MMIGRANTS—Stories of Vancouver’s People expands upon a 20-part series of cover stories appearing in The Vancouver Courier newspaper in 2007, 2008 and 2009. In this series, award-winning journalist Lisa Smedman explores the history of the various ethnic ups that now call Vancouver home. Packed with historic photographs and illustrations, IMMIGRANTS—Stories of Vancouver’s People traces journeys of the IMMIGRANTS who came by sailing ship, horse-drawn wagon, steam train and jet airplane from Europe and Asia. It sets their personal stories against the backdrop of history, examining the reasons why they came, the reception they received and how they’ve become a part of Vancouver mosaic. For anyone wanting to understand the struggles and triumphs of their immigrant ancestors, IMMIGRANTS—Stories of Vancouver’s People will prove an invaluable resource.
A Contract with China

In 1887, a mob attacked a Chinese work crew hired to clear land in Vancouver’s West End. The excuse was that Chinese were taking white jobs. In fact, it was the other way around.

On a snowy February evening in 1887, a crew of loggers retired to their tents after a day spent clearing the dense forest that would one day be Vancouver’s West End. They laid aside axes and eight-foot-long crosscut saws, stripped off their waterproof coats and crawled into tents. Before bedding down, they peeled off damp and sweaty check shirts and trousers, pulled off muddy boots to change their wool socks, and tucked valuables such as silver pocket watches into trunks for the night.

The crew was just like the dozens of other work crews hired by the Canadian Pacific Railway and private landowners to clear land for subdivision and sale—except for one small detail.

They were Chinese.

That night, a mob—said by one eyewitness to number close to 300 men—made its way to the spot where the Chinese were camped. Lanterns in hand, singing the Civil War marching song “John Brown’s Body,” they converged on the tents around midnight.

William H. Gallagher was an eyewitness to what followed. More than 40 years later, when interviewed at the City of Vancouver Archives, his memories of that night were still vivid.

“There was snow on the ground, it was quite clear, and we could see what we were doing,” Gallagher said. “There were many tough characters among the crowd, navvies who had
been working for [CPR contractor Andrew] Onderdonk, hot-headed, thoughtless, strong, and rough...

"When the Chinamen saw all these men coming they were terrified... the rioters grabbed the tents by the bottom, and up-set them, the war cry 'John Brown's Body' still continuing. The Chinamen did not stop to see; they just ran. Some went dressed, some not; some with shoes, some with bare feet. The snow was on the ground and it was cold."

The camp was located near the foot of modern Burrard Street, where a spring tumbled over a bluff into Burrard Inlet. Several of the Chinese fled in this direction, choosing a 20-foot jump into bitterly cold water over facing the mob.

"The tide was in, they had no choice, and you could hear them going plump, plump, plump, as they jumped into the salt water. Scores of them went over the cliff," said Gallagher.

The mob tore down a wooden cookhouse, heaped the bedding and belongings of the Chinese into piles, and set these on fire.

E.R. Glover, a reporter for the Vancouver News, saw the riot first-hand. The newspaper broke the story in its Feb. 25 edition, one day after the riot.

The mob had formed after a Thursday-night meeting at city hall, organized by businessmen determined to "keep the city clear of the Celestials." Their aim was to put the Chinese on a boat and send them to Victoria. Those at the meeting were infuriated by the false news that up to 200 Chinese were encamped in the forest.

"A number of Chinese] got away in spite of their efforts to surround them," the Vancouver News reported. "Those who were caught were in some instances badly kicked by some of the crowd, and then ordered to pack up and leave, in which they were assisted in no gentle manner. [Then] the work of demolishing their camp began. The shanties were pulled to the ground, their boxes and outfit smashed and their bedding thrown into the fires."

Vancouver's Police Chief John Stewart and Superintendent Henry B. Roycroft of the B.C. Provincial Police tried to stop the riot. Stewart blew his whistle, while Roycroft hustled the Chinese into a roofless shed.

"The Chief then ordered all present in the Queen's name to return peacefully to their homes but no attention was paid to the order," reported the Vancouver News. "Superintendent Roycroft and Chief Stewart then took up their position beside the fire in front of the Chinamen, facing the crowd, and by the gallant front and unwavering pluck shown by them held the whole at bay."

The mob tried to shout down the police, failed, and eventually resorted to throwing snow at the Chinese. Eventually it broke up into groups which drifted back to the city.

The rioters gathered again the next morning in front of the Sunny Side Hotel on Water Street. This time, their target was the Chinese-owned stores on Dupont (Pender) Street. The mob ordered the residents of Chinatown into wagons. The Chinese merchants complied—but only after negotiating that one man remain behind in each store to protect it.

