CCNC OHI 85-14; Personal Communication (PC) 10 December 1986. For more information on North American misconceptions of the Chinese in contemporary works see Glynn-Ward, *The Writing On . . .* ; William Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire: China and the United States*, Hartford, Conn., S. S. Scranton and Company 1870; James S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates*, Toronto F. C. Clarkson, 1909; and Emily Murphy, *The Black Candle*, Toronto, T. Allen, 1920.

[70] CCNC OHI 85-8, CCNC OHI 85-22.

[71] CCNC OHI 85-14.

> "We would run up to the door and shout the rhyme through it--just yell and run. It was a daring thing to do. One Chinese man got very disturbed all the time and the other was cool and calm. It was senseless because all the kids in the village were treated well by the Chinese. In fact every year at Christmas we would be treated to free Christmas pudding."[72]

The racist comments were undoubtedly hurtful, all too common, and remembered by many to this day.

Although the Chinese were generally thought of as cooperative and studious students a few did appear in the *Punishment Book* of Queen's Avenue School in Edmonton.[73] As early as 1910 a young Chinese boy was given "10 strokes" (straps on the palm of the hand) for the offence of "disobedience".[74] However, no further details of the incident were recorded so it is not known if the boy understood enough English to amend to discipline. In 1917 a Grade III Chinese student caught playing on the railway tracks at the back of the school was given four straps on each hand along with his non-Chinese playmates.[75] In 1922 a group of 13 boys which included a 16 year old Chinese student in Grade V was punished for "playing over on (the) girls' side (of the) playground".[76] Other offences recorded in the *Punishment Book* included: "misbehavior in lines", "disturbing lines", "filthy conduct", "scuffling in hall",

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[72] Confidential Personal Interview (CPI) 19 January 1987.
[73] Queen's Avenue School, *Punishment Book, 1906-1931*, Edmonton, Edmonton Public Schools Archives. Teachers were required to record every instance of corporal punishment in this book.
[74] *Punishment Book*, p. 49.
[75] Ibid., p. 90.
[76] Ibid., p. 116.

and "throwing snowballs at girls on (the) way home from school".[17] There was no reference to any pupil being punished for making racial slurs against fellow students but it was noted that one young boy was punished for what the teacher interpreted as "swearing in (the) Ukrainian language".[18]

Alberta educators generally viewed Oriental students in a positive light, as reported in a 1914 issue of *The Farm and Ranch Review*: "These Chinese or Japanese students, by the way, make almost the best type of scholar, industrious, intelligent, alert, polite, careful. They wish to learn, and usually succeed remarkably well."[19] This stereotype of the Chinese student with its positive and negative effects, was to last for decades and has survived to this day.

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[17] Ibid., p. 135, 129, 141, 145, 163. For more examples see *Punishment Book*.

[18] Ibid., p. 146.

[19] Keane, p. 319. This observation was certainly in contrast to accusations by pro-segregationists in British Columbia that the presence of Chinese pupils subverted classroom order. See Ashworth, p. 62. Such popular views existed in British Columbia despite the fact that the teaching staff maintained its assertion that Chinese students in the classes produced no dissension at all. No statistics from prior to the mid-twentieth century are available on the levels of achievement of Chinese students in comparison to other children although the earliest study on the intelligence levels of Chinese and Japanese students was conducted in Vancouver in 1926. See Phillip E. Vernon, *The Abilities and Achievements of Orientals in North America*, New York, Academic Press, 1982, p. 109. Also see, Morrison G. Wong, "Model Students? Perceptions and Expectations of Their Asian and White Students", in *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 53, October 1980, p. 236-246.

Chinese Students' Perceptions of Alberta Educators

The teachers and administrators of Alberta schools have generally been highly regarded by Chinese Canadians.[80] They have been described as patient, resourceful, dedicated, and possessing a wide range of pedagogical skills in their dealings with Chinese students. Many devoted after-school hours to help newcomers learn English and some teachers have been especially remembered for their intolerance of derogatory and racist name-calling at school.

There have been educators, nevertheless, who uttered racial slurs themselves. A few students spoke of teachers who were not as sympathetic to the Chinese:

> "At school, the one major thing I was dissatisfied about was one English teacher. He had an arrogant attitude . . . I remember that in elementary he kept reminding me that the English were controlling the Chinese and that the Chinese had long fingernails and all that."[81]

Teachers' treatment of students were not always perceived as fair and consistent. For example:

> "Well, we used to have a teacher who used to . . . He would punish only the Orientals if they did something like throwing an eraser. You know, if the white kid . . . threw an eraser, he was not punished. But if an Oriental kid did that, he was always punished and strapped."[82]

Another student quit school because of his bad experiences. He is a Canadian born who was educated in China and found himself having to learn English as a teenager when he returned. He recalls with great resentment getting hit with

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[80] Based on views from CCNC Oral History Collection, 1985-1986 and personal interviews.
[81] CCNC OHI 86-31.
[82] CCNC OHI 86-11.

a stick by the teacher for merely turning his head while walking up the school stairs. He changed schools several times and within a span of five to six years he had had eight to nine different teachers.[83] Educators, like any other people, varied according to their beliefs and biases.

Concluding Remarks

Although Chinese Canadian students in Alberta prior to the mid-twentieth century were not subject to any official restrictions concerning access to an education in the public schools, it did not exempt them from obstacles having to do with their ethnicity in daily school life. The school segregation movement that spilt over from British Columbia was short-lived and primarily part of nation wide anti-Oriental sentiments. Any further development of the issue was prevented by the relatively small and stable Chinese population in the public schools, particularly after immigration of Chinese to Canada was completely halted in 1923.

A higher educational level might have been attained by the China-born students if the school system had been more accommodating and sensitive to their needs. The native-born Chinese students in Alberta, however, coped well in a system that stressed Anglo-conformity and British loyalty. For the most part, those who encountered and endured discrimination have not retained any resentment about the incidents. They

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[83] POHI 84-7; PI 17 August 1984; and CCNC OHI 85-41.

have memories that are difficult to erase but they did not allow the unpleasantness to hinder their progress and determination to succeed. The extent to which the Chinese students were affected by discrimination is impossible to measure but the future ambitions and visions held by Chinese Canadians at the time could not help but be int enced and modified.

V. ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR THE CHINESE

During the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, adult Chinese immigrants in Alberta urban centres wishing to acquire proficiency in the English language[1] had three avenues available to them.[2] The first was private instruction where cost and possibly the availability of willing and cooperative tutors were deterrents.[3] The second avenue was to learn their limited English on the job and not receive any formal instruction.[4] The third avenue and the one most commonly adopted by the Chinese was to pursue evening classes in basic English offered by both the public school boards and missionary workers in the local churches.[5] In offering these

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[1] Few Chinese immigrants knew English before they came to Canada. See Chapter II.

[2] Some of the early Chinese immigrants learned English on their own, by what they have described as "listening and memorizing" from their job situation and other experiences. Many also used a Chinese-English dictionary. One oral history interviewee recalled carrying a card which had the name of his destination printed on by a friend. Another interviewee who worked in a restaurant memorized the written menu and merely had his customers order by pointing to the desired selection. For examples, see Chinese Canadian National Council Oral History Interview (CCNC OHI) 85-26, 85-35, 86-38, and 85-5.

[3] Only one oral history interviewee mentioned having hired a tutor to teach him English. See CCNC OHI 85-2. Another gentleman related how a neighbour was asked to give private lessons but no mention was made about remuneration. See CCNC OHI 85-5.

[4] Three oral history interviewees fall into this category: CCNC OHI 85-26, CCNC OHI 85-35, and CCNC OHI 86-38.

[5] At least six of the oral history interviewees attended the churches' English classes (CCNC OHI 85-37, 85-42, 85-2, 86-5, 86-4, and Personal Oral History Interview (POHI) 84-6); and only one attended the public school night class

classes the school and church hoped ultimately to ensure national unity in language, religion, and culture--Canadianization and Christianization.

Attaining Canadianization Through the Night Schools

Anglo-Canadians in the early twentieth century were deeply concerned about the hundreds of thousands of non-English speaking European immigrants.[6] Their fears that the English institutions of Canada would deteriorate and be taken over by the "foreigners" prompted Anglo-Canadians to embark on a program designed to assimilate or absorb the immigrants. The school board was one of the agencies that was ected to assume the responsibility throughout the early decades. Schools were to be developed as community centres and as instruments of Canadianization.[7]

Educational leaders took for granted that immigrants were to become English-speaking, develop pro-British sentiments and adopt Anglo-Canadian cultural identities. Canadianization was equivalent to Anglo-conformity, which was desired for all newcomers to the commonwealth of Great

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[5](cont'd) (CCNC OHI 85-29).

