

“BY THE SIDE OF OTHER CANADIANS”¹:

The Locally Born and the Invention of Chinese Canadians”

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IN 1914 A GROUP OF LOCALLY BORN YOUNG MEN from Victoria, British Columbia, became the first people to publicly call themselves “Chinese Canadian.”² By calling themselves this, they affirmed their Canadianness in the face of racist discourses that consistently denied it. At the same time, they asserted their Chineseness not as a racial category but, rather, as their “nationality,” or what we more commonly today would call their “ethnicity.” In proclaiming this new identity, they did more than combine two fully formed previously existing identities. Nationalist, ethnic, and even racial identities are never fixed but, rather, are continuously defined and redefined through processes of ascription and of self-definition.³ And while people necessarily construct new

¹ Low Kwong Joe [Joseph Hope], “Chinese Segregation,” *Victoria Daily Times*, 11 October 1922, 4. I am indebted to the other contributors to this special issue of *BC Studies* and to Trevor Gulliver, Frances Boyle, and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this article. I would also like to thank Henry Yu and Robert McDonald for their encouragement. This paper was written with support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa.

² See Lisa Rose Mar, “From Diaspora to North American Civil Rights: Chinese Canadian Ideas, Identities and Brokers in Vancouver, British Columbia, 1924 to 1960” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2002), 138.

³ For example, despite its seeming agelessness, the category “Chinese” is really a product of modern Chinese nationalism. See John Fincher, “China as Race, Culture and Nation: Notes on Fang Hsiao-ju’s Discussion of Dynastic Legitimacy,” in *Transition and Permanence: Chinese History and Culture. A Festschrift in Honour of Dr. Hsiao Kung-ch’uan*, ed. D.C. Buxbaum and F.W. Mote (Hong Kong: Cathay Press, 1972), 59–69. See also Rebecca E. Karl, “Race, Colonialism and History: China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in *Philosophies of Race and Ethnicity*, ed. Peter Osborne and Stella Stanford (London: Continuum, 2002), 97–113; and Rey Chow, “On Chineseness as a Theoretical Problem,” in *Philosophies of Race and Ethnicity*, ed. Peter Osborne and Stella Stanford (London: Continuum, 2002), 132–49. On the performative nature of Chinese identities, see James L. Watson, “The Renegotiation of Chinese Cultural Identity in the Post-Mao Era: An Anthropological Perspective,” in *Perspectives on Modern China: Four Anniversaries*, ed. K.G. Lieberthal, J. Kallgren, R. MacFarquhar and F. Wakeman, Jr. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 364–86; and Edgar Wickberg, “Global

identities out of the bits and pieces of existing cultural repertoires, they also articulate new ways of being in the world.⁴ The Chinese Canadian identity is no different. While both Canadian nationalism and Chinese nationalism supplied the ingredients for this new identity, the term “Chinese Canadian” articulated something completely new: the everyday stuff of people’s lives caught between the racist exclusions of the dominant society and the China-focused lives of first-generation migrants from China.

As is often the case with histories of the so-called Chinese in Canada, before the middle of the twentieth century the evidence about the lives of Chinese Canadians is more often than not indirect rather than direct. Such is certainly the case when it comes to the invention of a Chinese Canadian identity. With two exceptions discussed below, there is remarkably little direct information available about those who first publicly self-identified as Chinese Canadian. The absence of specific information on the inventors of Chinese Canadian identity makes it necessary to infer the reasons for this invention from other records and from the larger context of earlier twentieth-century British Columbia. Three sets of sources document the locally born during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The first set consists of demographic information on Chinese resettlement in British Columbia; it indicates the size of the locally born population and suggests something of their social conditions. The second set is made up of the self-representations of the locally born in both the English- and Chinese-language newspapers of the era. The largest single set of such self-representations is to be found in their interventions in the 1922-23 students’ strike, when locally born young adults sought support for their year-long boycott of schools, which was organized to protest the Victoria School Board’s attempt to force all racialized Chinese elementary school pupils to attend segregated Chinese-only schools. The third set of sources consists of interviews with locally born young men and young women that were conducted in 1924 by Winifred Raushenbush, the field investigator of the United States-based Survey on Race Relations. Although these sources from the 1920s do not speak directly to the invention of a Chinese Canadian

Chinese Migrants and Performing Chineseness,” *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 3, 2 (2007): 177-93.

⁴ See, for example, Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities,” in *Race, Culture and Difference*, ed. James Donald and Ali Rattansi (London: Sage, 1992), 252-59. On articulation, see Stuart Hall, “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, 2 (1986): 28-44.

identity, they do document how the locally born saw themselves, their community, and their place in Canadian society.

Even though the members of the second generation of those who migrated from Guangdong Province in South China are effectively as old as are the members of the first generation migration (the first member of the second generation was born in 1861), the locally born of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have not been well studied.⁵ David T.-H. Lee, the original scholar of the Chinese in Canada, was positively dismissive of the locally born, noting in his influential history that their Chineseness was at best superficial and that they were marginalized by the dominant society.⁶ By contrast, Anthony B. Chan, Peter

⁵ David T.-H. Lee [Lee T'ung-hai or Li Donghai], *Jianada Huaqiao shi* [A history of the Overseas Chinese in Canada] (Taipei: Zhonghua Da Dian Bianying Hui, 1967); Anthony B. Chan, *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983); Harry Conn, Ronald J. Conn, Graham Johnson, Edgar Wickberg, and William E. Willmott, *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, ed. Edgar Wickberg, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982); Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988). Professional histories contrast with more popular accounts written by second and later generation people. See Paul Yee, *Saltwater City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1988); Denise Chong, *The Concubine's Children: Portrait of a Family Divided* (Toronto: Viking: Penguin Books Canada, 1994); and Brandy Lien Worrall, ed., *Finding Memories, Tracing Roots: Chinese Canadian Family Stories* (Vancouver: Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia, 2006).

⁶ *Jianada Huaqiao shi*, 388-89. Lee's comments are reproduced in English by Wing Chung Ng in *The Chinese in Vancouver, 1945-80: The Pursuit of Identity and Power* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 40. Lee, who was born in China, was for many years the principal of the Chinese public school in Victoria. This put him in close contact with the locally born. Interestingly, at least two locally born people were sufficiently literate in Chinese to contribute to his earlier edited collection. See Liu Guangzu [Joseph Hope], "Yubu Huaqiao sa nian fendou shiji [The accomplishments of thirty years of struggle of the Victoria Overseas Chinese]," in *Jianada Yuduoli Zhonghua Huiguan/Huaqiao Xuexiao chengli qishiwu/liushi zhounian jinian tekan* [Special memorial publication marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of Canada's Victoria Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and the sixtieth anniversary of the Overseas Chinese School], ed. David T.-H. Lee [Li Donghai], (Victoria: Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, 1960), part 4, 6-10. See also Lin Libin [Lim Bang], "Weibu Zhonghua Huiguan zhi yuange ji qiaoxiao chuangle zhi yuanqi [The origins of the Victoria Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and the reasons for the creation of the Overseas School]," *Jianada Yuduoli Zhonghua Huiguan*, part 4, 1-5.

The situation in Canada contrasts with that in the United States, where the "American-born Chinese" have long been recognized as integral to the histories of the Chinese. See, for example, Him Mark Lai, *Cong Hua qiao dao Hua ren: Er shi shi ji Meiguo Hua ren she hui fa zhan shi* [From Overseas Chinese to Chinese: A history of the development of Chinese Americans during the Twentieth Century] (Hong Kong: San Lian Shudian, 1992); K. Scott Wong and Sucheng Chan, eds., *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998); Sucheng Chan, *Being Chinese, Becoming Chinese American* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Him Mark Lai, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2004). Even recent scholarship on transnationalism has been careful to include the American born. See Xiao-huang Yin, "Writing a Place in American Life: The Sensibilities of American-Born Chinese as Reflected in Life Stories from the Exclusion Era,"

S. Li, and Edgar Wickberg have been more careful to acknowledge second-generation people whenever they encountered them; however, in the end, they too have focused on the life patterns, organizational networks, and realities of first-generation migrants. It is only in the work of Wing Chung Ng that the second generation, or those he calls “the local born Chinese,” becomes integral to understandings of community development. Indeed, he sees this development in relation to intergenerational tensions in which one-and-a-half-generation people (those born in China but who grew up in Canada) emerged as key leaders because only they could bridge the divide between older first generation migrants and the locally born.⁷ However, Ng’s work on the development of a Chinese Canadian identity is restricted to the activities of locally born veterans of the Second World War during the late 1940s and early 1950s.⁸ While Lisa Mar’s study of ethnic brokerage and community leadership supports Ng’s analysis,⁹ neither Mar nor Ng have examined the period before 1925, when the term was invented.