"The remainder, probably 100, assembled quietly, were loaded onto old-fashioned horse-drawn drays," recalled Gallagher. "They all stood up crowded together on the drays, and one by one the drays and wagons moved off to New Westminster—a pretty rough ride in a springless dray over a rough road—where the Chinese were put on a steamer for Victoria... some of them were tied together by their pigtails, to prevent them escaping."
When Fong Tak Man came to Canada in 1884, he, like many Chinese, hoped to find a better life. Along the way, he found a new religion. Fong (whose given name would later be Anglicized to Dickman) was born in 1860 in Yen Ping, Kwangtung (Canton), China. After coming to Canada, he worked driving stagecoaches between New Westminster and Vancouver. To improve his English, he took language classes at a night school run by Mrs. C.J.E. Monck on Hastings Street.

"Besides teaching them English, they preached the gospel to them as well, and so my father became a Christian and lay preacher," recalled his daughter, Anna Lam, in an interview with the CBC in 1986. Other memories of Anna Lam were recorded in the book Saltwater City, by Paul Yee.

"Father used to go down and preach in the street with a portable organ," she said. "I don’t know who played for him, but he used to take it down and sing hymns and preach in the street. He had night classes with over a hundred young men coming to learn English. I would say quite a number of them became Christians."

Fong was baptized by Rev. Ebenezer Robson at the Methodist Church on Princess Street in Vancouver and became a lay minister in 1898. He was assigned to the Methodist mission at Nanaimo that September. Reverend S.S. Osterhout wrote about Fong’s work there.

"Mr. Dickman proved a man of sterling Christian character, of modest life and profession, and of a patient, persevering temperament," Osterhout wrote. "True to the mining class as a whole, the Chinese of Nanaimo have not been the easiest to reach with the Gospel, but in his patient way, Mr. Dickman has continued to influence the lives of his people so that from time to time groups of young men have been prepared for baptism and received into membership of the church..."

In 1899 in Victoria, Fong married Jennie (Jane) Cheng, who had come to Canada the previous year. B.C. Vital Events records her name, when she married, as Jennie A. Yee. She came from a wealthy family. Her father was a senior government official in the Qing Dynasty, stationed on what was then known, to Westerners, as the island of Formosa—modern Taiwan. He sent his daughter to an English boarding school in Hong Kong.

"I didn’t realize how unusual [my mother] was when I was younger, but she attended an English girls’ school in Hong Kong and learned how to read and write English, read and write Chinese and also learned to play the piano," Anna said in her 1986 interview. "Which was really unusual for a Chinese woman, in those days."

Granddaughter Diana Lam said British Columbia didn’t live up to her grandmother’s standards. "She was quite distressed with the kind of books they had for children here, so she sent away to England so her girls would have proper books to read."

The Fongs’ first two daughters were born in Nanaimo. The family moved to Vancouver in 1906, the year Anna was born. Dickman ministered at the Chinese Methodist Church in Vancouver until 1913, when the family returned to Nanaimo. He later ministered in New Westminster—where he was ordained in 1923—and in Edmonton. He retired in 1939.

The Fong girls (whose surname is often recorded as Dickman by B.C. Vital Events) went on to make their mark in British Columbia. Esther was the first Chinese-Canadian woman to graduate from the University of B.C. Levina was the first to become a teacher. Anna was the first Chinese-Canadian nurse, and Laura (whom the Fongs adopted in 1915 after one of Jane’s nieces died in childbirth) became a program director at the YWCA.

Diana Lam traces her ancestry back to other Chinese immigrants who were early arrivals in B.C. Her paternal grandmother, Chew Shee, was also aboard the ship that brought Jane Cheng to Victoria in 1898. The two women—and their respective husbands—remained friends throughout the years that followed. Chew Shee married Lam Chung Ling, who’d emigrated from China to Victoria in 1880. Their son George Lam would marry Anna Fong in 1931.

Lam Chung Ling was best known as the proprietor of the Hong Wo general store in the Steveston area of Richmond, a business he established near the foot of Trask Street in the 1890s. The store sold canned goods, hardware, clothing and produce. It was in business until the 1970s.

He was also a middleman who contracted Chinese labourers to work at the local canneries. He purchased farmland in the area, eventually acquiring more than 350 acres. He owned more than 30 greenhouses, and was best known for growing cucumbers, which he pickled in a plant he set up.
According to the Vancouver News of Feb. 26, the Chinese boarded up smashed windows and doors before departing. "The number that left was 86 and there cannot be many remaining in town now... It is reported that the Chinese laundry men will leave in a day or two. The Pacific laundry on Dupont Street is deserted."