[6] Although Anglo-Canadians were also concerned over the Chinese, Asians were not included in the nation's plans for assimilation or Canadianization. See Chapter IV; and W. G. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Case of Some Problems Concerning the Church's Relations to Immigrants*, Toronto, Canadian Council of the Missionary Education Movement, 1922, p. 124-153.

[7] "Report of Delegates Attending The National Conference on Character Education in Relation to Canadian Citizenship held in Winnipeg", 20-22 October 1919, p. 12, Edmonton, Edmonton Public School Archives (EPSA), File No. 1246.

Britain.[8] Although the focus was on the children of the immigrants, provisions for adults were not completely ignored.[9] The public night school was the major agency engaged in this work.

School authorities throughout Canada, and particularly in the foreign dominated communities, were strongly encouraged to establish a basic English night class[10] to

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[8] For further discussion see, Raymond Breton, et. al., "The Impact of Ethnic Groups on Canadian Society: Research Issues" in Wsevold Isajiw (ed.), *Identities: The Impact of Ethnicity on Canadian Society*, Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Vol. V, Toronto, Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1977, p. 191-213.

[9] More emphasis was placed on the children because it was thought that the success rate would be higher in this age group. The consensus was that children are easier to mould than adults who had pre-established values and ideals. See J. E. Rea, "My main line is the kiddies . . . make them good Christians and good Canadians, which is the same thing", in Isajiw (ed.), p. 3-14; Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984, p. 345-346; and Marilyn Barber, "Canadianization Through the Schools of the Prairie Provinces Before World War I: The Attitudes and Aims of the English-speaking Majority" in Martin L. Kovacs (ed.), *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education*, Regina, Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1978, p. 283.

[10] Day classes were suggested in both Edmonton and Calgary. The Edmonton Public School Board rejected the idea in 1921 and the response to such a proposal in Calgary in 1913 is not known. See Edmonton School District No. 7, *Minute Book*, January 1921 and Calgary School District No. 19, *Minute Book*, December 1913. The concept of the public school night classes in Alberta emerged after the turn of the twentieth century. Classes held at night enabled those who held day jobs and those who were not within the school-age range of 7 and 15 an opportunity to obtain educational advancement. For information on age requirements see, "Extracts From the School Attendance Act as Amended 1919", (Unpublished Manuscript), Edmonton, EPSA; and Section 3 of "The Truancy Act" in Province of Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report 1914*, p. 130. The Alberta government was highly supportive of the evening program and stated so in its Department of Education *Annual Report 1914*, p. 64-65: "They have just as much claim on the public money expended for the education of people of such ages as have those who are able

accommodate the working immigrant. The English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) classes, as they would be known today, were interchangeably called "English for Non-English" or "English for Foreigners"; and later renamed "English for New Canadians", or "Canadianization Classes". They were often assigned to school board departments such as "Continuation Classes", "Technical Education", or "Night Class Committees". Such provisions in Alberta were made almost exclusively for the non-English-speaking European immigrants who constituted not only the majority of the immigrant population, but in contrast to the Oriental were considered both more desirable and assimilable.[11] The Chinese, however, were permitted to take advantage of the organized public evening classes, which some did.[12]

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[10](cont'd) to attend the educational institutions providing instruction during the day. Because a student above the compulsory age limit cannot attend school between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. is no reason why he should be deprived of the opportunity to receive suitable instruction when and wherever it is practicable for the educational system to arrange for its provision." In November of 1914, the provincial government formulated official policy to render financial aid to communities for promoting technical education, including night class instruction. Special government grants were awarded to school districts to help maintain night school classes. See *Annual Report 1914*, p. 50; and "Report of the Delegates . . .", p. 12. There was also a concern regarding the best teaching pedagogy to utilize when teaching English to the foreigners. See, James T. M. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadians: A Treatise on Canada's Greatest Educational Problem*, London, J. M. Dent, 1918, p. 116-142. In 1914 the Edmonton Public School Board made special note of its retainment of "four expert Berlitz teachers" who coached the night school staff. See Superintendent of Schools, "Report No. 3", 15 October 1914, Edmonton, EPSA.

[11] See Chapter IV.

[12] In Vancouver 1908, the first English as a Second Language Class (ESL), was established for the purpose of separating older Oriental pupils from whites. See Mary Ashworth, "The

Only in Lethbridge did the local school board establish classes specifically for the Chinese.[13] Lethbridge's night class program operated only on an ad hoc basis when there were sufficient pupils registered.[14] The school board's efforts began in 1913 but only lasted for that one year. Night classes did not resume until after World War I.[15] Had classes been organized in Lethbridge in 1914, the Board would not have been able to pay its teachers.[16] The Board was only willing to furnish the classrooms and provide heat and light.

Basic English evening classes in Edmonton were inaugurated on 30 October 1912 along with other evening classes, and had a total enrollment of 19 students. These students were divided into three levels--elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The foreign-born made up the majority of the elementary class but records were not kept of their ethnicity.[17] By 1914, classes were distributed over

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[13](cont'd) Segregation of Immigrant Children in British Columbia Schools, in *Working Teacher*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Winter 1978, p. 8.

[14] See Province of Alberta. . . *Annual Report 1920*, p. 112.

[15] *Annual Report 1915*, p. 57.

[15] It is not known whether it was the war effort, insufficient enrollment or insufficient funds that was the primary cause for the night school's closure.

[16] *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, 23 October 1914. In the discussion the school board had over the possibility of classes being held, it was decided that should there be classes, teachers were to have been responsible for making their own arrangements with pupils for remuneration. Instructors in previous years were paid by the Board.

[17] The intermediate and advanced classes taught Practical Arithmetic, Business English, Penmanship, Spelling, Dictation, Stenography, and Bookkeeping. Classes at all levels were held three evenings a week for two hours each evening. See Superintendent of Schools, "Report No. 10 on South Side Schools", 31 October 1912, Edmonton, EPSA.

seven different centres throughout the city and arithmetic and civics were added to the teaching of basic English.[18]

Calgary was the first of the three Alberta urban centres to open English for Non-English classes. In the fall of 1911 these classes were instituted and an healthy enrollment of 315 students was quickly attained.[19] The program in Calgary continued to be very successful, having expanded to several centres before the outbreak of World War One.[20]

The fee of $2 per term was charged in Alberta and appears to have been kept unchanged until the 1930s. In Edmonton, it was actually a deposit required of each student which was returned if the attendance of the individual was over 75 percent.[21] Students were also allowed to pay in installments. In Calgary 1925, difficulty in collecting fees from the evening non-English students was noted in the School Board minutes.[22] The Board instructed the Superintendent to have teachers obtain signed promises to pay from such students if they wished to continue in the classes.

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[18] *Annual Report 1914*, p. 75.
[19] Calgary School District No. 19, *Minute Book*, 14 November 1911. The Board's involvement in other night school classes dates back to 1902. For information on the development of evening classes see, Leroi Allister Daniels, "History of Education in Calgary", (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis), University of Washington, 1954, p. 180-186.
[20] See Province of Alberta . . . *Annual Report 1912*; and Calgary . . . , *Minute Book*, August 1912.
[21] If the attendance was only 50 to 75 percent, then half of the deposit was returned; but if it was below 50 percent, the total deposit was forfeited.
[22] Calgary . . . , *Minute Book*, January 1925.

Some years later, during the late 1930s or early 1940s,[23] the Calgary School Board agreed to establish free classes in English for adults of European extraction. Such classes, however, did not materialize because even with advertising there was not enough registrants to warrant its operation.

In contrast, a request twenty years earlier by an Edmonton Chinese community group for instructional material was not accommodated.[24] In 1920 the Chinese Nationalist League of Edmonton wrote to the School Board asking for a supply of readers for their evening classes. Board Minutes indicate the item was briefly considered but the request had to be denied for fears of a shortage of readers for school needs.[25] The letter was moved to be filed and no records exist of any reply.

The Chinese Enrollment

The Chinese made up a minute portion of the students registered in the evening English for Non-English classes. A comprehensive survey of student characteristics such as age distribution, gender, occupations, and nationalities was

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[23] This was described as "some years ago" in "Report of the Superintendent of Schools For January 1944", Calgary, Calgary Board of Education.