The first recorded usage of the term “Chinese Canadian” came with the establishment of the Chinese Canadian Club in Victoria in 1914.¹⁰ The club was nominally made up of locally born young men, although at least one member had been born in China but had grown up in Victoria.¹¹ In 1924, Winifred Raushenbush, the field investigator for the Survey on Race Relations, visited the club. She described it as “composed of about twenty young men, all of whom with one exception are between the ages of twenty and thirty.”¹² A 1929 photograph of the Chinese Canadian Club’s soccer team appears to confirm the ages of

in *Chinese American Transnationalism: The Flow of People, Resources and Ideas between China and America during the Exclusion Era*, ed. Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 211–235.

⁷ See Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver*.

⁸ See also Wing Chung Ng, “Becoming ‘Chinese Canadian’: The Genesis of a Cultural Category,” in *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas*, ed. Elizabeth Sinn (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998), 203–16.

⁹ Mar, “From Diaspora to Civil Rights.”

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 138. It is likely that the term had been used privately for some time before. Certainly, in many years of research, I have not found any earlier usages of the term. See also *From China to Canada*, Wickberg, 97–98.

¹¹ Although he was born in China, Wong Foon Sien who grew up in Victoria was also a member. *From China to Canada*, ed. Edgar Wickberg, 97.

¹² See “Interview with Joe Hope, President of the Chinese Canadian Club, Victoria,” Survey on Race Relations (hereafter referred to as SRR), box 24, major document 33, p. 1, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0033.pdf (viewed 28 February 2007).

its members.¹³ All of this suggests that, at the time of the founding of the club, its members were in their mid to late teens.

Relatively detailed information is available on two of the members. “Miss Raushenbush,” as she is often referred to in the original documents, interviewed the club president, Joseph Hope, and one of his close associates, Cecil Sit Shiu Lee. Described in the interview as being in his “mid-twenties,” Hope (a.k.a. Low Kwang Joe [Liu Guangzu in Pinyin romanization]) had been born in Victoria in 1896 to a merchant family and, in 1924, was in the China-Canada import/export trade.¹⁴ Hope had been sent to China by his parents for at least part of his schooling and was most likely one of the club members who was quite literate in Chinese.¹⁵ Certainly he represented the club in its official dealings, both in English-speaking and Chinese-speaking contexts. Lee, too, had been born in Victoria, but he had been schooled in the Victoria School Board schools and at Columbia University in New York. By 1924, he was working in the Chinese department of the Royal Bank.¹⁶ The British Columbia Vital Event Death Registration lists him as having died in Vancouver in 1971 at the age of seventy-five.¹⁷ This suggests that he was born in 1896 or 1897 and that he would have been more or less the same age as Hope. Although I have not been able to find any additional information on Lee, the fact that he attended Columbia University suggests that his family was well-to-do.¹⁸

¹³ See Vancouver Public Library, Special Collections, historical photographs, “Victoria Chinese Canadian Club Soccer Team at Con Jones Park,” 26 December 1929, VPL acc. no. 11801.

¹⁴ British Columbia, British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency, reg. no. 1896-09-323694, BC Archives, GR 2965, B13804 (GSU no. 2115625), particulars of birth. His father, Charley Hope, was a merchant tailor.

¹⁵ “Interview with Joe Hope.”

¹⁶ “Interview with Cecil Lee, a native son who is married to a Hakkla,” SRR, box 24, major document 34, p. 4, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0034.pdf (viewed 26 February 2007).

¹⁷ See British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), Vital Event Indexes (hereafter VEI), Vital Event Death Registration, reg. no. 1971-09-010677, available at http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-4FE2A31/textual/governmt/vstats/v_events.htm (viewed 8 December 2007).

¹⁸ According to the 1901 Canada census, a “Shick Shew” Lee was born in Victoria to Lee Cheong, an opium merchant, in 1892. Assuming this was Cecil Lee, he would have been seventy-nine rather than seventy-five in 1971. Part of the difficulty in finding Lee and other racialized Chinese is the carelessness with which their names and other information were recorded in the census. For example, the 1901 and 1911 manuscript censuses mangle the names of the prominent community leader Lee Mong Kow and his family, even though Lee spoke English fluently and his wife, Chang Ann Seto, had been born in Victoria. In 1901, he is listed as “Lee Ming Kow,” his wife as “Lee Ming Seto,” his oldest daughter as “Lee Ming Yort Wha,” and his oldest son as “Lee Yook Quan.” In the 1911 census he is listed as “Lee Mong Kiow,” his wife as “Chow Ceotosese,” his oldest daughter has disappeared, and his oldest son was “Chow Uuliveh.” Compare 1901 Census of Canada, BC, Victoria (no. 4), subdistrict: Victoria (city/cité) D-7, p. 23, available at Automated Geneology, <http://automatedgenealogy>.

In these interviews, Winifred Raushenbush describes both Hope and Lee as fully acculturated to the dominant society. She notes that Hope's Chinese education has led him to have "all the Chinese charm of manner, which the native born Chinese brought up in this country have lost. And which they so much envy," but that in other respects he is North American in his outlook, liking "dancing and billiards and tennis."¹⁹ Raushenbush apparently spent considerable time with Hope, even attending a party that he was at as well as being given a tour of Chinatown that included the Chinese school, the Chinese Benevolent Association, and the Chinese hospital. She was so at ease with Hope that she noted, "I would rather go to the homes of these people than go to the theater, they make me so comfortable."²⁰

Raushenbush's observations of the Cecil Lee-Grace Cumyow household in Victoria further suggests acculturation. This was "the first Chinese home belonging to a very smart young couple" that she had visited.²¹ She described their home as "undistinguished and American in its furnishings" with "a statue of the Three Graces under the clock." When "Mrs. Lee" wanted to cook some Chinese noodles, "her husband wouldn't let her." Apparently he was afraid that Raushenbush and "Mrs. Mahon" who accompanied her would not like them, "so we had the usual ham sandwiches which the Chinese offer to their American friends, also tea cake and wine."²² Raushenbush was evidently surprised by Grace Lee, whom she described as "an accomplished" pianist and noted, "her social instincts were so sure that she could just as capably been the wife of any young business man."²³ She also described Cecil Lee as having "an unusually good library," in which "[t]he Encyclopaedia Britannica is his bible."²⁴

com/census/ViewFrame.jsp?id=61156&size=large&highlight=6 (viewed 8 December 2007); and Automated Genealogy, 1911 Census of Canada Indexing Project, British Columbia, Victoria, District 21, p. 3, at <http://automatedgenealogy.com/census11/View.jsp?id=37353&highlight=1&desc=1911+Census+of+Canada+page+containing+Mong+Kiow+Lee> (viewed 8 December 2007). The 1901 original is further mangled by the transcription process of the automated database, and Lee becomes "Lee Wong Kon." A BCA photograph of Lee Mong Kow and his family, dated from before 1905, shows that none of his three children born in the 1890s was named Cecil. See BCA, photo A-02348, available at http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-143B344/cgi-bin/text2html/visual/img_txt/dir_101/a_02348.txt (viewed 9 December 2007).

¹⁹ "Interview with Joe Hope," 2-3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²¹ "Interview with Cecil Lee," 4.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

The children of Grace Cumyow and Cecil Lee were fourth-generation locally born. Grace Cumyow, who married Lee in 1919, was the eldest daughter of Won Alexander Cumyow, the first child born in British Columbia to parents from China.²⁵ The oldest of six boys, Cumyow had been born in 1861 at Port Douglas on Harrison Lake, ten years before British Columbia entered Confederation. His parents, Won Ling Ling and Wong Shee, were storekeepers and outfitters for those following the Lillooet Trail. In 1889, Cumyow married Ye Eva Chan, a young woman from Hong Kong brought to British Columbia by a missionary family.²⁶ By 1901, the Cumyow's had four sons and a daughter, Grace. Eventually they had ten children.²⁷

Although Winifred Raushenbush was evidently surprised by the Lee-Cumyow household, it is also apparent that English was the language of this household. Interestingly, Raushenbush describes Cecil Lee as "liberal" in his views on intermarriage, something that she attributed to the fact that he "did not marry a Chinese woman." She describes Grace as "a Hakkla [sic]."²⁸ The Hakka are an ethnic minority in South China and had made up 10 percent of the migration from Guangdong. Hakka and Cantonese speakers also have a long history of interethnic conflict.²⁹ Apparently Lee's family had objected to the marriage because of the Cumyow's Hakka origins. In the context of British Columbia, where

²⁵ VEI, Vital Event Marriage Registration, reg. no. 1919-09-201053, BCA microfilm no. B11390, GSU microfilm no. 1984111, http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/textual/governmt/vstats/v_events.htm#indexes (viewed 3 November 2006). See also "Interview with Cecil Lee."