By March 3, the Pacific Steam Laundry of W. Ballinger & Co. were able to boast in a newspaper ad that it employed "white labour only."

The mob rounded up every Chinese person they could find. In a 1959 interview with the archives, James Keel said he was working with a CPR land-clearing crew when the rioters came through. "We had three or four Chinese in that camp, cooking for us, and at the time of the Chinese Riot [of] February 1887 the rioters came out and took them away."

The contractor whose hiring of a Chinese work crew prompted the riot was John McDougall. According to H.P. McCraney, who was interviewed at the archives in 1931, hiring Chinese labourers allowed McDougall to tender a bid of $150 per acre for the land-clearing job, instead of the going rate of $300 per acre.

McDougall—later deservingly nicknamed "Chinese McDougall"—was in Victoria at the time of the riot. "McDougall was very unpopular, and he would have had rough handling if he had been there that night," said Galagher.

"There had been talk of tarring and feathering the contractor," Lee Charlton told the archives in 1941. Charlton, a 21-year-old bookkeeper at the time of the riots, was part of the mob that night. He was one of three men later arrested and charged with unlawful assembly and destruction of property.

It wasn't the first time the Chinese work crew had been forced out of Vancouver. The men had begun work in January, only to be ordered out of town by a "committee" of 75 Vancouverites, backed up by 250 "onlookers."

The Vancouver News of Jan. 11 reported that the 19 Chinese labourers "quickly took down the tent in which they were encamped, packed up their blankets, saws, axes and provisions, and accompanied by the people marched down to the CPR dock where they remained until the arrival of the Princess Louise." When the ship came in around 4 p.m., the Chinese were marched aboard and the $28.50 that had been collected for their return trip to Victoria handed over, all to the "hearty cheers" of a crowd of 600.

George H. Keefer, a CPR contractor, watched as the Chinese were rounded up. "I can see the picture yet, of these poor chinks with their rice sacks and big baskets and balancing poles, all heading for the wharf; they were coming out of the blackened timber and brush from all directions, and some of them were coming on the toe of a boot. They were herded on the wharf, and... old Tom Sawyers [Tom Cyra, owner of the Granville Hotel] passed around a hat and got a silver collection with which to pay their fares back to Victoria."

McDougall, however, had signed a contract with the owners of what was then called the Bighouse Estate (everything west of modern Burrard Street) to do the land clearing. The subcontractor he was working with in Victoria—most likely a Chinese merchant—would also have signed a formal agreement to provide the men for the job.

McDougall told the Vancouver News "that he was under a heavy penalty to complete the work and if he did not act according to the contract that those with whom he had made the agreement would do the work themselves and compel him to pay what loss might be incurred."

He sent the work crew back to complete the job.

The anti-Chinese agitators got wind of it, and prevented the Chinese from disembarking. As Keefer told it, "They even turned the hose on the boat. [The Chinese] were finally landed at New Westminster and tricked over in the night, a week or so after things had quietened down. Then came the second riot [of Feb. 24]," said Keefer.

The provincial government responded to the riot by revoking Vancouver's charter on Feb. 28. Two days later, at a hastily convened meeting, Vancouver's city council drafted a letter of protest. There was no need, they said, for Victoria to send special constables to police the city. The city itself was "prepared to take all steps for the enforcement of the laws for the protection of persons of all nationalities who come to Vancouver."
working as a lecturer at the University of Hong Kong. Like many other Chinese, Yue joined the British defence forces and fought the Japanese. When Hong Kong surrendered on Christmas Day, 1941, he became a civilian again, but lived with the fear that a neighbour might turn him in.

"Sooner or later the Japanese might find out who was fighting against them and then the whole family would be killed," said his daughter, Angelina Bao.

Although Bessie was a Canadian citizen, with the war on there was no way the Baos could get back to Vancouver.

Bessie's brother Billy was still in Vancouver, supporting their mother. Sisters Barbara and Helen were also in Hong Kong, having come there to attend university. Barbara's husband, Phillip Miao, had also fought the Japanese, and wanted to flee Hong Kong.

Barbara's father-in-law had been born in Hawaii, and thus was an American citizen. He was living in the American quarter in Shanghai. So Bessie, Barbara and their respective families fled to Shanghai. Although it was also occupied by the Japanese, nobody there knew their husbands had been in the militia.

At the end of the war, the Baos remained in Shanghai. Angelina was seven years old at the time. Her father continued to work as a civil engineer, while her mother found work with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

In 1948, with the Chinese communists advancing on Shanghai, Bessie was one of the Canadian citizens offered a flight out of that city. She was able to bring her son and daughter back to Vancouver, since they were listed on her passport as dependents. Her Hong Kong-born husband, however—away on an engineering job in Canton—wasn't able to come.