[24] Communication from the Chinese Nationalist League to Edmonton Public School Board, 10 May 1920, Edmonton, EPSA, File 4816. There were also efforts by other ethnic groups to start their own classes. See communications from the years 1915 and 1917 in Edmonton, EPSA, File 1246. Also see references in Edmonton . . ., *Minute Book*, 21 January 1930, 11 February 1930, and 23 December 1926.

[25] Edmonton . . . , *Minute Book*, 17 May 1920.

conducted in the 1914-15 school year in all night school centres of Alberta.[26] It revealed that the Chinese made up 1.5 percent (49 out of 3,203 students) of the provincial total.[27] Any person over 16 years of age was eligible to attend the night classes but students were usually in their 20s or 30s with the majority being male.[28] Attendance rates varied from extremely low to above average.

Of the total night school enrollment in all classes in Edmonton that school year, only 2.5 percent or 15 students were Chinese.[29] The majority of night school registrants were enrolled in English for Non-English classes.[30] By the

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[26] The survey also included information on names of instructors, size of classes, and duration of courses. It revealed statistics on Alberta school districts that offered basic English classes for the non-English; these included: Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Nordegg, Bridgend, Passburg, Bankhead, Coleman, Frank, Bellevue, Canmore, and Taber. See Province of Alberta . . . *Annual Report 1915*, p. 58-63.

[27] Calculated from figures in Province of Alberta . . . *Annual Report 1915*, p. 72.

[28] See Province of Alberta . . . *Annual Report 1915*, p. 58-63 for median ages of individual classes.

[29] Ibid., p. 2. Other nationalities attending included: 73 Russians, 12 Bulgarians, 31 Italians, 44 Austrians, 1 Greek, 27 Ruthenians, 10 Galicians, 7 Swedes, 129 Germans, 4 Maltese, 12 Poles, 6 Norwegians, 29 French, 20 Hollanders, 4 Swiss, 18 Ukrainians, 1 Icelander, 18 Hebrews, 51 English, 15 Scotch, 8 Irish, 28 Canadians, 6 Americans, and 6 Unclassified. Also see, Edmonton School District No. 7, "Reports No. 1, to 6--Technical School Classes" and "Reports No. 1 to 20 Inclusive Regular Classes" of "Annual Statement of Night Class Instruction" to the Province of Alberta, Department of Education--Technical Education Branch, 12 July 1915, Edmonton, EPSA; and Superintendent of Schools, "Report No. 7", 4 August 1915, Edmonton, EPSA, p. 3.

[30] In October 1914 night classes opened with a total of 212 students spread over four schools, of whom 163 were in classes for the non-English speaking. See Superintendent of Schools, "Report No. 3", 15 October 1914, Edmonton, EPSA. The enrollment was as follows: Queen's Avenue School-113 (106 non English, 7 academic), Parkdale School-23 (all non-English), Richie School-26 (all non-English), and Scona

end of the school term a total of 1606 students had been in attendance of whom 37, or 2.3 percent were Chinese.[31] Not all the Chinese enrolled were in the basic English classes: some were students of Business English and Math, Mechanical Drawing, Building Construction Drawing, Woodwork, Academic English, and Commercial English.

Edmonton was the only centre in the province that experienced an expansion that year in night school enrollment, offering 15 English for Non-English classes.[32] Calgary, even with its higher Chinese population, was only able to attract 11 Chinese students into its curtailed program of five classes. They represented 1.1 percent of the total student population of 974.[33] Serious disruption in the night class program was felt in all other Alberta centres even with the financial aid from the provincial government which began in 1914.[34] War time conditions for the next four years not only had a negative effect on the range and

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[30](cont'd) High School-50 (8 non-English, 42 Commercial). By the end of the month enrollment jumped to 575 pupils of whom 326 were non-English learning the English language or increasing their proficiency in it. Superintendent of Schools, "Report No. 4 Fall Term 1914", 5 November 1914. The rest included 76 taking Commercial subjects and 73 in academic subjects. See Edmonton . . ., *Board Minutes*, 7 May 1914.

[31] Province of Alberta . . . *Annual Report 1915*, p. 68. Statements at Edmonton Public Schools note 40 Chinese among a total of 1499 or 2.7 percent.

[32] Edmonton did show a decline, however, in the number of classes and in enrollment after the war. In 1919 only two schools offered the class with enrollments of 10 and 24. In 1920 there was only one class operating with enrollments between 20 and 30. See Superintendent of Schools, "Report No. 90", 1 December 1921, Edmonton, EPSA.

[33] Calculated from figures in Province of Alberta . . . *Annual Report 1915*, p. 69.

[34] Ibid., p. 57.

variety of programs school boards had to offer but on the attendance record as well.[35]

School boards often used advertising to recruit students for the basic English classes. In October 1919 the Edmonton Public School Board authorized the preparation of announcements of the night classes in different languages for distribution among non-English speaking people. The available sources, however, do not reveal if any were published in Chinese.[36]

Advertising was not the only method of recruitment used by the Alberta school boards. In May 1914 the Edmonton School Board requested from the City a list of names, addresses and nationalities of all non-English speaking people for use in the formation of night classes in the following school term.[37] In another instance, a Calgary principal conducted a survey through the pupils of his school to gauge the level of interest of parents and other adults in improving their English.[38] This particular action

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[35] The evening language instruction classes operated successfully in Calgary until the outbreak of World War I in 1914 when the number of courses offered was gradually reduced. In the fall of 1913 the Calgary Board offered 37 different technical night courses. By the end of 1915 only continuation courses for Grades IX and XI students that were fully self supporting were available as evening classes. All classes were discontinued the following year. See Daniels, p. 183. The *Annual Report 1915* noted that enrollment in these English classes of Calgary were only about one-third of what they had been the previous winter. Province of Alberta . . . *Annual Report 1915*, p. 57.

[36] Edmonton . . . ,*Minute Book*, October 1919.

[37] Ibid., 7 May 1914.

[38] The principal found 30 adults who were interested in enrolling in an English class. Based on this data, the Board adopted the Superintendent's recommendation that such a class be provided to operate two evenings a week for three

arose out of the expressed concern of English-Canadians over the role of the public school in providing elementary English and Canadianization classes for the non-English.[39]

Community Support

Support for basic English classes came from many community groups, and particularly from women's associations.[40] Members of one Edmonton organization were quite anxious to further the efforts of the board and even offered to provide a variety of services themselves. They communicated to the school board their willingness to serve meals to some of the classes, procure charts for instructional use, and survey factories and other places in search of foreigners for the school board classes.[41]

General community support contributed to the continuation of the basic English classes throughout the 1920s. An aggressive assimilation policy continued to be followed in the public schools of Alberta throughout the decade and beyond.[42] A late 1920s *Annual Report* noted a marked demand for classes in oral and written English from

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[38](cont'd) months in the Langevin School. For more information see, Superintendent of Schools, "Report of the Superintendent of Schools for January", Calgary, Calgary Board of Education, 8 & 10 February 1944.

[39] Ibid.

[40] The Young Women's Christian Association, Women's Canadian Club, Women's University Club, and Adult Education Committee of Edmonton and Calgary were among such groups.

[41] Communication from Women's University Club to Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton, EPSA, File 2863.

[42] Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976, p. 213.

recent immigrants of non-English speaking countries.[43] By this time the Chinese Exclusion Act had halted all Chinese immigration to Canada, which undoubtedly diminished Chinese enrollment.

Economic conditions in the Depression years brought about budgetary restraints in all Alberta school boards and the night school program was again curtailed. Enrollment in all centres showed a corresponding decline. Edmonton School Board policy permitted students on relief to attend evening classes free of charge.[44] Documents do not specify if the Chinese were included in this generous offer but during the 1930s relief payments to the Chinese were certainly unequal compared to amounts awarded to whites.[45] The general decline in enrollment was also attributed to the drop in immigration and the availability of similar programs offered by other organizations.[46]

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[43] Province of Alberta . . . *Annual Report 1928*, p. 69.

[44] In 1931 the English for New Canadians class was down to 38 students from 99 students of the previous year. More than half of the decline in the overall night class enrollment was due to the drop in classes of English for New Canadians. The decrease from 1931 to 1930 in enrollment was 115, of which students of English for New Canadians accounted for 61. For more information and figures see, Superintendent of Schools, "Comments on Evening Classes", 27 January 1932, Edmonton, EPSA.

[45] For more information on relief payments to the Chinese, see Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta*, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1982, p. 145-148. The Chinese were being allotted less than half of what whites were receiving.