²⁶ "Wong Liu Ling" according to the 1881 census, "Wong Ling Ling" according to Cumyow's marriage certificate. Compare New Westminster North, British Columbia in 1881 (1 of 2), Census Returns for the 1881 Canadian Census, LAC, RG 31, C1, district 187, sub-district B, p. 55, household 245, reel C-13284, available at http://www.vpl.ca/ccg/pop-up-1881_census_Cumyow_family_Page_1.html (viewed 3 November 2006); and Marriage certificate, Won Alexander Cumyow, British Columbia civil marriage record for Wan Alexander Cumyow and Ye Chan, 1889, British Columbia, Vital Statistics Agency, Marriage Registrations, 1872-1929, reg. no. 1889-09-114432, BCA microfilm no. B11381, available at http://www.vpl.ca/ccg/pop-up-Marriage_certificate_Won_Alexander_Cumyow.html (viewed 3 November 2006). I have taken the latter as being more likely to have been controlled by Cumyow, who presumably knew his father's name. "Shee" was a common form of address indicating that a woman was married; however, in Chinese custom, women kept their father's surnames. The electronic census information recorded by the Church of Later Day Saints misreads the handwritten "Shee" as "Shu."

²⁷ Accounts differ on this. The biography of Cumyow, located in the Won Alexander Cumyow Fonds in the Rare Manuscripts and Special Collections Branch of the University of British Columbia Library, suggests that he had ten children: six boys and four girls. His death notice suggests that he was survived by four sons and six daughters.

²⁸ "Interview with Cecil Lee," 2.

²⁹ On the Hakka as a proportion of the migration from Guangdong, see David Chuen-yan Lai, "Home County and Clan Origins of Overseas Chinese in Canada in the Early 1880s," *BC Studies* 27 (1975): 3-29. See also Nicole Constable, *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

racism made intermarriage extremely difficult and where there were few women of marriageable age in the Guangdong migrant communities, this opposition appears to have been short-lived. However, it does highlight the fact that it would have been exceptional for second- and third-generation people to be able to marry someone from their own dialect group. It is unlikely that Cecil and Grace spoke the same dialects of Cantonese or Hakka. Consequently, English would have been the common language of their household.³⁰

Raushenbush's visits with Hope and Lee suggest that they were at best reluctant participants in larger political struggles. When asked about the 1922-23 students strike, according to Raushenbush, "[Hope and Lee] looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders, and Cecil Lee said, 'It started right here. We had to go down and meet the school board a number of times. It was awful, I don't like to think of it.' This feeling was something they both seemed to share, but they appeared reluctant to talk about it."³¹ However, she noted that they shared "a very profound affection for Victoria" and shared an "ineradicable optimism." She especially found that Hope's "manner was very assured and charming under all circumstances," and seemingly that he was "untouched by any bitterness or sullenness about the treatment of the Chinese," noting that this was "in spite of the fact that he has been sent to Ottawa by the Chinese in connection with the Exclusion Act. This he regarded as something politicians had cooked up and something that had to be handled with patience."³²

The reticence of Hope and Lee to discuss their political activities suggests that the club came together in the first place for social rather than for explicitly political reasons. This image of the locally born as acculturated to the dominant society, as keenly aware of the racism of the dominant society, but also as reluctant participants in politics is supported by other sources. In this respect, the timing of the invention of a Chinese Canadian identity is important. It was only by the eve of the First World War that there came to be enough locally born people who were the offspring of first-generation Guangdong migrants to

³⁰ "Interview with Cecil Lee," esp. 2.

³¹ "Interview with Joe Hope," 1. For accounts of the strike, see Mary Ashworth, *The Forces Which Shaped Them: A History of the Education of Minority Group Children in British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1979); David Chuen-yan Lai, "The Issue of Discrimination in Education in Victoria, 1901-1923," *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Études ethniques au Canada* 19, 3 (1987): 47-67; and Timothy J. Stanley, "White Supremacy, Chinese Schooling and School Segregation in Victoria: The Case of the 1922-1923 Chinese Students Strike," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 2, 2 (1990): 287-305.

³² "Interview with Joe Hope," 5.

constitute themselves as a distinct social group. The same factors that produced the virtual absence of women within the Guangdong migrant communities of British Columbia also resulted in few locally born children. According to the 1921 Canada Census, 8 percent of the total "Chinese" population in Canada (2,966 out of 39,536) was made up of the locally born. Of these, 2,133 lived in British Columbia. However, most of these would have been school-aged children. Only 830 locally born people were reported in the 1911 census.³³ Again, this 1911 group would have overwhelmingly been made up of children. Figures collected by the Chinese Board of Trade for the 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration reported that 4 percent of the total Chinese population of Victoria – 3,263 people – some 62 boys and 82 girls were "native-born." If the number of locally born children was proportional to the number of married women, there would have been at most 200 locally born children in British Columbia at that time – a figure further suggested by the presence of only 122 "Chinese" children, presumably immigrants as well as locally born people, in the provincial school system.³⁴ The number of "Chinese" children in BC schools was small, despite the fact that attendance had become compulsory the year before in the urban areas, in which so-called Chinese people were concentrated.³⁵ During the nineteenth century, the locally born would have been even fewer. For example, Lim Bang was born in Victoria in 1884 at a time when there were few "Chinese" children in the city.³⁶ According to the 1884 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, again citing the community's own population figures, out of a total population of 1,767, there were only twelve "boys under 12" in Victoria.³⁷

Even though the locally born "Chinese" population was tiny in relation to the overall Guangdong migration and the population of British Columbia as a whole, as a group it had relatively strong social and cultural capital as it was overwhelmingly made up of people from merchant households. The 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration reported forty-five merchant households in

³³ Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, 61.

³⁴ The commission also reported the presence of twenty-seven "females" in Vancouver. See Canada, Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1902), 12-13.

³⁵ Timothy A. Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling in British Columbia, 1900-1929," in *Schooling and Society in Twentieth-Century British Columbia*, ed. J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig, 1980), 27.

³⁶ See City of Victoria Archives, Lim PR 139, Lim Li Bang Fonds (ca. 1890-1960).

³⁷ Canada, Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* (Ottawa: By order of the Commission, 1885), 363.

Victoria, twenty-eight labourer households, one minister household, and two interpreter households.³⁸ Significantly, these merchant households, following Chinese ethnic custom, included some with multiple wives. The commission reported the presence of sixty-one merchant wives, twenty-eight labourer wives, one minister's wife, and two interpreters wives. Assuming that the number of children was proportional to the number of women, at least two-thirds of the locally born children would have belonged to merchant or other middle-class households. In subsequent years, the locally born population became increasingly working class in origin, reflecting, in part, the migration of more working-class women prior to the ending of Chinese immigration in 1923.³⁹

Putting all of this together, it is likely that, at the time of the founding of the Chinese Canadian Club, there were no more than forty locally born young men in Victoria, almost all of whom were from merchant or other middle-class households. It is the younger members of this group, those in their mid to late teens in 1914, who would have formed the club. The older locally born men were more integrated into the Chinese language institutions and society of British Columbia than were the members of the Chinese Canadian Club. For example, Won Alexander Cumyow founded the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and was for many years its English-language secretary. Lim Bang appears to have been closely associated with English-speaking, first-generation migrants rather than with the members of the Chinese Canadian Club. Along with Lee Mong Kow, who for many years was the official immigration interpreter, he was a founder of the Imperial Chinese School in 1907. Certainly, Lim socialized with Lee Mong Kow (the Chinese-born immigration interpreter) and with leading first-generation merchants; he was also active in the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association.⁴⁰ Similarly, the older locally born women had most likely married first-generation migrant men, as is evident in the

³⁸ See Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration*, 12–13. For example, the Victoria merchant Chu Lai had four wives. See Timothy J. Stanley, “Chu Lai,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 13 (1901–10) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 198–99.

³⁹ After 1904, the migration of women remained fairly constant in absolute terms but also remained a small proportion of overall immigration. See Li, *Chinese in Canada*, 60 and 61.

⁴⁰ See the photo, “Tennis party at the home of Lim Bang,” showing “Dong Lin Tong (merchant), Lee Mong Kow, Lee Dan. Front Row: Lim Bang (host), Herbert Lee, Chan Horn (manager of Yuen Lung).” Victoria City Archives, PR 139, Lim Li Bang Fonds, print 7341. See Lim Li Bang Fonds, 984–11–30, excerpt from *Who's Who and Why: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Men and Women in Western Canada* (Vancouver: Canadian Press Association Ltd., 1912). See, also Lin Libin [Lim Bang], “Weibu Zhonghua Huiguan zhi yuang ji qiaoxiao chuangli zhi yuanqi.”

case of the Victoria-born Chang Ann Seto, who was married to Lee Mong Kow.

All of this suggests that the Chinese Canadian Club came together in the first instance to enable its members to socialize with others of a similar age, gender, and experience rather than for expressly political purposes. This is confirmed in Raushenbush's observations of the clubroom as "quite pleasant," with "a very good and complete library of the best authors, including the entire works of Jane Austen,"⁴¹ as well as by the existence of the club's soccer team. In early twentieth-century Victoria, racism ensured that Chinese people had limited contact with young men and women who were racialized as white, while the demographics of the Chinese community and racist immigration practices ensured that there were few people of their own age, locally born or otherwise.