Bessie and her children moved in with Bessie's mother, still living at what was then 433 Columbia Ave. They lived there for a couple of years, and Angelina attended Strathcona Elementary. In 1956, they returned to Hong Kong and Bessie was reunited with her husband.

Angelina went on to become a civil engineer and moved to Beijing. In the 1980s, she started thinking about emigrating, but was only permitted to leave Communist China temporarily, as a visiting scholar to universities in the United States. Her husband and two daughters were ordered to remain in China—a guarantee that she'd return.

It wasn't until 1997 that Angelina was successful in emigrating to Canada, an echo of the journey her grandfather had made more than a century before her.
On March 2, three dozen special constables in blue serge pea jackets arrived in Vancouver by boat from Victoria. Led by Roycroft, they "marched to our city hall, came to attention and formally demanded and were handed the keys of the city," recalled court registrar W.A.E. Beck in a 1931 interview with the archives.

Beck recalled them as "a composite of ne'er-do-wells of almost every nationality, including a few stranded young Englishmen, one of whom called upon me for advice as to his right to handcuff a prisoner."

The arrival of the special constables was "humiliating and obnoxious," Beck said. Vancouverites responded with taunts; one man marched behind the specials, whistling a song from "The Mulligan Guards," a Broadway farce. The city protested having to foot the bill for the force; just a day before their arrival, council had sworn in 10 special constables of its own.

"Vancouver is thoroughly able to protect itself and does not need any special constables thrust upon it at an enormous expense," the *Vancouver News* protested. "The city is law-abiding and quite ready to cope with any disturbances."

The rioters, it added, "were only a very small portion of the community." Although all three of the men arrested as ringleaders lived in the city, the "real culprits," the newspaper opined in a subsequent issue, "were probably not Vancouverites."

Beck also downplayed the riot, calling it "not serious," and saying the mob was "chiefly composed of American anti-Chinese agitators, among whom it was reported, were a number of San Francisco sand lotteries, at which city and other U.S. cities serious anti-Chinese riots had recently taken place."

Stipendiary magistrate A.E. Vowell re-tried the three men who'd been arrested and charged earlier in connection with the riot. The result of this second trial was the same: Charleton, milkman Tom Greer, and logger John Frauley were released after the case was dismissed for lack of evidence.

By March 18, the special constables had sailed back to Victoria. The workers McDougall had hired were back at work, clearing the CPR lands, with two special constables—hired by the city, this time—protecting them.

When a brush-clearing fire threatened to wipe out Vancouver for the second time in June 1887, Chinese work crews clearing the Brighouse Estate pitched in to fight it. Not surprisingly, the city refused to pay the $322.25 bill their Chinese contractor submitted for the two days and one night his men spent fighting the fire—a bill calculated at a rate of $1 per man per day.

By July, the clearing job was done.

"I never knew how John McDougall came out financially on the job," said Keefer. "Some had it that he made good, but I never could find out."

Likely, McDougall lost money. By September of 1887, he'd hired a lawyer to sue the city for $10,000 in damages for "obstructing him with the completion of his contract."

Who were the Chinese who were driven from Vancouver by the mob in 1887?

A letter, written to Vancouver City Council on March 7 of that year by Victoria lawyer Thornton Fell, lists the names of 32 men who were attacked by the mob. Five have the surname Lee, and there were two each with the surname Chin and Ong.

One may have been the surname of the labour contractor in Victoria. A Jan. 19 letter to the *Vancouver News,* hinting that the Chinese work crew would be returning, said, "I have it on good authority that Ong Wook will have the Chinese here by tomorrow's boat or the day after to complete the contract to clear and grub the Brighouse Estate."

Several of the men are listed solely by their first names, preceded by the honorific "Ah," the Chinese equivalent of "Mr."

Fell's letter carefully itemizes the items each man lost during the riot. Ham Fong Quong, for example, lost bedding, a coat, shoes, three shirts, two pairs of pants, a Chinese scale and seven pieces of underwear, with a total value of $43.50. Duck Gem suffered a $100 loss, including his cooking utensils. Gan Yook—likely, the work crew's foreman—suffered the largest loss; the $296.50 in items lost included a pair of gold wristlets, a pair of gold earrings and a gold hair ornament.

Total for all 32 men was $2,068.85—a substantial loss, in an era when non-white labourers were often paid less than a dollar a day.

The items listed are an intriguing blend of east and west. Western-style boots, check shirts, "water proofs" and blanket coats rub shoulders with Chinese shoes, silk vests, a "China box" (likely a sandalwood or lacquered box) and a "counting board." Although some of the men may have cut their hair in the Western style, others wore it in a braid that hung down their backs, the end held in place with a ribbon or hair clip.