[46] Both the YMCA and Robertson College in Edmonton South at that time offered such classes. Robertson College actually began conducting their classes in 1917. It was located on 11118-80 Avenue. See Communication from the principal of Robertson College to Edmonton Public School Board, 8 January 1917, Edmonton, EPSA, File 1246; and Superintendent of Schools, "Comments on English Classes", 27 January 1932,

Teaching English in the Cause of Evangelization

Similar English classes, although evangelical in nature, were operated by various church groups in Alberta. These classes were in progress even before the idea was conceived by public school boards. It was perhaps not so much an act of generosity as it may seem for the lessons were necessary in order for the immigrants to be able to read the Biblical scriptures. Educational services evolved from the contention of the Church that it could not Christianize without Canadianizing nor vice versa; in essence, Christianization and Canadianization were synonymous.

Immigrants represented a challenge for the Protestant Churches; and missionary workers, compelled by a sense of mission or "God's calling", were appointed wherever new Canadians could be found.[47] Missions were established for virtually all immigrant groups, including the Chinese.[48] In

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[46](cont'd) Edmonton, EPSA.

[47] W. J. Campion, et. al., *The First Fifty Years: The Training and the Work of Women Employed in the Service of the United Church of Canada*, Toronto, The Committee on the Deaconess Order and Women Workers, The United Church Training School and the Women's Missionary Society of the Women's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada, 1945, p. 12.

[48] Missionary work among European foreigners in the northwest began in the nineteenth century. For information on the work among Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Poles, and other ethnic groups, see Elizabeth McKillop, "Pioneer Missions in Southern Alberta", in *Pioneer Mission Work, Presbyterian Church, Alberta*, Edmonton, A. Bryden, 1915, (Authorized by the Women's Home Missionary Synodical Conference of Alberta), p. 13-18; A. McLaren, "Pioneer Missions in Eastern Alberta", in Ibid., p. 19-22; Annie G. Foote, "The Early History of Western Presbyterian Missions", in Ibid., p. 23-30; J. H. Riddell, *Methodism in the Middle West*, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1946, p. 272-275; Finlay Family Papers,

the case of the Chinese, missionaries were genuinely concerned about their physical and spiritual welfare, but these feelings were in conflict with an underlying scorn of certain aspects of the people and culture.[48]

Work among the Chinese in Canada[50] was actually an

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[48](cont'd) "Newspaper Clipping File", Edmonton, Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA), Box 3, Acc. 84.155; *Ministerial Session of the Fifteenth Session of the Alberta Conference of the Methodist Church*, 29 May 1918, p. G.S. 65; and Michael Owen, "'Keeping Canada God's Country': Presbyterian School-Homes for Ruthenian Children", in Dennis L. Butcher, et. al. (eds.), *Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West*, Winnipeg, The University of Manitoba Press, 1985, p. 184-201.

[49] This paradox in Protestant thought is discussed in W. Peter Ward, "The Oriental Immigrant and Canada's Protestant Clergy, 1858-1925", in *British Columbia Studies*, No. 22, Summer 1974, p. 40-55; and mentioned in Edgar Wickberg (ed.), *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, Toronto, McClelland and Steward Ltd. and Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1982, p. 124. Not all Christians believed the Oriental should or could be assimilated. Writings of the time discussed the vices and virtues of the Oriental. For examples, see Rev. J. C. Speer, *The Story of China in Canada*, Toronto, Department of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church, 1906, p. 40-67; Smith, p. 124-153.

[50] Missionary work among the Chinese in Canada began in 1859 in British Columbia. A missionary school for the Chinese was established in 1860 in B.C. The first Chinese Mission was opened in New Westminster in 1883. A Chinese Rescue Home was founded in 1887 in Victoria. For more information see, *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Women's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada 1948-1949*, Toronto, The United Church Publishing House, p. 92; Rev. James Ko, et. al. (eds.), *93rd Anniversary of the Chinese United Church, Vancouver, B. C. 1888-1981*, Vancouver, United Church of Canada, 1981, (English Edition), p. 1-3; Malcolm C. Macdonald, *From Lakes to Northern Lights*, Toronto, The United Church of Canada, 1951, p. 91-94; Jean Gordon Forbes, *Wide Windows: The Story of the Women's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada*, Toronto, The Literature Department, The Women's Missionary Society, The United Church of Canada, 1951; and Edmund Oliver, *His Dominion of Canada, A Study in the Background, Development, and Challenge of the Missions of the United Church of Canada*, Toronto, Women's Missionary Society and Board of Home Missions of the United Church of Canada, 1932, p. 225 & 231. Also see, Rev. A. B. Winchester, "What is Being Done for the

extension of the evangelistic zeal of the times, particularly of Protestant missionary efforts in China which had begun in the early nineteenth century.[51] Chinese

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[50](cont'd) Chinese in Canada?" in *Presbyterian Record*, May 1904, p. 235-237; and Speer, p. 50-52, 64-66.

[51] The first appearance of Christianity in China occurred in about 505 A. D. as part of the missions of the Nestorian Church. Later in the sixteenth century Catholic missions were sent to China. The first Protestant missionary arrived in China in 1809. For a concise history see Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missionaries in China*, New York, Russell and Russell, 1929. For information on early missionary work in the province of Kwangtung see John A. Turner, *Kwangtung or Five Years in South China*, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 1982 (First published by S. W. Partridge & Co., London, 1894). Some sources state that Canadian missionary work in South China was actually brought about by the Chinese who had come to Canada from the Canton district. These missionaries in South China concentrated on bringing the gospel to the families and friends of the Chinese in Canada and on following up on converted Chinese who had returned to China. See Campion, et. al., p. 10; Forbes, p. 62; and Alvyn J. Austin, *Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom 1888-1959*, Toronto, University of Toronto, 1986, p. 126-127. Education was a service provided by missionaries in China to accomplish evangelistic goals. The school played a fundamental role in missionary efforts to reach the Chinese. The minimum objective was to have every convert able to read the Bible for themselves. Christian influence was probably strongest in education. See John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1974, p. 13. The educational work in the evangelistic efforts of missionaries, however, was often subject to debate prior to the 1870s. The secularizing effects of this provision, particularly the use of English in the schools was feared. More so, they feared the evangelistic cause would become secondary to education; there was a danger that Christianity might be expected to grow out of education rather than the other way around. In China during the late 1800s, with trade and commerce flourishing in the treaty ports, the use of English in schools was particularly associated with learning for personal gain. It was acknowledged in 1885 that some mission schools' high turnover of pupils was due to the fact that students only stayed long enough to learn sufficient English to obtain lucrative employment. For more information on the issue of including English instruction in missions in China see, Irwin T. Hyatt, "Protestant Missions in China, 1877-1890: The Institutionalization of Good Works" in *American Missionaries in China: Papers from Harvard*

missions in Canada, along with missions among native Indians, French Canadians, and Eastern Europeans, remained under the jurisdiction of the Church's Foreign Mission Boards well into the twentieth century before becoming an entity of the Home Mission Boards.[52]

Of the four Protestant denominations that were the most active in providing services for the Chinese in Canada--Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, and Baptist--the first two were the most prominent in Alberta.[53] The United Church of Canada, which formed in 1925,[54] continued to encourage further work among the Chinese throughout the country. By the 1930s it could boast of 25 Oriental missions of which two were in Alberta.[55]

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[51](cont'd) *Seminars*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard East Asian Monographs, East Asia Research Centre, 1966, p. 52; and Evelyn E. Rawski, "Elementary Education in the Mission Enterprise" in Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank (eds.), *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, Cambridge, The Committee on American-East Asian Relations, 1985, p. 136.

[52] See Margaret E. McPherson, "Head, Heart, and Purse: The Presbyterian Women's Missionary Society in Canada 1876-1925", in Dennis L. Butcher, et. al., (eds.), *Prairie Spirit: . . .*, p. 147.

[53] Macdonald, p. 92. Macdonald suggests that it was probably the work among Orientals that the two churches had their first experience in cooperation and sharing a mutual responsibility.

[54] It was an union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregationalist Churches. For more information see, Macdonald; Forbes; and Oliver.

[55] For locations of the other Oriental Missions, see map in *Atlas of the United Church of Canada: In Christian Service for Others in Canada and Lands Abroad*, Toronto, The Missionary and Maintenance Fund Committee and the General Books of the United Church, n.d., p. 6. It was not until the 1940s that mission work among the Japanese was initiated in Alberta. See *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report . . .*, p. 50, 66; and Oliver, p. 283.