That the Chinese Canadian Club was founded for reasons of male sociability contrasts sharply with the emergence of a Chinese American identity that, from its inception, had political overtones. A distinct identity on the part of locally born Chinese in the United States emerged during the late nineteenth century with the founding of the United Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden State – a group explicitly founded in reaction to the exclusion of locally born Chinese from the organization of locally born non-Chinese Californians. This group was later reconstituted as the Chinese American Citizens Alliance.⁴² That a distinct identity for the locally born appeared earlier in the United States than it did in Canada is explained by demographic differences between the two countries. The timing and size of the resettlement from Guangdong in each country meant that, where there were thousands of locally born in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century United States, there were tens in Canada. As in Canada, so in the United States the first-generation Guangdong migrant population was overwhelmingly made up of men; however, the overall proportion of women and, hence, of the locally born was consistently higher in the United States than in Canada.⁴³ Indeed, by 1910, the 11,921 "native born" in the United States

⁴¹ "Interview with Joe Hope," 1.

⁴² Sue Fawn Chung, "Fighting for Their American Rights: A History of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance," in *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era*, ed. K. Scott Wong and Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 95–126.

⁴³ The presence of women and hence of the native-born in the United States is underlined by Judy Yang, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of the Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995). The passing of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act effectively barred most racialized Chinese from entering the United States,

made up 17 percent of the total “Chinese” population and as much as one-third of the San Francisco community.⁴⁴ Although the members of the Chinese Canadian Club were likely aware of the existence of “Chinese Americans,” significant differences between the United States and Canada meant that they did not simply copy the American model. While the first Chinese American identities appear to have been articulated for expressly political purposes, the Chinese Canadian identities were initially articulated for purposes of sociability – quite literally as a way of finding a place in the world where one’s existence was not questioned – and only later developed a political element. The radical affirmation of Chinese Canadians as people who belonged in Canada also differed in degree from the equivalent affirmation in the United States. The American-born had political rights that the Canadian-born did not, and while racist violence in the United States may have been stronger than it was in Canada, so, too (relatively speaking), were the American Chinese communities.⁴⁵ Also significant was the fact that Chinese Canadians were British subjects, as were people from Hong Kong. Thus the term, “Chinese Canadian,” tied them to the territory of Canada more than it did to a formal citizenship. Even the fact that Britain was one of the major imperialist powers in China, especially in the Hong Kong and Guangdong regions, further complicated the BC scene. This linked the transnationalism of Chinese populations in Canada to the much larger migrations from Guangdong and Hong Kong to places like Singapore and Malaysia.⁴⁶

All of this highlights the importance of developing an analysis that is rooted in local contexts and that avoids essentializing assumptions.⁴⁷

and Chinese American communities declined in overall population at the same time that the locally born population increased. See Erika Lee, *At America’s Gate: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). See also Sucheng Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882–1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

⁴⁴ Chung, “Fighting for Their American Rights,” esp. 98.

⁴⁵ Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* (New York: Random House, 2007). Although the history of ethnic cleansing in Canada remains to be written, the fact is that by the end of the First World War, many areas of British Columbia were also closed to those racialized as Chinese.

⁴⁶ See Robert A. Huttenback, *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies, 1830–1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976); and Yen Ching Hwang, *The Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution, with Special Reference to Singapore and Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976).

⁴⁷ Wang Gungwu has repeatedly made this point with respect to Overseas Chinese communities. See Wang Gungwu, *China and the Chinese Overseas* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991). See also his “Introduction: Migration and New National Identities,” and “Upgrading the Migrant: Neither Huaqiao nor Huarenm,” in *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas*, Sinn, 1–12 and 15–33.

This, in turn, suggests that it is important to pay close attention to local discourse. Before the invention of Chinese Canadians, if there was one thing that almost everyone living in British Columbia would have agreed upon, it was that there were "Chinese" and then there were "Canadians." During the early twentieth century, Canadian nationalisms produced thoroughly racist understandings of who and what belonged in the nation. In British Columbia in particular, popular English-language discourse commonly equated Canadianness exclusively with people and things of northern European and, especially, of British origins. English-language discourse focused not so much on whether the area's racialized Asians and First Nations people should be restricted or excluded as on how best to restrict them so as to ensure their eventual disappearance and, above all, so as to preserve the local dominance of "whites" – that is, racialized English-speaking Europeans. White supremacy was built into the dominant governmental system and was integral to the settler colonialism that had produced that system. Everyday racist practices, widespread discrimination, and popular violence reinforced the resulting racist state formation, often with devastating consequences for those racialized as "Chinese." Among other things, this meant that, by the early twentieth century, the term "Canadian" was thoroughly racialized and excluded those labelled "Chinese."⁴⁸

Significantly, "Chinese Canadian" was a term of English-language discourse. In Chinese sources, the name of the Chinese Canadian Club appears as the "Tongyuan Hui," or "Shared Origin Club"; the equivalent to "Chinese Canadian" does not appear until 1944.⁴⁹ This situation points to very real differences in English-language and Chinese-language discourses in British Columbia, even when they were articulated in relation to the same referents. Although Chinese-language discourses

⁴⁸ Contra Patricia E. Roy, "British Columbia's Fear of Asians," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 13, 25 (1980): 161–72. While Roy is certainly correct that many Anglo-European settlers were insecure in their occupation of the territory and that the intensity of anti-Asian discourse varies with time and region, the entire political system of British Columbia was predicated on the dominance of those racialized as white. See also Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858–1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989). Although it does not use the term "white supremacy," scholarship on European colonization in relation to First Nations tends to support my view. For example, Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900–50* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998); Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); and R. Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002). On racist state formation, see Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994); and David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002).

⁴⁹ See Mar, "From Diaspora to Civil Rights," 138.

of early twentieth-century British Columbia also represented “Chinese” and “Canadian” as mutually exclusive, they drew on Chinese nationalist discourses that defined Chineseness in essentialist, if not always in racialized, ways.⁵⁰ The fact that “Chinese Canadian” was a term used in English-language discourse suggests that, for the inventors of the term, their membership in the imagined community of Canada was at issue in a way that their membership in the imagined community of China was not.⁵¹

In the context of these polarized discourses, inventing an identity that straddled this divide drew upon significant social and cultural capital. That a group of men first publicly articulated this identity highlights the fact that young women from the same background, despite being more numerous, were in an even more insecure position with respect to the dominant society. The inventors, locally born second- and even third-generation inhabitants of British Columbia, were almost without exception the children of merchants and, hence, were relatively privileged in relation to first-generation Guangdong migrants, who made up the vast majority of the “Chinese” community. Also important is the fact that they came of age during the era in which compulsory attendance in BC government-controlled schools ensured that they were fluent in the dominant discourses and were able to manipulate them for their own purposes. At the same time, they needed access to discourses on Chineseness that provided alternatives to those supplied by the white supremacist discourse. Evidence of these alternate discourses can be found in Chinese-language newspapers.

Although British Columbia’s Chinese-language newspapers were primarily concerned with first-generation migrants, they recorded the activities of second- and third-generation people insofar as their activities were linked to the papers’ nationalizing projects. The Vancouver-based *Chinese Times*, or *Tai Hon Kung-po* (*Dahan Gongbao*), the organ of the Chee Kung Tong (CKT), or Zhigongdang in pinyin, included Victoria in its market and regularly reported on events there. While this was not the only Chinese-language newspaper published in British Columbia during this era, it is the one that is the most completely preserved and to which scholars have the greatest access.⁵² As the official organ of

⁵⁰ See, L. Eve Armentrout Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns: Chinese Politics in the Americas and the 1911 Revolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990); Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (London: Hurst, 1992).

⁵¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London/New York: Verso, 2006).