The newspapers of the day reinforced the idea that the Chinese—including those hired by McDougall—were coming from elsewhere to take the jobs of white Vancouverites. In fact,
the Chinese were in British Columbia long before most of the European immigrants who eventually settled in Vancouver.

The first Chinese to arrive in what is today British Columbia were 50 carpenters aboard a ship captained by John Meare in 1788; they helped build a fur trading post in Nootka Sound. Some remained behind and married First Nations women.

Chinese next came to B.C. in 1858, during the Fraser River gold rush. Most were veterans of the California gold rush that began in 1848. One of them was San Francisco merchant Ching Lee, who came to Victoria in 1858 to set up a franchise of the Kwong Lee Company.

During the Cariboo gold rush of 1860s, one of the largest "Chinatowns" in the province was at Barkerville, where Chinese accounted for half the town's 10,000 residents.

The next wave of Chinese immigration came in the 1880s, during construction of the B.C. section of the CPR; thousands of Chinese worked on the railway. The reason was a simple matter of economics. It proved cheaper to bring labourers across the Pacific by ship than to bring them across North America by rail. Thanks to earlier railway-building projects south of the border, there were already experienced Chinese labourers close at hand; the first 1,500 Chinese that Onderdonk hired were from Oregon, and were supplied by the U.S.-based Lian Chiang Company.

"The irony is, the Chinese completed the transportation network that allowed European labourers to come very cheaply [to B.C.]," said Henry Yu, a University of B.C. history professor who specializes in Chinese-Canadian history. "The railways allowed, for the first time, the competition of European labour. The rhetoric was, 'The Chinese are taking our jobs,' when in reality it was the other way around."

Paul Marnette was a bridge draughtsman for the CPR from 1880 to 1885. As he put it during a 1951 interview with the archives, when asked why Onderdonk used upwards of 10,000 Chinese labourers, he said, "Well he had to get help; there were no men to be got here."

Historians point to the famine, war, natural disasters and overpopulation as prompting migration from Guangdong and Fujian, the two southeastern provinces from which the vast majority of Chinese immigrants came to Canada. But the migrations of the late 1800s were only made possible, said Yu, by a trading network that was in existence long before the railway companies of North America ever needed labourers.

For 500 years before the Chinese came to B.C., said Yu, merchants in China's southeastern provinces made a business of supplying labourers to sugar plantations and other industries throughout southeast Asia—the East Indies, Vietnam, Thailand or the Philippines, wherever they were needed.

Chinese labour was attractive to the CPR both because it was cheap, and because it came as a package deal. In return for a set amount of money, a Chinese contractor would deliver the men to the job site, together with the tools they needed to do the job. He'd also supply their food.

Even before the CPR was built, Chinese immigrants had set up shop in Granville Townsite (Gastown), the precursor to modern Vancouver. One pioneer recalled the Chinese store being there as early as 1877.

Gin Tei Hing had a wash house and store in Granville Townsite in the early 1880s; further along Water Street was the laundry of Wah Chong, whose daughter was the first Chinese-Canadian to attend school in Vancouver. In April 1886, according to the Vancouver Weekly Herald, Wah Chong relocated his laundry to Hastings Townsite (site of the modern PNE). It proved to be a fortuitous move. Vancouver burned to the ground two months later. It also proved to be a prosperous location; the crews who were extending the CPR from Port Moody to Vancouver were headquartered at Hastings, and needed laundry done.

Goon Ling Dang, who married one of Wah Chong's daughters, came to B.C. in 1877 after a 56-day journey aboard a sailing ship.

"I don't know why I came," he said in a 1936 interview at the archives. "I was just a young fellow, about 18, and wanted to go somewhere; they said Victoria was a good place to go. The fare was $38, which I borrowed."

"When I arrived at Victoria I found it just a
SPORTS TEAMS WERE THE PRIDE OF CHINATOWN

When the Chinese Students soccer team won the Mainland Cup in 1934, the victory was a source of pride for Vancouver's Chinese-Canadian community.

"Chinatown erupted in a wild celebration," reported Paul Yee in his book Saltwater City. "A parade with a hired band began at Con Jones Park, car horns blaring. The players held the three-foot-high cup aloft in an open car. Firecrackers exploded in Chinatown, where a crowd of thousands waited... The next day was declared a holiday in Chinatown with free tea and dim sum for everyone."

The soccer club, formed in 1919, had a distinguished record. Its members won the Iroquois Cup in 1926, the Wednesday League Cup in 1931 and the Spalding Cup in 1937. They also received the L.D. Taylor trophy for sportsmanship.