English Classes and the Founding of Chinese Missions

The popularity of English classes contributed to the founding of two Chinese missions in Alberta. They were located in the urban centres of Edmonton and Calgary and were the beginnings of the Chinese United Churches in those cities. Although an Oriental mission was not established in the Lethbridge area, missions for other ethnic and cultural groups had been operating for some time.[56] One mission in Alberta reported that its composition included many nationalities: Chinese, Russians, Germans, Italians, Bulgarians, Swedes, Norwegians, English, French Canadians, and others.[57]

Activities which led to the formation of the Chinese missions in Edmonton and Calgary followed the pattern adopted in many British Columbian localities.[58] Initial activities such as street-preaching, home visitations, church and Sunday School services, social and recreational activities,[59] and educational services for adults and

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[56] The Presbyterian Church home mission was launched in 1892 over the concern of Mormons settling in the area south of Lethbridge. See *Home Mission Report, Presbyterian Church 1892*, Edmonton, PAA, Box UC 196; and McKillop, p. 13-18.

[57] *The Home Mission Pioneer*, February 1912, Vol. VII, No. 12. Less than half were English with almost an equal number of French Canadians.

[58] See Lascelles Ward, *Oriental Missions in British Columbia*, Westminster, British Columbia, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1925, p. 86; and S. S. Osterhout, *Orientals in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada With Asiatics in Canada*, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1929.

[59] The Young Men's Christian Associations were usually the primary instigators of recreational activities. A Chinese YMCA arose in both cities. The Edmonton YMCA was organized in 1921 and included instruction in both English and Christianity. The Calgary YMCA was founded by Christian

children were sponsored by various established congregations in the city to attract the Chinese.[60] When it was possible, Chinese graduates of other missions who knew English[61] or returned missionaries from missions in China, were relied upon to carry on the programs. Both Edmonton and Calgary received the services of converted Chinese Christians and Calgary has been noted to have had the aid of returned missionaries from China.[62]

The English instructional classes had excellent teacher to student ratios[63] and usually while no fees were required, donations to the mission were welcomed.[64] Classes were held either in the sponsoring church or in the homes of the church ministers or volunteers. Once a regular number of attendants was attained, a rented room or building was

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[59](cont'd) Chinese in 1914 and received much support from a variety of religious denominations. See *Chinatown News*, 3 December 1979, p. 6; Frank Dabbs, "Calgary Chinese Mission", (Draft only--Chapter of Unpublished Manuscript for the Oi Kwan Foundation Time Capsule), 1986, p. 4; and Macdonald, p. 93.

[60] Some churches that were active in this respect were the First Baptist, Knox and Wesley Presbyterian, and Central Methodist Churches of Calgary; and the Westminster Presbyterian and McDougall Churches in Edmonton. See Dabbs, "True Sons in the Faith", p. 6; "Calgary Chinese Mission", p. 3; Ban Seng Hoe, *Structural Changes of Two Chinese Communities in Alberta*, Ottawa, National Museums of Canada, 1976, p. 209; W. Peter Ward, p. 44; and POHI 84-6.

[61] Wickberg (ed.), p. 95.

[62] See Frank Dabbs, "A Great Cloud of Witnesses", p. 5.

[63] J. Fraser Perry(ed.), *They Gathered at the River*, Calgary, Central United Church, 1975, p. 194, reports a ratio of 1 teacher to every 5 students in one local church that sponsored English programs. Interviewees from the oral history collections also reaffirm the low ratio, often speaking of only 2 to 3 students per instructor.

[64] Oral history interviewees recall that a donation was sometimes given. Dabbs, "Calgary Chinese Mission", p. 2, states that students of the Calgary Mission were charged a nominal tuition fee of $1.

sought.[15] The rented space provided a regular meeting place for nightly adult sessions and weekend preaching.

The Edmonton and Calgary Chinese Missions

Mission work and English classes among the Edmonton Chinese were initiated in the first decade of the twentieth century. As early as 1904 Chinese immigrants were offered Sunday School classes at the Westminster Presbyterian Church.[16] Teachers and pupils of the Alberta College[17] began mission work among the Chinese shortly after its founding.[18] The local newspaper reported their objective was to educate, "civilize", and ultimately Christianize the Chinese, although it was also noted that the majority of the city's Chinese did not pay much attention to the mission.[19] In 1908 ten or more regular attendants were taught reading, spelling, and writing in English in addition to the Bible and New Testament scriptural readings. Centrally located

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[15] In Edmonton this was the house on 96 Street and 102 Avenue which became the first Chinese United Church. In Calgary the first rented space was in the McLean Block on 8th Avenue S.E. near City Hall; then the mission moved to a rented building on 10th Avenue S.W.

[16] Hoe, p. 209; and Dabbs, "True Sons in the Faith", p. 6.

[17] The Alberta College was established in 1903 by the Methodist Northwest Conference to promote higher education. For its history, see *Ninetieth Anniversary Booklet*, 1961, Stutchbury Family Papers, Edmonton, PAA, Acc. 80.230 S.; and Riddell, p. 273.

[18] *Edmonton Bulletin*, 23 May 1908.

[19] Historically, missionaries in China represented a disruptive force to traditional Chinese society. The fact that Christianity accompanied Western Imperialist measures was also a factor. See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism" in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Missionary Enterprise . . .*, p. 336-373; and Lascelles N. Ward, p. 79-83.

churches like the McDougall Church also offered English classes on Sundays.[70] Missionary work among the Edmonton Chinese led to the establishment of a Chinese Church in the early 1930s.[71]

Oral histories reveal that the main purpose of Chinese immigrants in frequenting the churches was to learn some English. Canadian Protestant missionaries generally faced much difficulties in trying to attract Chinese members.[72] When Rev. Dickman was enquired about his difficulties in 1935 he was quoted as saying, "I visit all the Chinese people in Edmonton. When I ask them why they do not come to my church they say they are too busy."[73] That year the

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[70] CCNC OHI 84-6.

[71] See Chapter III. Support and assistance from the United Church of Toronto helped maintain the small Edmonton church's existence. See *Edmonton Journal*, 26 August 1935.

[72] These problems are discussed in Ward, p. 44. Also see *Edmonton Journal*, 3 September 1935 regarding the difficulties Rev. Dickman had in trying to convince members of the Chinese community to attend his church services. In addition, the existence of various denominational bodies confused some Chinese. See Malcolm Macdonald, p. 96 in which a Saskatchewan Chinese is quoted as saying "You Christians funny people. Four Churches and one Jesus." Converted Chinese Christians also encountered some difficulties. For example, see Speer, p. 54-56.

[73] See *Edmonton Journal*, 26 August 1935. Early statistics do not reveal religious backgrounds of ethnic groups. At the turn of the twentieth century, the *Census of Canada* did not even survey Eastern religions. In 1911, 0.66 percent of Edmonton's total population claimed affiliation with Eastern religions; the figures for Calgary and Lethbridge are 0.80 percent and 1.23 percent respectively. These figures undoubtedly included Moslems, Hindus, and Sikhs. See *Census of Canada*, 1921. The 1981 *Census of Canada* shows that 4.54 percent of the Chinese in Edmonton are Buddhists, Confucianists, or Taoists, 15.2 percent are Protestant, 12.2 percent are Catholic, and 61.8 percent have no religious preference. See William C. H. Cheung, "The Chinese Community in Edmonton: A Demographic Analysis", A paper presented at the "Building Our Potential" Seminar, Edmonton, Chinese Canadian National Council (Edmonton Chapter), September

parish boasted of having 35 members.[74]

Calgary's Chinese Mission, with its longer history,[75] experienced a larger congregation and wider expansion than its counterpart in Edmonton. This was, to some extent, due to the greater involvement and support of some local white citizens who willingly spoke up for the Chinese in public in times of need.[76] Another factor was Calgary's higher Chinese population, particularly the Canadian-born who were fluent in English and more familiar with Canadian institutions. These people were able to conduct themselves more aggressively and successfully in promoting the work of the Chinese Mission and other such projects.[77]

English classes conducted for the Chinese in Calgary date back to the early 1890s[78] when classes were initially

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[73](cont'd) 1984, p. 5.
[74] *Edmonton Journal*, 26 August 1935.
[75] A catalyst to the establishment of Calgary's Chinese mission was the 1892 Small Pox Riot (See Chapter I) in which the local Chinese were blamed for spreading the disease. The Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches formed the Canadian Chinese Association after the incident to promote an interdenominational Christian mission among the Chinese. See Frank Dabbs, "Calgary Chinese Mission".
[76] The few allies the Chinese had during the small pox incident were members of the clergy and other Christians. See *Calgary Herald*, 14 October 1910 for another incident where some of Calgary's white citizens spoke up for the Chinese. Among the prominent people who helped in the development of the Calgary Chinese Mission are Rev. James Herdman of Knox Presbyterian Church who became the Superintendent of Home Missions for the Synod of Alberta and British Columbia in 1902, Thomas Underwood, a Baptist building constructor who was later elected mayor of Calgary, and William Porterfield, a Baptist grocer.
[77] Members of the Chinese Mission were key figures behind such projects as the Calgary Chinese School, the Oi Kwan Foundation, the Wai Kwan Manor, and the Chinese YMCA. See Dabbs, "A Message to the Future", "Calgary Chinese Mission", and "Chinatown Development Foundation".
[78] Perry, p. 193; see also "Central Methodist Church Before

held at Central Methodist Church.[79] They continued for so many decades that the room where they were held is still known as the "Chinese Room".[80] A Chinese Department in the Sunday School that consisted of 25 to 30 young men grew out of the missionary activities.

