

## CHINESE

The first Chinese to settle in Canada arrived after the discovery of gold on the Fraser River in 1858. Almost all were originally from the province of Kwangtung, southeast of Canton. Some did well, some did not, and many left the country when most mines had been exhausted. Most of those who remained took up other laborious work, shoemaking, laundering, tailoring, gardening and general labour.

In 1881 thousands more were brought over to work on the Canadian Pacific. They were paid 75 cents to \$1.25 for a twelve-hour day.

After that, immigration of Chinese, Japanese and East Indians was sharply curtailed. Those entering had to pay a head tax of up to \$500 in 1903. In 1923 a new law blocked all but a few.

By 1941 there were about 34,500 Chinese in Canada, most men and over half living in British Columbia. The repeal of the Exclusion Act in 1947 changed the picture—women and children came over and the Chinese became family units in the larger community. Today there are 225,000, about one-third in British Columbia and one-third in Ontario.

## JAPANESE

The Japanese came to Canada slowly. There were perhaps 1,000 in Canada in 1896, almost all in British Columbia.

The government limited Japanese immigration in 1908 when the number was around 9,000 but those on hand married and had children, and by 1941 there were 23,149, including both those born in Japan (*Issei*) and those born in Canada (*Nisei*). In World War II the British Columbia coast was designated a 'protected area', and all persons of Japanese origin, *Issei* and *Nisei*, were evacuated and sent to inland camps.

After the war some moved east, mostly to Ontario, and some returned to the coast. The *Nisei* married and had children, a third generation called *Sansei*.



Photo: Courtesy Department of the Secretary of State.

# October/Octobre 1983

**CANADA**  
TODAY / D'AUJOURD'HUI

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Photo: Public Archives Canada C 47066.