

Everyday Racism Toward Ethnic Chinese on Vancouver Island, 1858-1947

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Introduction

This project is funded by a two-year grant from the Division of Learning & Teaching Support & Innovation (LTSI), and it received technical support from the Humanities Computing and Media Centre at the University of Victoria (UVic). Its major purpose is to employ students to collect and process historical data on everyday racism toward ethnic Chinese, including immigrants from China and their local born descendants, on Vancouver Island from 1858 to 1947, and to provide historical data for more students at UVic to engage in active and interactive learning in anti-racism research. The range of this project spans the period from the beginning of large-scale Chinese immigration to Vancouver Island until the repeal of Canada's Chinese Exclusion Act. Due to the limitations of time, personnel, and financial resources, the project's database at present covers only the period between 1858 and 1915, but further work is also planned to complete it to 1947.

Specifically, this project has four major goals:

- 1) To inspire student research interest in and personal awareness of the local history of anti-Chinese racism in everyday circumstances beyond state-institutionalized racist policies through the collection and analysis of relevant data from Vancouver Island's newspapers and other sources;
- 2) To expand my history courses with newly collected historical data and with students' independent research and collaborative coursework on everyday racism toward ethnic Chinese on Vancouver Island;
- 3) To teach students UVic's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion through active and interactive learning from the history of local everyday racism toward people of Chinese origin and its continual impacts on BIPOC (black, indigenous and people of color) in daily life at the present, even within the university campus;
- 4) To share the project's findings with UVic's faculty, staff, and students as well as the general public through presentations by participants, especially my lectures, and through online preservation and presentation of the project's results.

Because this project stresses active learning of historical knowledge and research and communication skills to fight racism in everyday life, we hired an ethnically diverse group of

undergraduate and graduate students for data collection, classification, compilation, and analysis, as well as database construction and other related works. These students include Vanessa Aase, Yixiong Fu, Jia Mao, Calissa Stewart, Jakob Svorkdal, and Michael Woo. It is also hoped that this project will promote interactive learning of mutual respect and understanding by other current and future students through collaborative coursework on anti-Chinese everyday racism in the history of Vancouver Island and its continuous impacts on BIPOC today.

This project's historical data is collected from three newspapers on Vancouver Island, *the British Colonist* (1858-1980) in Victoria (<https://britishcolonist.ca/>), *the Nanaimo Free Press* (1874-1928, <https://viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/6679>), and *the Cumberland News* (1899-1916, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers>). **It plans to use such historical data to reveal racial bias and abuse against ethnic Chinese in regard to their life style, working habits, religious faiths, recreational activities, educational opportunities, and the like from 1858 to 1947.**

This project evolved from an article by Zhongping Chen, "The Chinese Minority and Everyday Racism in Canadian Towns and Small Cities," in *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 36. No. 1 (2004): 71-91. Based on classic historical works on anti-Asian racism in Canada by W. Peter Ward, Patricia E. Roy, and other historians, the project also uses sociological and anthropological lens to examine everyday racism, or the daily, familiar, and entrenched prejudices and practices against BIPOC (e.g. Frances Henry, *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Co. Canada, 1995). Moreover, the project benefits from David Lai's geographical analysis of Canadian Chinatowns, Timothy J. Stanley's research on school segregation of Chinese Canadian children, and multidisciplinary studies of anti-Semitism, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Black issues.

The activities of the project follow innovative teaching approaches from education, psychology, and other disciplines, stressing active and interactive learning in anti-racism by students through their data collection, independent research, and collaborative coursework. With inspiration from theoretical discussion about race-class relations in sociology, political science, and other disciplines, it is hoped that the project's participants, including its student assistants and the future users of its data, will examine the mutual reinforcement of economic exploitation and racial oppression, especially racist violence in class clashes.

This project provides historical data as additional anti-racism resources and educational materials to support UVic's commitment to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive community. It will expand UVic's fight against racial discrimination by bringing forward evidence of more personal, pervasive, and persistent everyday racism toward ethnic Chinese in local history and providing historical lessons about its continuity in more subtle mistreatment of ethnic minorities in our present and familiar environments, including the UVic campus. By sharing historical data from this project for students' independent research and equal exchange of ideas for their collaborative coursework, it is hoped that they will help each other develop truly respectful interrelations, better understanding their respective cultural backgrounds, and contribute to the construction of UVic as an anti-racism and inclusive community.

This database lists three sets of historical data from *Cumberland News* (1899-1916), *Nanaimo Free Press* (1874-1928), and *The British Colonist* (1858-1980) in Victoria by following the working order of our research team. Each set includes an index to another file with selected newspaper reports or articles in chronological order. This will allow users of this database to find the title or summary of relevant data from the index and then look for the chronologically arranged newspaper report or article.

Please notice that the titles of newspaper reports or articles are the originals, and they could include racist words, phrases, or implications.