The Calgary Chinese community organized its own church[81] in 1901 which provided separate educational programs. It opened with two Chinese boys;[82] and by 1903 twenty-six Chinese of whom 18 were baptized Christians were reported to be attending Sunday services.[83] In the 1920s evening classes conducted by the city's Chinese Nationalist

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[78](cont'd) World War One" in A. W. Rasporich and Henry Klassen (eds.), *Frontier Calgary 1875-1914*, Calgary, McClelland and Stewart West, 1975, p. 181-189.

[79] The Central Methodist Church (1905-1925) evolved from the McDougall Mission (1873-1883) and Calgary Methodist Church (1883-1905) and is now the Central United Church (1925-)

[80] Perry, p. 39.

[81] One of the reasons why separate churches for ethnic groups were organized and promoted was to encourage the people to conduct missionary work among their own group members. More important, however, was the fact that few Chinese would even go to an Anglo-Saxon Church by themselves. Or if they did, they may not have felt completely welcomed, as J. I. McKay expressed in *The World in Canada*, Toronto, The Committee on Missionary Education, The Women's Missionary Society--Literature Department of the United Church of Canada, 1938, p. 12: " . . . The Church is sometimes guilty in this matter of maintaining and widening the gulf between people of different origin. We have given our money, and offered our prayers for the healing, helping and Christianizing of black and yellow people in Canada and far away, but it is a question of whether men and women from Africa, or from China, or from Japan, be they ever so Christian, would be entirely made welcome in a good many of our churches in this land."

[82] "Calgary Chinese Mission Church", Unpublished manuscript in Chinese Mission Correspondence, Thomas Underwood Papers, Calgary, Glenbow Museum and Archives (GMA).

[83] Presbyterian *Acts and Proceedings*, Board of Foreign Missions, 1903, p. 113. (Notes taken by Dr. Michael Owen, at the United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.)

League were halted in favour of ones simultaneously offered by the Chinese Mission.[84] Services at the Chinese Church continued along with those offered by the Chinese Department at Central Methodist Church until 1930 when the Chinese Department dispersed following developments in the United Church Union.[85] By 1941, the average attendance at the services was approximately 70 for the month of March.[86] Although the Calgary Chinese United Church was more successful in terms of attracting support of the local community, in a letter to the Superintendent of Oriental Missions, a Calgary sponsor of the local Chinese Mission criticized the Chinese minister for not being "spiritual" enough:

> " . . . when he makes these long trips and I have told him before, he doesn't stay long enough in one place to do any spiritual work at all, he gets the money and leaves for the next point which I think is entirely wrong. . . . The spiritual part of our work in the Mission is not being pushed enough to suit me. The young people seem to think it is some kind of a club in place of a Church . . . (He) never comes to see me unless it is about a meeting or some work that he wants to get done, never speaks about spiritual things . . . "[87]

Many Chinese took advantage of the English classes of the Chinese Mission and in later years contributed financially

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[84] They were replaced with Chinese language public speaking classes. *Calgary Herald*, 15 October 1923.
[85] Perry, p. 77.
[86] Rev. Yee Tong, "Missionary Report for March 1941", Chinese Mission Correspondence, Thomas Underwood Papers, Calgary, GMA. Calgary's Chinese population at the time was at 799.
[87] Letter dated 17 December 1936 from Thomas Underwood to S. S. Osterhout, Chinese Mission Correspondence, Thomas Underwood Papers, Calgary, GMA.

to it.[88]

Concluding Remarks

The school and church were recognized as powerful agencies for nationalistic purposes. In trying to Canadianize and Christianize new immigrants, Canadian society was, to a certain degree, facilitating the educational needs of the newcomers. English-Canadians welcomed the assimilation of white immigrants but were dubious of the Orientals' ability to do so. Evening English classes were operated by the Alberta public school boards for the large numbers of European foreigners but were open to the Chinese. The classes, however, would have been restricted to those who were aware of the service and familiar with registration procedures. A strong interest in continuing evangelical work by the Protestant Churches led to the organizing of Chinese Missions and the provision of English instruction as a prerequisite to Biblical teachings. In contrast to the public school classes, students here were actively recruited by missionary workers.[89] Aside from these classes, governments, churches, and social organizations, for the most part, neglected the education and

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[88] One of the minister's task was to travel through the towns of South Alberta to gain converts and raise funds. See *Calgary Daily Herald*, 26 September 1922; and Frank Dabbs, "True Sons in the Faith", p. 3.

[89] The oral histories suggest the classes offered by religious agencies were more widely attended than the public evening classes.

Canadianization of the Oriental.'[10] Attendance at these classes no doubt represented some relief from the total immersion expected of them at work'[11] and elsewhere in Albertan society. Few, if any, stayed in these classes beyond acquiring an adequate working knowledge of English.'[12] Ulterior motives lay behind the creation of these two types of English instruction classes but they did, at least, present an opportunity for the Chinese to overcome their language deficiency.

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[10] Smith, W. G., *A Study in Canadian Immigration*, Toronto, The Ryerson Press, 1920, p. 174-175.

[11] Some Chinese immigrants, however, were able to secure jobs with Chinese employers and did not need to speak English or had co-workers who could translate for them.

[12] Whether any Chinese students progressed from the basic English classes to other types of continuing education classes is unknown and impossible to determine from the statistics available. In 1923 the Calgary Chinese Mission sponsored a promising young scholar for theological study overseas but it is not known if the student acquired English skills from the classes offered in the city. See *Calgary Herald*, 13 April 1923.

CONCLUSION

The educational experiences of Chinese Canadians in Alberta during the period between their first attempt at permanent residency in the province in 1885 until the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1947 have been diverse and, at times, contentious. Official political legislation against Chinese immigration at the federal level affected the quality of life experienced by the Chinese in Alberta. It promoted discriminatory legislation by civic governments in the province which, in turn, effectively regulated much of Chinese Canadians' social relations, economic opportunities, and inevitably educational experiences.

The unfavourable conditions, however, did not diminish the value of attaining an education and may even have prompted the efforts to preserve their rich cultural heritage. An appreciation of the learned individual was a value held by Chinese society for centuries and one that the Alberta Chinese pioneers retained. Imbued with a classical Chinese education from the village schools of Kwangtung, China and a deep cultural pride, the pioneers sought a Chinese education for their children.

Members of the second generation found themselves being sent to China to achieve such an end. In doing so, their schooling already in progress in Alberta schools was disrupted. When these Canadian-born students returned, some

ironically found themselves in situations not unlike those of their immigrant parents--that is, having to attend English classes and having to adjust to a different society. For the most part, their experiences in China helped develop a sense of pride and appreciation of their cultural heritage.

The alternative to sending the children overseas for a formal Chinese education was to establish Chinese language schools in Alberta. These schools served as supplementary places of learning to the regular day school, transmitting basic speaking, reading, and writing skills in the Chinese language in addition to a knowledge of Chinese customs and traditions. The extra after-school hours and Saturday classes that Chinese Canadian children in Alberta had to spend in the language schools, however, were not always enjoyed. In the eyes of the children, sitting around a table learning Chinese from a family friend or relative, as was often the case, did not command the same seriousness or respect as the public school where each student sat in his or her individual desk lined up rigidly in rows. Nevertheless, the Chinese school represented a vehicle to pass on knowledge of their origins and accomplishments, helped maintain some self-esteem, and provided a sense of identity in the midst of racial discrimination.