⁵² At various times, there were Christian, Chinese Empire Reform Association, and Guomindang newspapers that had very different political views from those of the CKT, but

the CKT, the *Chinese Times* was centrally concerned with promoting a particular version of Chinese nationalism. It consequently tended to represent Chinese and Canadians in polarized terms. The *Chinese Times* commonly represented people living in British Columbia as *Huaren* (lit., "Chinese people"), *wo guoren* (lit. "people of our country"), or *Huaqiao* (lit., "Overseas Chinese"). The terms were variously contrasted to categories such as "Westerners," "English people," and "Canadians." A 1922 editorial in the *Chinese Times* on the Asiatic exclusion movement in British Columbia provides examples of such usage. The editorial consistently contrasted *wo Huaren* ("we Chinese") and *wo guoren* ("people of our country") to "Canadians" (variously *Kanren* or *Jiaren*). For example, "the people of our country [*wo guo renti*] have followed the path of welcoming Canadians [*Kanren*] wishing to expand commerce with the cities of East Asia" and have not exercised "the slightest discrimination" against them.⁵³ This recasting of a local issue in terms of a larger conflict between China and the West was a recurring strategy in the paper's Chinese nationalizing agenda. It represented people of Chinese origins living outside of China as integral members of the Chinese nation, while also drawing sharp lines between "the Chinese people" and others. Drawing such essentialized boundaries was part and parcel of the invention of modern Chinese nationalisms.⁵⁴ Within the discourse of the *Chinese Times*, "Canadians" and "Chinese" were two different people. The locally born may never have set foot in China, but within the logic of the paper, they were still *Huaren*.⁵⁵

Something of the different ways in which first-generation migrants and the locally born positioned themselves can be seen in the newspaper's coverage of the 1922-23 Victoria students' strike. The

only very scattered copies of these have survived. Despite the rivalry between these other associations and the CKT, the *Chinese Times* still reported the speeches and other activities of their spokespeople when associated with communal actions such as those organized by the Chinese Benevolent Associations. This suggests the existence of a separate Chinese-language public sphere. See Timothy J. Stanley, "Schooling, White Supremacy and the Formation of a Chinese Merchant Public in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 107 (1995): 3-27.

⁵³ "Lunshuo Dongya ren hejian e yu Kanren lu wai Kanren tichang qu zhu he [How do East Asians see the hatred of Canadians who are repeatedly raising exclusion]," *Chinese Times*, 26 October 1921, 1.

⁵⁴ See Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*. The strategy of linking local struggle to Chinese nationalism as part of a broader cultural politics within a hostile social landscape was not unique to British Columbia. See Yu Renqiu, *To Save China, to Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). The best account of politics remains Armentrout Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns*.

⁵⁵ It is of course an open question as to whether other newspapers engaged in similar representations as only scattered copies remain. Most likely the Guomindang Victoria-based paper *New Republic* did so, as did the earlier *Yat Sun Bo* of the Chinese Empire Reform Association.

immigrant-dominant Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) supported the Chinese Canadian Club in its boycott of the local public schools. Yet, as shown in the *Chinese Times'* coverage of a rally on 24 September 1922, the CCBA representatives emphasized the insult to "our country" – China – whereas the Canadian-born stressed their rights as British subjects.

Representatives of the first generation recast the local dispute in terms of the larger issue of China's weakness and its domination by foreign powers.⁵⁶ Typical was the speech of the CCBA representative, Ma Gungru, who called upon "our country [*zuguo*] to open international negotiations" and for efforts to build public opinion among "our country's government, students, merchants, workers, newspapers, and people in every walk of life" in order to force the negotiation of "a treaty of mutual respect." The representative of Victoria's Chinese Public School expressed similar views, telling the meeting that "the Chinese" were the precursors of world civilization but that "today we are looked down upon by the English people as humanity that cannot be of equal rank so they accordingly segregate schools to teach us." The speaker added that, fortunately, "the political consciousness" of the Overseas Chinese was such that they would fight determinedly to "wipe away this national shame."⁵⁷ In the banal nationalism of the discourse being deployed here, it is the Chinese nation that is being humiliated by the school board, not merely Victoria students. Key to this discourse are the small pointing words, what the cultural psychologist Michael Billig calls the diexis of nationalist representations, the "we's" and "ours" that make and remake the nation and its members.⁵⁸ Thus, "our country" refers to "China" and not to "Canada." Similarly, the "we" does not refer merely to "we, the opponents of segregation" or to an imagined community limited to others in Canada; rather, it simultaneously positions people living in

⁵⁶ In 1922, China was divided by civil wars. Although the foreign powers, including Canada, recognized the coalition that controlled Beijing as the national government, more often than not the existence of such a government was a fiction. See, for example, Colin Mackerras, *China in Transformation, 1900-1949* (London and New York: Longman, 1998).

⁵⁷ "Kangzhen fenxiao Huaqiao tuanti hui kai yanshuo da hui [Overseas Chinese organizations hold large public rally to resist school segregation]," *Chinese Times*, 27 September 1922, 1.

⁵⁸ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995). Billig argues that nationalist categories are extremely fragile, which means that people need to be consistently reminded of them through mundane, banal acts of signification. As a result the nation is always represented as the prime taken-for-granted category (e.g., "the weather report" that talks about "national trends" rather than regional or local ones only makes an imagined community). Scholars have long recognized the artificiality of nationalist categories. See Ernest Renan's 1882 lecture, "What Is a Nation?" in Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? et autres essais politiques* (Paris: Presses Pocket, 1992).

Victoria (including the striking students) as members of the same group and differentiates them from others living in Victoria by positioning them as members of a larger Chinese nation. Ma referred to *zuguo*. I have translated this as "our country" but it is more literally rendered as "our ancestor's country," or "the land of our forefathers," or "the fatherland." He and a number of the speakers positioned the audience as *Qiaobao*, or "fellow countrymen living overseas," and the striking students as "our students," or our "overseas fellow country students." The speakers juxtaposed these categories to "Westerners [*xiren*]" and to "English people [*Yingren*]" living in Victoria. For example, Ma called the BC schools *xiren xuexiao*, or "Westerners' elementary schools."

Significantly, Joseph Hope, speaking for the Chinese Canadian Club, articulated a different position. While he, too, positioned the striking students as "Chinese," he also positioned them as people who were British subjects. He told the meeting that this was the second time that "Chinese students [*Hua sheng*]" were "being humiliated," and he warned, perhaps foreshadowing the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act, that "unless no effort is spared in resisting it, a third harsh regulation will be brought forth and its humiliation will be even more unbearable." He then added that the locally born were supposed to have equal rights and that those who were "segregating yellow and white" were violating "the thousand year old sacred constitution." This was apparently a reference to the British constitutional tradition. Interestingly, where others spoke of China or of the Chinese people as being humiliated, he spoke of Chinese persons as being humiliated. In his discourse, Chineseness appears to be an ethnic origin, something that is quite separate from formal citizenship or political loyalty. At the same time, he is concerned that school segregation was establishing a precedent for more significant segregation and exclusion in Canada. Where other speakers were concerned about China and the Chinese nation, Hope was concerned about the consequences of segregation to people in Canada. This was a theme that he returned to repeatedly. According to the *Chinese Times*, when speaking at the opening of a Chinese Canadian Club branch in Vancouver at the end of 1922, he explained that "the Overseas Chinese were being discriminated against" and that "it was necessary to unite all Chinese, especially the native born ones, together so as to fight against unjust treatment." He noted that "the club was established

primarily for protecting against injustice and protecting the rights of the Chinese.”⁵⁹

Thus it would appear that, in Chinese-language discourse, while the locally born were both represented and represented themselves as integral participants in the imagined community of China, they positioned themselves differently from first-generation migrants. Rather than enter into the struggles of China proper, they identified their particular contribution as helping the community fight against local oppressions. This was likely an expression of their greater awareness of the pressures of the dominant society, their distance from the old country politics of their elders, and an affirmation of a special role for them in the broader struggles of ethnic Chinese communities. This made an asset out of their acculturation to the dominant society, something that many first-generation migrants saw as a deficit. Indeed, first-generation old-timers disparagingly referred to the locally born as “Siwash,” a derogatory Chinook jargon term for First Nations people.⁶⁰ Being “native” had its advantages when dealing with a hostile environment.

The expression of a fully distinct identity as Chinese Canadian appears first in English-language newspapers. The letters to the editor of self-identified locally-born people provide the largest collection of their self-representations and the most direct source on their negotiations of identity. Particularly important are the many letters written to Victoria’s English-language newspapers during the 1922–23 students’ strike. Previously, the self-representations of self-identified Chinese people in English-language discourse tended to be isolated. During the school segregation dispute, several people directly represented themselves to the English-language public for the first time. These letters were written as part of a campaign to win the support of the newspapers’ readers for the striking students and to expose the racism of the school board. As such the letter writers were not simply interested in representing themselves as similar to the “white” residents of Victoria; their ability to mobilize dominant discourses demonstrated that they had assimilated the legitimating discourses of English Canadian state formation through their own schooling in the Victoria School District.

⁵⁹ *Chinese Times*, 3 January 1923, p.3. Translation and citation from the Chinese Canadian Research Collection, University of British Columbia Library, Special Collections, box 4, file 13, Bessie Yue (translator).

⁶⁰ See, for example, Wong Tai Wai, “Impressions of a Chinese Doctor,” *Forward* 2 (May 1931): 15. This was the journal of the Chinese High School and University Students Association. See City of Vancouver Archives, the Yip Family and Yip Sang Ltd. Papers, 1895–1989, Add. MSS 1108, box 95, file 2.

For example, in early September 1922, Jane Law Son, self-described as "a Chinese girl" who had "attended the public schools," noted that most of those caught up in the strike were "British-born" and that segregation would cause "prejudice and ill-feeling." "Don't you want the Chinese to become good citizens of Canada?" she asked.⁶¹ In effect, she argued that integrated schooling enabled Chinese acculturation to the dominant society and made for good Canadian citizenship, while segregated schooling prevented this from happening. Significantly, she also rejected the idea of a racialized Canadian citizenship, instead suggesting that citizenship was produced through government-controlled schooling and acculturation.

