

Archive Package: 1947–2014 (Post-World War II)

Fact Sheet: Key Issues and Events of 1947–2014

- 1947: The federal government repealed the Exclusion Act. The *Canadian Citizenship Act* came into effect on 1 January 1947 under the government of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King.
- The enactment of the *Provincial Elections Act Amendment Act* in 1947 in British Columbia meant that Chinese Canadians could now vote provincially for the first time since the province entered Confederation. At the same time, a change in federal law made voting rights a part of citizenship.
- Chinese Canadians began to participate in politics. The first included two Chinese Canadian war veterans who became an MP and a City Councillor, respectively.
- Through 1970s and 1980s, many Chinese Canadians were elected as MPs, MLAs, Mayors and City Councillors.
- The 1952 *Immigration Act* allowed for “preferred classes” of people immigrating to Canada - which included Asians wishing to reunite with family. However, the Act still discriminated against other groups, including passing quotas for those coming from India, Pakistan, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).
- 1957: After twenty years of lobbying, Chinese Canadians met with Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, highlighting the problem of family separation in Chinese Canadian Communities.
- 1957 to 1966: Family reunification through sponsorship began, for those who could act as sponsors (sponsors had to be naturalized as Canadian citizens, and the Asian family members had to meet eligibility requirements).
- 1960: The Chinese Adjustment Statement Program allowed “paper sons and daughters” (people who needed to use other people’s names and identification papers to immigrate to Canada during the Exclusion Act period) to apply for legal citizenship.

- 1962: The immigration policy opened the door to Chinese immigration. As a result, new Chinese immigrants rose from 876 in 1962 to 5,178 in 1966.
- 1960s: Many Chinese immigrated to BC to escape Communist violence during the Cultural Revolution.
- 1967: A points system gave preference to immigrants who met certain criteria, such as were English or French speaking, or had employment arranged in Canada, were immigrating to a region of high employment, had proper education or training, or had relatives in Canada.
- 1971: Only 1,558 families were living apart. Victoria's Chinatown had dwindled to two city blocks, and about 143 residents. It underwent a rehabilitation program that ran from 1979-1986. In 1995, the Heritage Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designated Victoria's Chinatown as a national historical district.
- 1980s and '90s: Capitalist business people living in Hong Kong were anxious over the Chinese government's impending treaty take-over of the island from Britain in 1998. They looked to Canada as a place to resettle and do business, so many Hong Kong entrepreneurs entered Canada at that time.
- 1983 to 1996: About 700,000 Chinese business people (mostly from Hong Kong) came to settle in Vancouver and, to a lesser extent, Toronto. They brought billions of dollars worth of investment funds with them.
- 1984: Margaret Mitchell, the federal Member of Parliament for Vancouver East from 1979 to 1993, raised the issue of head tax repayment on behalf of her constituents, and the CCNC took up the struggle for redress for the indignity suffered by Canada's head tax payers between 1885–1924.
- 2006: Generations after the head tax was repealed, and after years of negotiations, an agreement was reached with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, which led to a government apology and financial compensation to an estimated 20 living head tax payers.
- 2014: The BC Government issued its apology for historical racist and discriminatory policies.