The response to the Chinese in Alberta was largely dictated by nativist views. Despite the myriad of political, social, and economic barriers that emanated from fashionable

anti-Oriental sentiment at the time, the Chinese managed to achieve a tenuous place in Alberta educational institutions. Unlike in some British Columbia schools, efforts to segregate the Chinese failed to bring forth any concrete educational policy against the children; and Chinese Canadian students were expected to integrate with other children in the same classrooms. However, this did not exempt Chinese children from prejudice and discrimination in the schools. Encumbered by unfounded notions of negative stereotypical peculiarities assigned by white Albertans, Chinese Canadian children were confronted with petty insults and sometimes physical harassment because of their racial background. Such attitudes regulated the scope of interaction between Chinese children and their white peers.

For the Chinese in Alberta, prejudice and discrimination also limited the economic rewards and occupational standings that are expected to succeed educational achievements. Paul Voi s statement, as mentioned in the "Introduction", that few Chinese in Alberta received an education in Alberta prior to the 1940s may be modified to ascribe to higher education, for the Chinese were not openly denied schooling in the province. Informal discrimination and financial constraints w he most influential factors in determining the duration schooling for Chinese Canadians in Alberta. This included the education of Chinese immigrants in the English as a Second Language classes. The public night classes in Basic English

were organized primarily for the benefit of the large number of European immigrants but they were also open to the Chinese, who made up a very small fragment of the classes. Local churches sponsored their own English classes for the Chinese as part of their efforts to uphold a Christian Canada. The Chinese United Churches in Alberta had their beginnings in these small gatherings for language and religious instruction. The classes were attractive because they were free, individualized instruction was accorded, and the Chinese presence was desired and welcomed by the missionary teachers.

The sparse support that the Chinese received from widely scattered sectors of Canadian society, such as the missionaries, was comforting but ineffective in preventing the far-reaching ramifications of federal legislation. A generally hostile social atmosphere developed and the needs of the Chinese were merely ignored in a society where nativist views of Anglo-conformity dominated. Spared from official provincial or local legislation that would limit access to education, the Alberta Chinese, in turn, endured informal acts of discrimination and implications of subordination in order to receive the benefits of both Chinese and Canadian schooling. The psychological strains of such experience and exposure were eased by the nurturing of a positive self-image through teachings of their rich cultural heritage in the Chinese schools they attended and at home.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questions Used in Oral History Interviews

Biographical Data:

What is your full name?
Is this your official name?
What other names are you known by or have used in the past?
What is your birth date?
Where were you born?
What is your country of origin?
Tell about your family. (Family size, brothers, sisters, occupations of members, ages, etc.)
What is your present occupations? Previous occupations?

Coming to Canada (Please answer if applicable):

Who was the first member in your family to come to Canada?
What were the reasons for leaving China and coming to Canada? Purpose? How old were you?
Who helped you to come over? (Financial and other circumstances.)
Did you have relatives here?
What other people did you know of in Canada before you came?
How did you feel about coming to Canada before arriving? After?
What was the intended length of stay?
How did you communicate your needs on the way to Canada?
How were you treated on the way?
Did you travel alone? If not, with whom? What were the conditions like? How long was your journey? How much money did you have on you?
How were you treated at Canadian Immigration and by the local people upon arrival?
What were your first impressions of Canada?
Did you know any English when you came? If not, what were the first English words you learned? What were the circumstances under which you learned them? How did you pick up your English?
When did you become a Canadian citizen? Why did you take this step to do so?

Moving to Alberta:

When did you come to Alberta? How did you get here?
What were the places of settlement? Length of stay in each?
Why did you settle here?

Were there any differences in the way you were treated by whites in British Columbia as compared to in Alberta? If so, what were they?
Please explain any problems you may have encountered because you are of Chinese descent or because of a lack of competency in the English language: a) at work sites? b) in restaurants? c) in stores? d) in other public places? e) when trying to find housing accommodations? f) at school?

Education:

How many years of schooling did you have in China? In Canada?
When did you begin attending school in China? In Canada?
What schools did you attend? Name of school, location, description of building, school yard, etc.
Describe the student population: size of classes, ethnic backgrounds, academic levels, age groups, behaviour in and out of school, etc.
Describe the teacher population: staff size, male/female, age group personality, etc.
How many immigrant students were there in your class? How much English did they know compared to you?
What were the different ways you were taught English? Wh teacher used your favourite teaching method? Why was this favourable to you?
What subjects were taught?
What was your favourite subject? Why?
What subject did you like least? Why?
What were your marks/grades like in school? How did they compare with your Chinese peers? How did they compare with your Canadian classmates? How did they compare with children of other ethnic groups?
Tell about other things you remember of your teachers.
Tell about other things you remember of your classmates.
How were you treated by teachers? Classmates? Any differences? Any particular reason why?
What extra-curricular activities were you involved in?
Who did you play with most at recess? At home? In the neighbourhood?
Did you find any of the curriculum offending as a Chinese student?
What language did you speak at school with your Chinese friends?
What language did you use at home? With parents? With siblings? Relatives?
How did your teachers, non-Chinese friends, and other students respond to you speaking Chinese when they overheard it?
Were you encouraged at home to participate in "Canadian culture"? How so? Were you encouraged at school (by teachers and classmates) to do so? How?
Were you encouraged at home to make many Canadian friends? How? or Why not?

What did you usually do after school?
How were the Chinese students treated by peers as compared to Canadian children? To other English as a Second Language (ESL) students?
What did you hope to gain by attending school for the period of time that you did in Canada?
What educational aspirations do you have for your children and grandchildren? Why?
What do you perceive to be the changes in the educational system for Chinese Canadians?
What improvements would you like to see in the educational system for Chinese Canadians?
Did you attend post-secondary institutions? Why or why not?
What was the general public opinion of the value of education in the local Chinese community at the time when you were a student? Now?
If you had attended school in China before, how did the schools differ from those in Canada?
How were they the same?
How were you taught in China? In Canada?

Chinese School in Canada:

Did you attend Chinese school in Canada?
IF SO:
Who operated this school?
How was it different from the English school? How was it the same?
Were there any non-Chinese in attendance at this school?
What were the hours of operation?
Why did you attend the Chinese school? What did you hope to gain?
Did your non-Chinese friends know you were attending this school? How did they react to your going?
What were the tuition and fees? Were the fees reasonable or affordable?
Who was the teacher? Please tell about him/her. How did he/she compare to your regular Canadian teacher? (Teaching styles, discipline methods, patience, qualifications, personality, etc.)
What subjects did you learn? How much Chinese do you remember?
How large were the classes? How many levels were there?
Tell about your classmates. (Ages, sex, numbers, behavior in and out of Chinese school, academic level, family backgrounds, etc.)

Church:

Did you attend local church services?
IF SO,:
What were the circumstances that led you to do so?
Did the church offer English classes for the Chinese? For other immigrants?
How large were the classes?
How many teachers were there? What were they like?
What were the hours of operation?
What subjects were taught?
What were the costs involved? Were you encouraged to attend Sunday Church services also?

Life in Canada:

Did you have a "good" childhood in Canada? Why or why not?
Did you work as a child? What did you do? How much were you paid?
Why did some whites dislike the Chinese?
What did you do for fun as a child?
Did you ever resort to physical fighting with Chinese or non-Chinese children? If so, how did it come about?
Did this happen when you were an adult? Please elaborate.
What was life like for a Chinese person in Canada? Explain.
Was the Chinese community a close one then? Explain. Is it now? Why or why not?
Have you kept in contact with your friends from the early years. If so, please note their names and addresses?
What do you remember of the past? Why?
Referring back to your past occupations, what were the work conditions like?
Were you paid the same as other employees doing the same task? If not, why?
Have you returned to China since coming to Canada? When and for what purposes?
What changes did you notice in China upon your visit(s)?
Did you send money back to China? Why? How often did you do this and what portion of your salary did the money represent?

Culture:

Did your attitudes, values, or perceptions of life change after coming to Canada? Why or why not?
What was the greatest difference between Canada and China?
What things were the same?
How did you dress when you came to Canada? What types of fashion changes did you go through while in Canada? Why?
Describe your home(s) in China and in Canada. (Physical building, neighbourhood, etc.)
What customs or traditions did you bring over to Canada?
What customs did you practice that induced discrimination against you?

How did you celebrate Chinese New Year, Mid Autumn Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, or other holidays in the early years? How do you celebrate these holidays today?
What kinds of Chinese foods were available in Canada then? Today?
Did you consider yourself a Chinese Canadian or a Canadian Chinese? Has this perception changed? If so, how so?
What was Chinatown like in the early years? How has it changed?