In mid-October 1922, after it had become evident that the strike would become a protracted affair, Joseph Hope, writing as Low Kwong Joe and identifying himself as the president of the Chinese Canadian Club, expressed the frustration of the club members, whom he described as "a body of Canadian-born Chinese whose future must perforce be with and in Canada." He pointedly asked:

What can be the purpose behind this movement [to segregate racialized Chinese pupils]? Can it be the intention to prevent us securing an English education so that our children can be permanently ignorant, so that they must remain laborers to be exploited? Being ignorant of the language we will be unable to take our part by the side of other Canadians, and we will then be pointed out as those who refuse to learn the customs or social life of the country – in fact, refuse to assimilate. It will have been forgotten by then that it was not because we did not want to learn, but because certain narrow-minded autocrats have taken upon themselves the responsibility of preventing our learning.

For Hope, what was at stake in school segregation was the very survival of people whose futures "perforce" were in Canada. Segregation not only threatened the class positions of the offspring of merchants like himself but also kept them "ignorant of the language [i.e., English]" and prevented them from being assimilated into "the customs or social life of the country." At the same time, he positioned those being segregated as Canadians. Segregation would not prevent them from living in Canada, but it would render them unable to take their "part by the side of other Canadians."⁶²

⁶¹ Jane Law Son, "Segregation," *Daily Colonist*, 17 September 1922, 4.

⁶² Low Kwong Joe, "Chinese Segregation," *Victoria Daily Times*, 11 October 1922, 4.

P. Lee, who also wrote for the Chinese Canadian Club, expressed similar views. Lee noted that 85 percent of the children involved in the dispute were Canadian born, noting: "We are claimed by the Canadian government as Canadian citizens." He then advanced an argument that drew upon the legitimizing discourses of the Canadian state:

The fundamental principles upon which Canadian nationhood is to be built upon are that there shall be no differentiation between races. All are to be moulded into one people. Will segregation do this or retard it? Some may say that Chinese cannot assimilate. We answer, why not? We have been forced by unjustifiable prejudices to keep apart, simply because you would not let us approach you. We are called upon to assume citizenship responsibilities, but we are denied citizenship rights.

Like Hope, Lee was suggesting that there was a collectivity of "Chinese" people but that it was highly desirable that the members of this group be allowed to assimilate into the dominant society. Significantly, for Lee it was racist segregation that was preventing this group from being integral members of a "Canadian nation." He noted, "Our children have to suffer, not for any sins of theirs, but because they happen to be born of parents who formerly inhabited a section of the globe known as China." He concluded with an appeal for "justice and fair play" on the part of "all those who enjoy the franchise."⁶³

Yet, such justice was not forthcoming. Many of those who did enjoy the franchise took for granted that Asians were aliens while Anglo-Europeans were native. For example, at the time the retail merchants of Victoria were complaining that "the Chinaman was gaining a firmer foothold in the business of the city" and that "there is not a business in the city, but suffers, directly or indirectly, because of the Oriental competition." That "Chinese" unfairly competed with "whites" had long been a trope of racist discourse in British Columbia. According to this discourse, a Chinese-owned business could not be "a business of the city," even though such businesses had been in Victoria since the Fraser River gold rush. At the same time it presented the businesses of "the White dealer" as naturally belonging in the city.⁶⁴

⁶³ P. Lee, "Chinese Segregation," *Daily Colonist*, 15 October 1922, 4; and *Victoria Daily Times*, 17 October 1922, 4.

⁶⁴ "Oriental Question Arouses Merchants," *Victoria Daily Times*, 26 June 1923, 16. By far, Roy provides the best documentation of anti-Asian discourse. See, Roy, *White Man's Province*. See also W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

These direct challenges to widespread and powerful representations of their alienness demonstrate the pooled cultural capital of locally born young adults, including those associated with the Chinese Canadian Club. Evidently, as their calls for full citizenship rights and references to theories of "Canadian nationhood" suggest, they had assimilated the dominant discourses of the English Canadian nation state. Their ability to do this reflected their relative class privilege. As a group, they were relatively well educated. Long before high school became universal, many of these people were graduates of Victoria's high schools. A number had attended postsecondary institutions, either the Provincial Normal School or university. As a group, they also had access to higher levels of education in Chinese. Most had attended after-hours Chinese-language schools such as the Chinese Public School in Victoria. At least one locally born child was able to work as an English-to-Chinese translator and journalist for the *Chinese Times* after having received four years of Chinese-language schooling in Victoria.⁶⁵ Some were graduates of the Chinese Public School in Victoria, which meant that they had completed the elementary school curricula of the Chinese Ministry of Education.⁶⁶ Some, like Hope, had been sent to China for secondary education. Where individually they may have lacked an education in one language or the other, as a group they had considerable cultural capital. Among other things, their education in Chinese provided them with alternate discourses to those of the white supremacists regarding what it was to be Chinese. Indeed, this collective capital allowed them to analyze the school board's actions and to take the radical step of organizing the students' strike in the first place.

Thus it seems that, by the early 1920s, the members of the Chinese Canadian Club were largely assimilated into the dominant society. They were certainly fluent in the language of the Canadian state. At the same time, they had access to discourses on Chineseness other than those supplied by white supremacists. Whether or not they bought into Chinese nationalism, they were aware that China was an ancient civilization and that they were products of it. They were highly conscious

⁶⁵ "Interview with Lum Hing, translator for the Chinese Times," SRR, box 24, Major Document 6, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/1010000000024_0006.pdf (viewed 3 November 2006).

⁶⁶ On the nationalist contents of this school, see Timothy J. Stanley, "Chinamen, wherever we go": Chinese Nationalism and Guangdong Merchants in British Columbia, 1871-1911," *Canadian Historical Review*, 77, 4 (1996): 475-503. For a discussion of its counterparts in the United States, see Him Mark Lai, "Teaching Chinese Americans to Be Chinese: Curriculum, Teachers and Textbooks in Chinese Schools in America during the Exclusion Era," in *Chinese American Transnationalism*, Chan, 194-210.

of their exclusion from the dominant society, and they had found ways of directly representing themselves in relation to that society.

How these elements came together to make a new way of being in the world is suggested by a remarkable set of sources, the 1924 Survey of Race Relations. The survey, originally organized by the Rockefeller-funded New York-based Institute of Social and Religious Research, sought to document the lives of racialized Asians on the Pacific coast of the United States and Canada. Because of Canada's 1923 federal exclusion act, the organizers of the survey were particularly interested in British Columbia and, most especially, in young racialized Chinese.⁶⁷ As a result, the survey began its formal inquiries in Vancouver. In 1924, the field investigator for the survey, Winifred Raushenbush of the University of Chicago, conducted a series of interviews with English-speaking members of the Vancouver, Victoria, and Cumberland "Chinese" communities.⁶⁸ The survey has been appropriately criticized for its Orientalism: it was, after all, a project through which a group of highly privileged, upper-class racialized white men (Raushenbush appears to have been the only woman associated with the project) sought to create knowledge of "the Oriental."⁶⁹ Despite this, the resulting interviews constitute one of the most important sources on the locally born during this era. They tend to confirm the impression created by the Victoria letter writers that second- and third-generation people were by and large acculturated into, and defined themselves in relation to, the dominant society.

This is not to say that the survey's interviews were not highly mediated. More often than not, Raushenbush conducted her interviews as visits rather than as something requiring a formal set of questions and answers; and when she wrote them up afterwards, she inserted her own observations and rather strong opinions among those of her research participants.⁷⁰ Indeed, in some instances it is difficult to tell whether it is Raushenbush or the interviewee who is talking. Although Raushenbush seems not to have been above walking into an association

⁶⁷ See "About the Collection," SRR, available at <http://collections.stanford.edu/srr/bin/page?forward=about> (viewed 3 November 2006). See also Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁶⁸ Winifred Raushenbush continued to be active in progressive politics in New York. She married another political activist, John Rorty, and gave birth to a son, Richard, in 1933. Richard Rorty grew up to be one of the leading philosophers of our times. She was also the biographer of the survey's principal investigator, Robert E. Park. See Winifred Raushenbush, *Robert E. Park: Biography of a Sociologist* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979).

⁶⁹ See Yu, *Thinking Orientals*.

⁷⁰ I am indebted to both David Oakley and Liz Dinger for this insight.

building unannounced, and even accepting cigarettes from her male research participants, apparently for reasons of propriety she was usually accompanied to her interviews, most often by a married "white" woman (commonly the wife of a missionary to "the Chinese"). For a variety of reasons – suspicion on the part of some of the local political groups about the survey, Raushenbush's own lack of Chinese languages, the need for personal introductions through intermediaries such as missionaries – the interviews were with English speakers, either long-term first-generation residents or second- and third-generation people, almost all of whom were from merchant, semi-professional, or professional backgrounds and who, more often than not, were Christians (or at least people well known to Christian missionaries). As a result, the locally born are overrepresented in her interviews – a problem for the survey's original design but an advantage for my purposes.