The league in which they played was predominantly British; other teams included the Sons of England and the Shamrocks.

"They were big, but slow," recalled Spoon Wong. "We ran rings around them. We played a kick and run game. As soon as we got the ball we kicked it away and chased it."

Other teams complained that the Chinese Students had an unfair advantage on the field because they could shout to each other in a language the opposing players couldn't understand. The Chinese players countered that they found it just as hard to understand what the English-speaking players were saying to each other.

The Chinese Students had two uniforms: a green soccer sweater and a white sweater. They travelled to games by streetcar and taxi, playing at parks in Vancouver and New Westminster, with the occasional exhibition game in Victoria or North Vancouver. For important games, players were reimbursed for lost wages—$1 to $1.50 a day during the Depression.

The club raised money through member subscriptions and spectator ticket sales, and by holding Halloween and Valentine's dances at local venues like the Peter Pan Ballroom. Expenses in the 1920s and '30s included new soccer balls at $5 each, oranges and cocoa for the games, fees for referees and for "lining" the field, sawdust and string, team photos at $1 each, coffee and tea after the games, league affiliation and cup entry fees, laundering the team sweaters, silver polish for the trophies, "football hose" and boot laces, and medicine—both North American and Chinese. An entry in the team ledger for 1934 records the purchase of "latex" and explains that "latex is a rubber bandage newly invented."

Chinese-Canadians also flocked to another sport: tennis. The Chinese Tennis Club was formed in 1937, and by 1940 was holding tournaments with similar clubs from Seattle and Victoria. Visiting players were treated to sightseeing tours of the city, banquets at local Chinese restaurants and "flannel dances."

The club annual for 1940 lists Charles E. Louie as president and Spoon Wong as vice-president. Champions for the previous year were Buck Sing Chung, men's singles; Doris Chan, ladies' singles; and Jack Chan and Buck Sing Chung, men's doubles.

In 1940, plans were afoot to move from a clubhouse at the CNR Tennis Courts to a site in Chinatown. The move was prompted by a letter from Canadian National, stating that the land occupied by the courts might be needed by the railway.

The club was considering a site owned by Great Northern at the southeast corner of Pender and Carrall streets. Leased to the Chinese Benevolent Association, the property was being used as a playground. Cost of building a clubhouse and four clay tennis courts, surrounded by a fence, was estimated at $1,400.

Noting that the site was sunny and central to Chinatown, a committee formed to study it reported that it had only a "small risk of theft and hold-up hazards."

The committee further concluded that locating the courts there would be "good publicity to tourists. This would be a credit to Chinatown."

In the 1940 annual, Dr. F.S. Chu summed up the spirit of tennis, as the Chinese-Canadian players saw it. Noting that the game not only helped to develop the physique and a "rigorous frame," but also "mental attributes such as resource, judgement, self-control, poise and adaptation." He concluded: "The displaying of these qualities will stand the participants in good stead when they come face to face with the stern conflict of life."

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Members of the Chinese Tennis Club of 1938.
small place, very small place, and I had friends there... my friends gave me work in a laundry; washing by hand.

"Then in 1885 I came over to Vancouver, and have stayed here ever since."

He set up shop on Duport (Pender) Street; his trade name was Jun (or Jung) Kee.

Emphasis is always placed, said Yu, on the fact that the Chinese saw North America as a place to work, rather than to settle. Yu said this was true not just of the Chinese, but of European immigrants.

Most tended to move from city to city, looking for work. Up to one-third of the immigrants who came to North America in the 1800s—of all nationalities, not just the Chinese—eventually returned to their homelands.

And it wasn’t just the Chinese who relied upon help from relatives and clan organizations to make it in the New World. Scottish immigrants, for example, were equally "clannish." In 1886 they set up the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society in Vancouver to aid fellow Scots who had "fallen into distress," who couldn’t afford the cost of a doctor, or who needed help with burial expenses. Most immigrants, said Yu, practised "chain migration"—a phenomenon in which immigrants follow in the footsteps of friends or relatives who had come to North America before them.

"There’s one person with the guts, and about 500 who come later," said Yu. "It’s all about family. All about who could help you out here and there."

European settlers, however, later developed a "mythology" that idealized the brave immigrant who came to the New World alone, and made his or her way in the New World by the sweat of their own brow, without any support. They settled an "empty" British Columbia—empty, that is, aside from a handful of Native Indians and Chinese who, somehow, mysteriously happened to already be there.

"In the narratives of B.C., the Chinese are always ‘arriving,’” said Yu.