Racism:

What do you know about the year 1923 in Chinese Canadian history? In 1947? How do you feel about these dates?
How did the whites relate to you? Describe your experiences.
Who did you usually turn to for help? Chinese, non-Chinese, organizations, agencies, etc.?
Would a certain white person help you? Why do you think this person helped you? Who was he/she?
How did whites treat Chinese people in relation to the way they treated blacks, East Indians, or other immigrant groups? In relation to North American Indians?
How did you feel about the way you were thought of and the way you were treated? Explain and describe. How do you feel about this today? Did you accept this? Why or why not?
Why did you continue to stay in Canada?
What do Canadians think of the Chinese today?
Do you think the attitudes have changed? Why or why not?
Would you return to China today?
How did you react to the racial insults when you first came to Canada? Has your response changed through the years? How would you react today? If the reactions are different, why is this so?
Do you feel your experiences, positive and negative ones, have been worth going through for the life you have today?

Head Tax:

Did you have to pay a head tax? How much was it?
At the time, did you know why the Chinese were being taxed? What was the reason? How did you feel about it?
Would you like the head tax returned to you today? Why or why not? If not, what would you like done about the head tax?
What if today's government refuses to do anything about the head tax issue?

Appendix B

TABLE I

The Chinese in Alberta

1901-1941

YEAR	CHINESE POPULATION	TOTAL PROVINCE POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF CHINESE POPULATION
1901	1235	73,022	0.32 %
1911	1,787	374,663	0.48 %
1921	3,581	588,454	0.61 %
1931	3,875	731,605	0.53 %
1941	3,122	796,169	0.39 %

Source: Census of Canada; and Edgar Wickberg (ed.), *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd. and Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, 1982, p. 300-301.

Appendix B

TABLE II

The Chinese in Edmonton

YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	% OF POPULATION
1899	13	13	0	0.59
1911	154	150	4	0.49
1916	329	318	11	0.61
1921	518	501	17	0.87
1926	332	302	30	0.51
1931	467	440	27	0.58
1941	384	-	-	0.41
1951	782	622	160	0.46
1961	1,808	1,092	716	0.56
1971	4,940	2,610	2,330	1.18
1981	16,300	8,390	7,915	2.50

Source: John Patrick Day, "Wong Sing-Fuen and the Sing Lee Laundry", (Paper prepared for the Historical and National Science Services by Edmonton Parks and Recreation), Edmonton, Edmonton City Archives, November 1978, Tables 5 & 6, p. 6 & 7; and Census of Canada, 1981.

Appendix B

TABLE III

The Chinese in Calgary

YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	% OF POPULATION
1891	-	-	0	-
1901	63	63	0	1.54
1911	485	482	3	1.11
1921	688	649	39	1.09
1931	1,054	969	85	1.29
1941	799	694	105	0.92
1951	973	774	199	0.75
1961	2,232	1,393	839	0.89
1971	6,000	-	-	1.51
1981	15,545	8,150	7,400	2.65

Source: Gunter Baureiss, "The Chinese Community in Calgary", *Alberta Historical Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring 1974, Table I, p. 3, (Percentages calculated from figures provided); and Census of Canada 1981.

Appendix B

TABLE IV

The Chinese in Lethbridge

YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	% OF POPULATION
1901	*30	-		-
1911	108	-		1.34
1921	170	162	8	1.53
1926	122	116	6	-
1931	230	220	10	1.70
1936	*142	-	-	1.05
1941	248	234	14	1.69
1946	146	127	16	-
1951	298	224	74	1.30
1961	413	259	154	1.16
1971	615	355	260	1.49

* Denotes Chinese and Japanese population.

Source: Census of Canada, 1901-1981; and Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1926-1946.

Appendix B

TABLE V

Number, Sex, and Nativity of Chinese in Canada

1881-1971

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF CHINESE IN CANADA	MALES PER 100 FEMALES	PERCENT NATIVE BORN	CHINESE AS % OF TOTAL POPULATION IN CANADA
1881	4,383	-	0	0.10
1891	9,129	-	0	0.19
1901	17,312	-	-	0.32
1911	27,831	2,790	3	0.39
1921	39,587	1,533	7	0.45
1931	46,519	1,241	12	0.45
1941	34,627	785	20	0.30
1951	32,528	374	31	0.23
1961	58,197	163	40	0.32
1971	118,815	112	38	0.55

Source: Peter S. Li, "Immigration Laws and Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese Families in Canada, 1885-1971", in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XI, No. 1, 1980, p. 64.

Appendix B

TABLE VI

Age Distribution of Chinese in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge For the Year 1926

	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge
Total Chinese	332	506	122
Under 21 Years	56	99	16
21 Years & Over	276	407	106

Source: Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1926.

Appendix B

TABLE VII

Alberta Chinese Population by Age Groups

Ages	1926	1936	1946
0-4	123	103	70
5-9	79	90	34
10-14	86	100	58
14-19	176	67	54
20-24	187	90	56
25-29	248	176	58
30-34	381	204	67
35-39	451	294	152
40-44	444	465	186
45-49	327	481	242
50-54	237	464	323
55-59	136	296	361
60-64	44	185	268
65-69	15	59	184
70-74	1	17	86
75-79	-	6	32
80-84	-	2	3
85-89	-	-	1
90-94	-	-	1
95+	-	-	-

Source: Census of the Prairie Provinces 1926, 1936, and 1946.

Appendix B

TABLE VIII

Comparison of Alberta and British Columbia Chinese Populations

	British Columbia	Alberta
1901	14,885	235
1911	19,568	1,787
1921	23,533	3,581
1931	27,139	3,875
1941	18,619	3,122

Source: Census of Canada.

Appendix C

"The Ghost at Bowman School"

(As told by Carol Watkinson and Margaret Wheeler, Lethbridge, 28 October 1986.)

Watkinson: The Bowman School is now the Bowman Arts Centre. At one point I was the executive secretary at the Lethbridge Arts Council which operates out of what is now the Bowman Arts Centre. One evening in November about 10, 12 years ago, I was locking the Centre up for the night and was alone. At that time there were two bathrooms in the Centre--ladies bathroom upstairs and the gentlemen's bathroom on the bottom floor.

When I went into the ladies bathroom to check it out, I suddenly became conscious of the fact that I could hear a child crying, sobbing actually. And I thought, "Uh-oh . . . somebody hasn't picked up their child from the ballet class or the art class or whatever. So I went out and checked the halls and went down below and couldn't find anybody. The building seemed empty so I went back upstairs. I went back into the bathroom and could hear the child sobbing again. So this time I went and checked the entire building again and then checked outside the building and there was nothing there. No one. I couldn't find anything at all.

And over the course of the next two or three months two other people in the building said that they had had the same experience. Muriel Jaw was one and Joan Waterfield was the other one. So we talked about this and we settled, "Well, that's really interesting. We must have a ghost or a poltergeist or something." But we were not serious about it at all.

And then one evening at a dinner party I told this story at the table and a dear old friend of mine, Thab Ives, who is Margaret's brother said, "Oh I know who that would be. And (he) told me the story of when he was a young student at the Bowman School. I think that would probably be the early '20s and he told the story of a young Chinese girl coming to school for the very first time. Now this was in the days when all the young girls would come to school dressed in their pinafores and their patent shoes and white stockings . . . (Discussion of the time period and the appropriate girls' fashion at the time.) . . . The girls definitely would have come dressed in a dress . . . no jeans . . . no girls wearing pants at that time. This first day of school a young Chinese student came for her first day dressed appropriately for a Chinese girl in her best clothes

which would be trousers and a tunic, I presume.

At some point she was let out of her class to go to the lavatory and as she was going through the door of the ladies washroom, a teacher obviously saw her trousers and presumed it was a boy trying to go into the girls' bathroom, and whomped her--but good! This is Thad's story, and I guess the child was so upset that she sobbed and sobbed and sobbed and sobbed.

Wheeler: Well, it would be strange--everything--to her if she's Chinese and she's in a definitely white community. She wouldn't know which end was up.

Watkinson: Absolutely. Thad said he never forgot this child crying and the sound of the sobs of this child. And her name was Star and we don't know what her last name was. So he put the two stories together. So that's the story of the sobbing child in the bathroom of the Bowman Arts Centre--the Ghost at Bowman School. I should add that nobody has heard her since Bowman has renovated and they turned the gentlemen's bathroom into a craft room and moved the bathroom itself upstairs and split this great big old bathroom into ladies and gentlemen's and nobody has heard her since.