Winifred Raushenbush's interviews with locally born people in Vancouver, including with locally born women, confirm the impression found in her interview with Hope and Lee that, as a group, the locally born were "Canadian" in their cultural outlook. In March, Raushenbush visited the Lam family in Vancouver, whose second-generation children were young adults. Here she met one of the sons whom she identified as "the only Chinese boy in the university." She noted: "There is nothing Chinese about this boy's conversation. He plays on the college teams, owns a dog, is fond of shooting ducks, and finds the college standard of scholarship very strenuous." Raushenbush was particularly interested in Mary Lam, the second-oldest daughter, whom she described as "about twenty five" and as "one of the Chinatown belles, with a whole string of rejected suitors and fiancés." Mary had apparently refused to marry despite her parents' anxiety that "she is 'getting on.'" Like other locally born women, Mary seems to have been relatively free from parental supervision. Indeed, Mary, a graduate of the Provincial Normal School, was planning to go to China to teach, via the Hawaiian Islands. According to Raushenbush, this was because "one of the reflections in the back of her mind ... [was] that the social life of Canton among the young people is said to be no end gayer than that of Vancouver."⁷¹

Mary Lam's interest in going to China because of its supposedly better social life highlights the extent to which the locally born were excluded from the dominant society and were caught up in a small town in which everyone knew everyone else's business. Mary provided

⁷¹ "Visit, the Lam family, 1924 March," SRR, box 24, Major Document 20, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1o1o000000024_0020.pdf (viewed 3 November 2006), 2-3.

Raushenbush with information on the “four cliques among the younger set” in Vancouver, none of which was in any way traditionally Chinese in outlook. The first clique was “the young married women.” According to Raushenbush, “there are quite a lot of them and instead of staying at home and minding their children they play around a great deal.” It seemed that “heaven had been good to them” as each had a younger sister who provided childcare. The second clique was “the Football crowd,” made up of the Chinatown football team, the members of which “are said to be quite popular.” The third clique was “the Students Club,” which was made up of “anyone who [was] a freshman in High School or who [was] a graduate of a school.” The fourth clique, or “coterie,” was “the Smart Set,” which was “the set that occasionally give dances”:

Aileen Cum You [Cumyow, Won Alexander Cumyow’s youngest daughter] is according to Mary the blue stocking of the crowd. She also uses a cigarette holder. I remarked that she would it went with their style. Mary let me know that Aileen’s position of a dentist’s assistant to a Japanese dentist had first been offered to her.

Raushenbush records an additional set, which consisted of “what I would call the intellectuals.” This group included several other people whom she interviewed, among whom was a Chinese-born official of the local Chinese consulate. According to Raushenbush, “This crowd get up early of a summer morning to play tennis together.”⁷²

These young adults seemed “Canadian” in their outlooks and lifestyles, regardless of the extent of their education in Chinese. As noted, Hope had been extensively educated in Chinese, while Cecil Lee had been extensively educated in English. For those born in the smaller centres, there was almost no possibility of a Chinese education or even of being able to speak a Chinese language. For example, Myrtle Hosang had been born in Lillooet in 1891. In 1909, she was the first racialized Chinese to graduate from the Provincial Normal School, and in 1924, she was working as the head bookkeeper in a white lawyer’s office. She also noted, “I don’t know much Chinese. I was born and brought up in the country. We were the only Chinese family and there weren’t any separate classes in the school, so we talked English all the time.” Although Hosang noted that most children spoke Chinese to their families, in her case, when she came to Vancouver “and got into the university, [she] had to spend all [her] time studying, so [she] didn’t have much chance anymore to speak English [i.e., Chinese]. Not reading Chinese very

⁷² Ibid., 3-4.

easily, [she didn't] know much about Chinese history or literature." She also noted that, due to a lack of opportunities, there was no economic return for attending high school, and relatively few Chinese did so.⁷³ Those like Hope and Lee grew up in urban centres and had access to Chinese-language schooling. Lum Hing, for example, was born in Victoria, where he attended various schools, including the Provincial Normal School. He studied Chinese at night for four years. He also lived in China for a year and a half but did not study there. Despite this, at the time of his interview, he was the secretary for the Chinese Theatre Association and was working as an English-to-Chinese interpreter and journalist for the *Chinese Times*, even though he apparently did not agree with the political stance of Chee Kung Tong.⁷⁴

These young locally born adults shared both an education in the English-language school system of British Columbia and a keen awareness of their subordinate positions. Myrtle Hosang told Raushenbush that she had graduated from the normal school just as Chinese-only classes were opening up and that, although she had been recruited for a position by the normal school principal, she had been turned down. According to Hosang: "There is nothing that the educated Chinese can do in Vancouver. Many things that I might perhaps have considered I haven't because of my race. [Here Raushenbush appears to interject.] They can't enter government positions, they can't be a barrister and I don't think they can be physicians. [Now Hosang reappears.] A number of the girls (Canadian) in our offices are studying law."⁷⁵ Hosang contrasted this to the situation in the United States, where second-generation people could vote and hold government positions, noting that her brother-in-law, a Dr. Mah, was a professor at the state university in California.⁷⁶

Perhaps the strongest sense of being excluded was expressed by the locally born wife of Ko Wing Kan, described simply as "Mrs. Ko" (Alberta Lee).⁷⁷ Raushenbush visited the Ko household in "the polyglot section of Vancouver, a block or two from the Strathcona school, which had children of thirty four nationalities." Mrs. Ko was

⁷³ "Luncheon, Miss Hosang, 1924 March 19," SRR, box 24, Major Document 23, 3-4, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0023.pdf (viewed 3 November 2006).

⁷⁴ "Interview with Lum Hing." On the Chinese Theatre Association, see Wing Chung Ng, "Chinatown Theatre as Transnational Business: New Evidence from Vancouver during the Exclusion Era," *BC Studies* 148 (2005-06): 25-54.

⁷⁵ "Luncheon, Miss Hosang," 3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ VEI, Vital Event Marriage Registration, reg. Number: 1911-09-065672, British Columbia Archives, microfilm no. B11375, GSU microfilm no. 1983703, available at http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/textual/governmt/vstats/v_events.htm (viewed 5 November 2006).

the granddaughter of one of the CPR workers and had grown up “in a little town not far from Vancouver where they were the only Chinese family.” According to Mrs. Ko, people were nicer in the country and in the United States than they were in Vancouver: “Here in Vancouver I don’t get out much, except to church on Sundays and to meetings ... But when I go into the stores, they don’t notice you unless they haven’t anything else to do, then they will wait on you.” She also described being harassed:

And I don’t think they ought to call us “Chink.” One of my girl friends she is much more out spoken that [sic] I. If we are going along the street in a car and someone speaks about it, – boys mostly – and say “Lookit, there goes a car full of Chinks,” I am just very still, but she stops the car and gets right out and speaks to them. I have told them sometimes “Chink” doesn’t mean anything. Sometimes afterwards they beg your pardon. That is better than nothing, I suppose.

Clearly, racial harassment was a common event in Vancouver, but, perhaps just as important, some of the young adults were willing to challenge it.⁷⁸

The result of all this is that many members of the second and later generations did not really feel part of either the dominant society or the society of the first-generation migrants: they were caught between the two. This is perhaps best illustrated in Raushenbush’s May 1924 interview with Gershon Lew, the estranged son of Dr. David Lew, the president of the Chinese Benevolent Association, whom she also interviewed.⁷⁹ She described the younger Lew as having “the manner of the younger generation, sullen, hot and angry about the manner in which the Chinese had been treated.”⁸⁰ He had been born in Vancouver but, at the age of three, had been sent to Japan where he attended school. He also attended the Canton Christian College in China. He had wanted to become a teacher and go to an English school, but his father did not allow him to do this. Raushenbush speculated that his father was unable to pay for Gershon’s education because he was supporting

⁷⁸ “Visit, home of Ko Wing Kan, 1924 February 20,” SRR, box 24, Major Document 13, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0013.pdf (viewed 5 November 2006), 5.

⁷⁹ See, “Interview with Dr. Y. P. Lew, Dentist and President of the Chinese Benevolent Association; interpreter, Seto More, agent of the Canadian Pacific Bureau, Ocean Travel, 1924 February 4,” SRR, box 24, Major Document 25, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0025.pdf (viewed 4 November 2006).