The Chinese became the people against which the myth of the brave European settler could be contrasted. Growing up, Yu kept hearing that the Chinese immigrants were the "weirdos" who were clannish and dependent. "Actually, the norm is what my family and most immigrant families experienced," he said. "Lots of [European immigrants] had family already around to help them. Maybe not as extensive [a support network] as the Chinese, but they still had relatives."

Other immigrant groups were once reviled, just as the Chinese were—Irish Catholics, for example—but discriminatory measures like the Chinese "head tax," introduced in 1885, and laws that prohibited certain ethnic groups from voting, were directed only at visible minorities. That’s because, as the white supremacy movement gained ground, laws that singled out other Europeans would have undermined the notion of a "white race."

"It’s not about the Chinese race,” said Yu. "It’s about gluing those other people together." In the meantime, all southeast Asians are lumped together. "They’re another variety of them," said Yu.

Yu takes pride in the fact that the victims of the 1887 riots fought back not with their fists, but by hiring a lawyer. It’s unclear whether the demand for reparations did any good; the same day that Fell drafted his letter detailing the Chinese workers’ losses, the city’s solicitor informed council the city "was not liable" for the damage the mob did to the store of Yune Chung. The merchant had been trying, through his lawyer, to get the city to reimburse him $952.20 for fire damage to his home, destroyed property, stolen cash and two months’ rent he’d had to pay while his home was unfit for occupation.

When council received Fell’s letter, they simply filed it.

The riot of Feb. 24, 1887 was a dramatic incident, but it wasn’t without precedent. An anti-Chinese movement had been growing ever since the transcontinental railroad was completed and European immigrants began flooding into B.C.
During Vancouver's first municipal election in 1886, mayoral candidate Richard H. Alexander, manager of the Hastings Sawmill, sent 50 or 60 of his Chinese mill hands to the polls to vote for him.

According to Gallagher, stagecoach driver Charlie Queen—who later became a Vancouver alderman—"got up on a stage coach in front of Mr. Cyrs' hotel on Water Street and made a speech blaming the Hastings Mill people for sending the Chinamen up. The crowd grew hostile, [and] started to drive the Chinamen back to the mill. The Orientals took to their heels, and the crowd took after them down the Hastings Road."

Queen hopped in his stagecoach and tried to run the Chinese down.

Alexander lost the election—in part because of this incident, and in part due to the campaigning of successful mayoral candidate Malcolm A. MacLean, who made much of Alexander's having once derisively referred to Canadians as "North American Chinamen."

Ironically, MacLean's wife employed a Chinese servant in her home. Speaking about her realtor husband's tenure as Vancouver's first mayor, she later recalled, "Those were the busiest times, so much entertaining, so many dances, so difficult to get help in the household. White help at any price was almost impossible, and the Chinamen were so independent; if there was an extra person for dinner, or something the Chinaman didn't like, they would pack up and walk out without saying a word."

Throughout the fall and winter of 1886-87, anti-Chinese agitators worked hard to turn Vancouver into a whites-only city. A committee visited Hastings Sawmill to demand that Alexander replace the Chinese who worked there with white workers. On Dec. 18, 1886, the Vancouver News reported that "as fast as white men applied for work the Chinese were discharged, until all the places about the mill were filled by white labor." The only exceptions were "two old Chinamen who have been faithful servants, and [Alexander] has not the heart to turn them out on the world to suffer."

In January, R.D. Pitt chaired an "indignation meeting" at which 300 people signed an anti-Chinese pledge, saying they would refuse to employ Chinese "for any purpose whatever... or to deal with them, directly or indirectly." The pledge was to come into effect on Feb. 1. Local businessmen posted it in their windows.

A committee visited merchants in Chinatown, offering to buy out their laundries if they would leave. The Jan. 16 Vancouver News quoted the committee as reporting that "a favorable response had been obtained from each. They were ready to settle their interest in the town and agreed to go back to China if their expenses were paid."

On March 13, the Vancouver News reported that Vancouver, a city "composed of an English speaking people from all parts of the Dominion, from this Province, from Great Britain and from the United States" must "protect itself from a positive and growing evil... the overcrowding by Chinese labor."

Jang "Eddy" Hong was living proof that an immigrant from Canton could, if he worked hard, make his fortune in Canada.

Born in 1911, Hong came to Canada when he was six years old, immigrating with his older brother. He originally lived in Chinatown and later purchased his first home on West 23rd Avenue near Cambie Street.

In the early 1940s he purchased his first gas station—the Star Service Station at 26 East Pender St.—and changed the name to China Service Station. He sold it in the mid-1950s, but while it was under his ownership the garage, later known as the Pender Centre Service Station, was also home to a number of different businesses, including Eddy's U-Drive, Tri Motors Garage and Art's Automotive. All were either owned or managed by Arthur Costanzo, J. Miotto and L. Principe.

By 1972 the property, then owned by Linwa Investments, had become a parking lot.

Hong also purchased a gas station just down the road, at 306 East Pender St., in the early 1950s.

Together with two other men, Hong started a company called Ready Investment. The company owned a diner known as Jimmy's Fine Food. There was no Jimmy, explained Hong's daughter—the name was a transliteration of the Chinese words "tastes good."

By 1956 Hong had earned enough money to purchase a home on Osler Street in prestigious Shaughnessy. The next year he listed his occupation as "retired" in the B.C. Directory—although he continued to buy and sell businesses. One of those businesses was Hastings Car Wash—said to be the first automated car wash in Vancouver—which Hong owned in the early 1960s.
Otherwise, it warned, a "prosperous community [would] be overshadowed by the darkly colored cloud of cheap and injurious labor competition comprising and covering every grade of domestic work and general labor service."

That said, the newspaper admitted the "boycott system" was proving impracticable, "inasmuch as it could not be made universal and needed such constant surveillance that the plan must wear itself out."

The city itself took steps to stamp out Chinese labour. Tenders from those who employed Chinese were not accepted. A list of specifications, drawn up for an 1880 contract to supply one million wooden blocks for street paving specified not only the type and quality of wood but also specifically states, "No Chinese to be employed on this contract."

Contractors found creative loopholes. In January 1888, Hugh F. Keeler responded to complaints that he'd employed Chinese on a gravel contract with a letter to council explaining that, "At the time the subcontractor commenced the work and during a great part of the time it rained a good deal and his gang of white men refused to work in the rain. Consequently the Chinese were employed and as we buy the gravel from them on the [illegible] and it is obtained outside City limits I did not think it was prohibited."

The city's solicitor later agreed with Keeler. Ironically, although both David and Isaac Oppenheimer sat on Vancouver's city council in the 1880s, as did Joseph Mannion, their brickyards on Bowen Island employed Chinese workers, according to W.A. Grafton.

"The Chinamen making bricks in Oppenheimer's brickyard and Mannion's brickyard at Bowen Island—both yards had Chinamen working in them—used to come down, and cut off the shark fins for a delicacy," he told the archives in 1939.

Despite the riots, the boycotts, the anti-Chinese provisions found in city contracts and the anti-Chinese movement of the 1880s, the Chinese remained part of Vancouver. As Beck would later recall, "[The] exhibition of mob violence certainly had the effect of many Chinese men leaving the city, but after a short interval of almost total exclusion they returned in greater numbers."

"Henderson's B.C. Gazetteer and Directory of 1889 listed 26 Chinese businesses in Vancouver, including 13 laundries, four grocery stores, two labour contractors, two tailors and a boot and shoemaker.

Faced with a growing Chinese population, the anti-Chinese movement switched tactics. "One method of intimidation was by marking a chalk mark at the gate or doorway of a dwelling indicating that the inhabitant was the employer of a Chinaman," said Beck. He recalled seeing this mark on the floor of the Bank of B.C. He asked manager J.C. Keith what it meant.

"He said he had just had a call from an anti-Chinese who made the mark and had warned him if he stepped over that mark he did so at his peril... [Keith] had then turned around to a kitchen table on which reposed a ledger, some cash and a most formidable revolver, but on looking back his visitor was making a hasty exit."

That said, Beck remained a supporter of excluding Chinese from Canada. When called before a royal commission in his capacity of custodian of naturalization records, he told its chair that "they would never become Canadian nationals. A few, no doubt, would be what are known as law abiding citizens, but their hearts would ever be in Asia."

In 1904, Chen Dian Quan wrote to his father, Chen Da Chun, who was living in Vancouver, known as "Saltwater City" to the Chinese.

In the letter, the son writes that he's worried about his father, who in an earlier letter home had mentioned that he was in debt and that he was unwell, with swollen feet. Dian Quan felt sorry for his father, who was nearly 50 years old, an age when he should be enjoying life with his children and grandchildren in China. He wrote that he wished his father could return to China soon, and told him not to worry about the family back home—that he'd faced enough suffering while overseas.

The letter was sent to Chen care of the Wing Sang Company, an import and export firm established in Vancouver in 1888 by Yip Chun Tien (better known as Yip Sang). The letter never reached Da Chun, for reasons unknown, and was included in a host of historic material from the company that now resides at the City of Vancouver Archives.

The founder of that company—who also went by the names Yip Loy Yiu and Yip Lin Sang—left the province of Canton (modern Guangdong) in 1864, when he was in his mid-30s. He worked in San Francisco as a dishwasher, cook, cigar maker and labourer in the goldfields before coming to British Columbia in 1881.