⁸⁰ “Interview with Gershon Lew, the Hottest Bolshevik in Vancouver, 1924 May,” SRR, Box 24, Major Document 29, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0029.pdf (viewed 5 November 2006), 2.

two families (having taken a second wife) and had lent a considerable sum of money to the Chinese Benevolent Association that had not been repaid. Gershon had attended "an English school" in the previous year or so "after the school affair in Victoria" (i.e., after the students' strike). The school authorities had tried to place him in a segregated class, but he had resisted – a situation that was defused by missionaries in an effort to forestall another strike. He left the school following a dispute in which the principal lined up all the racialized Chinese boys to find the one who was responsible for one of the other boys having been "jabbed by a nail." According to Gershon, the principal had made no inquiries when a Chinese lad was injured by a rock-filled snowball.⁸¹ Subsequently, Gershon had tried working as a labourer both in a cannery and on the railroad but had found that he had nothing in common with the other workers. While working in the cannery, he had struck up a friendship with "an English woman." This caused some friction with the other workers, who did not understand the relationship: "They asked, 'Why do you do this thing,' and I could not explain to them what such a friendship is like."⁸² Although Gershon was reputed to be "the Hottest Bolshevik in Vancouver," Raushenbush found him to be "a dreamer and independent of this mechanical world." She also noted that most of the support he had received since his break with his father came from women. She explained this as follows:

He is very scared. However, I want to note here, in justice, to Gershon, in order to explain why women like him, that when he is talking to me about his ideas, or talking hopefully, he is not at all bad looking. In fact, I should say that he is beautiful. His teeth are white and flashing, the eyes luminous and gay. Gershon could have been quite attractive as an instructor, I imagine, if his father had had enough money, or had not gotten married often.⁸³

What Gershon Lee seemed to fear was his apparent lack of a future. He was caught between the exclusions of the dominant society, the constraints of his father's traditional household, his own apparent lack of opportunities, and a well-founded fear of losing the middle-class position into which he had been born.

While Gershon Lee's case might seem extreme, it is suggestive of the general situation faced by members of the second and subsequent generations. As Raushenbush notes in her interviews with Joseph Hope

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 6.

and Cecil Lee, the educated men in this group really had two options: either to become entrepreneurs in the import/export business or to enter the professions and semi-professions. As she points out:

The native born Chinese in Vancouver who are of the same age [as Lee and Hope] all work in Banks. I think none of them make money with the exception of Harry Cum You [Won Alexander Cumyow's eldest son]. Cecil Lee holds the same position with the Royal Bank in Victoria that Harry Cum You does in Vancouver. Joe Hope is in the Import and Export business which is the field in which a young Chinese can make money at the present time, if he has ability and capital.⁸⁴

However, few had the cultural and social capital, let alone the financial capital, needed to secure their fame and fortune in China. Although often the children of entrepreneurial parents, most lacked the business acumen and opportunities of their parents. Indeed, as the China-born entrepreneur Louie Houie sneered in his interview with Raushenbush, the second generation invariably failed at business. The reality was that many also lacked the language and cultural fluencies needed to succeed in a business that catered to other racialized Chinese.⁸⁵ Some spoke English as their only language. They were also facing a situation in which their economic activities were increasingly controlled and limited by the provincial and municipal governments. A second option for men was to enter the professions and semi-professions, such as insurance brokerage. Access to professions catering to racialized whites was severely limited. Some of these, such as law and teaching, were blocked completely either by legislation or by racist assumptions. Meanwhile, access to those professions and semi-professions that catered mainly to first-generation migrants from China was limited by the same language and cultural barriers that were at play in the entrepreneurial field. This left a third possibility: working-class occupations. As Gershon Lew's experiences show, racist practices precluded their working alongside racialized whites (the workers whose popular cultures were most like their own), while their Canadianized tastes and lack of knowledge of things Chinese precluded them from easily integrating with first-generation workers.

⁸⁴ "Interview with Joe Hope," 4.

⁸⁵ "Dinner, Louie Houie, President of the Merchants' Association, 1924 April 2," SRR, box 24, Major Document 26, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0026.pdf (viewed 4 November 2006), 3-4.

Locally born women had even more limited possibilities than did locally born men, despite the fact that they were among the first generation of women of Chinese origins whose right to an education was generally recognized.⁸⁶ Except as behind-the-scenes partners in their husbands' businesses, women entrepreneurs were unheard of. Women faced similar barriers to those faced by men with regard to gaining access to professions such as law, and what, by the early twentieth century, were traditional women's professions – teaching and nursing – which were effectively closed to them. Although several of the locally born women interviewed by Raushenbush had graduated from the Provincial Normal School, none was able to work as a teacher in the provincially controlled schools. Meanwhile, it was extremely difficult for them to get into nursing schools.⁸⁷ Most appear to have entered white-collar occupations, taking advantage of the feminization of office work that first occurred during the First World War. Myrtle Hosang was the head bookkeeper at a lawyer's office, while Aileen Cumyow worked as an assistant for a Japanese dentist. Women even faced more limited marriage prospects than did men. Again, a gendered political economy was at work. Several interviewees, both men and women, suggested that men could and most often did marry women from China, while women were not able to marry men from China. Their lack of fluency in Cantonese and their lack of cultural knowledge of South China, in combination with the traditional practice of married women becoming members of their husbands' households, made it very difficult for them to go and live with their husbands' families in China. Women from China who came to live with Canadian-born husbands could be assets in a family business that catered to first-generation Guangdong migrants; the reverse, however, did not hold true.⁸⁸ Thus, it appears that many of the locally born women delayed marriage, and while seemingly independent of their parents' wishes, they had little in the way of prospects.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ See, "Interview, Ko Wing Kan, interpreter and Ginseng merchant, 1924 February 26," SRR, Box 24, Major Document 10, http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0010.pdf (viewed 4 November 2006), 4.

⁸⁷ After the Second World War, Denise Chong's mother was unable to find a trainee nurse's position at any of the regular hospitals; she was only able to find one at the Woodlands Institute. See Chong, *Concubine's Children*. See also the discussion of Anna Lam's situation in Yee, *Saltwater City*, 67.

⁸⁸ For accounts of several Canadian-born people who were sent to China and subsequently returned to Canada, see Worrall, *Finding Memories, Tracing Routes*.

⁸⁹ See, for example, the interviews with Myrtle Hosang, the Lams, and the Kos as well as "Interview with Yip Quong, the first white woman in Vancouver married to a Chinese man, 1924 February 26," SRR, box 24, Major Document 11, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0011.pdf (viewed 4 November 2006). It may be that the young women

Thus, the picture that emerges from Raushenbush's interviews is of a second and third generation decidedly North American in their outlook, too small to be economically viable with regard to meeting the needs of other second- and third-generation people, lacking the cultural capital and ability to secure their fame and fortune either in China or in Canada, and with limited prospects of successfully integrating into the larger racialized Chinese or racialized white working classes. Yet, at the same time, the very existence of people like this challenged white supremacy and Chinese nationalist essentialisms. As second-, third-, and in some cases even fourth-generation residents of British Columbia and Canada, they were "native" rather than "alien." The young adults among them claimed Canadianness by right of birth and by right of their personal tastes and practices. English was their primary language, while their cultural tastes and entertainments were those of "respectable" Anglo-Canadians. Even their occupations were no longer in the purely ethnic sector but were increasingly in the professions and semi-professions with non-racialized Chinese clients. Further, in both Victoria and Vancouver, as these young adults established their own households, they were beginning to move out of Chinatown into previously all-white neighbourhoods.⁹⁰

Thus, it would appear that the term "Chinese Canadian" was invented by a group of locally born young men for what were, at least initially, primarily social reasons. The Chinese Canadian Club allowed these men to socialize with others who, like themselves, were caught between two societies. English would have been their principal common language, while cultural improvement (e.g., reading the complete works of Jane Austen) and discussing the issues of the day would have been among their main outlets. Significantly, they were not hapless victims caught betwixt and between first-generation Guangdong migrant society and English Canadian white supremacy; rather, they were active agents of cultural production in their own right. As they grew increasingly aware of shared experiences and interest, they proved more willing to engage the dominant society on its own terms. At the same time, out of the

she interviewed were the exceptions. Raushenbush noted that there were only thirty-five unmarried "girls" in Vancouver, of whom only three were over twenty (Myrtle Hosang, who was over thirty, Aileen Cumyow, and Mary Lam). She also noted that Aileen's sister had married at age twenty-seven, "which is probably as late as any girl has married here." See p. 3 of the rough draft of "Visit, the Lam family, 1924 March," SRR, box 24, Major Document 20, available at http://collections.stanford.edu/pdf/1010000000024_0020.pdf (viewed 3 November 2006).

⁹⁰ The 1924 Survey on Race Relations indicates that, in Vancouver, six Chinese families lived outside of Chinatown. In Victoria, in the same era, at least five families lived outside of Chinatown.

seemingly mutually exclusive cultural repertoires of early twentieth-century Chinese and English Canadian nationalisms, they invented something new. In doing so, they challenged the white supremacist and Chinese nationalist binaries of their era with the very fabric of their lives, giving substance to a new hybrid: "Chinese Canadians."