

Chronology of Key Events in Japanese Canadian History

THE EARLY YEARS - THE ISSEI

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- 1877 Manzo Nagano, first Japanese individual known to land and settle in Canada, abandons ship in New Westminster and subsequently runs a gift shop, Japanese food store and hotel in Victoria, BC.
- 1887 Gihei Kuno visits Canada and returns to Wakayama-ken to recruit fellow villagers to settle in the village of Steveston. Steveston becomes the second largest Japanese Canadian settlement in Canada before WW II.
- 1889 First *nisei* (second generation), Katsuji Oya, is born to Yo and Washiji Oya.
- 1890s *Issei* (Japanese immigrants) establish stores, boarding houses and other businesses along the streets adjacent to Hastings Mill, especially along Powell Street. This neighbourhood becomes the major settlement of Japanese Canadians until WW II.
- 1895 Japanese are denied the right to vote in BC regardless of place of birth.
- 1900 Tomekichi Homma, a naturalized Canadian citizen, applies to be included on the voters' list. The Collector of Voters refuses to accept his name but a BC judge declares that the clause barring Asians from voting is *ultra vires* (beyond the power of the Legislature).
- 1902 The Privy Council of Britain supports the BC law which denies the vote to Asians. The loss of the fight for the franchise has other consequences – Japanese Canadians cannot vote, hold public office or become lawyers, pharmacists, architects, chartered accountants or teachers.
- 1904 Japanese Canadian farmers begin to settle in the Fraser Valley and establish themselves as successful berry farmers.
- 1905 The first Buddhist temple in Canada opens at the Ishikawa Hotel on Powell Street, Vancouver.
- 1906 The first Japanese language school is established in Vancouver by the Japanese Consulate.
- 1906 to 1907 Several thousand men arrived to work in Canada or enter the United States.
- 1907 On Sept. 9, a protest rally organized by the Anti-Asiatic League turns into a riot. A white mob rampages through the Chinese and Japanese sections of Vancouver. Vancouver's Asian workers stage a general strike in protest.



NOTICE
TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE RACIAL ORIGIN
Having reference to the Protected Area of British Columbia as described in an Extra of the Canada Gazette, No. 174 dated Ottawa, Monday, February 2, 1942:-
SHALL HEREAFTER BE AT HIS USUAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE EACH DAY BEFORE SUNSET AND SHALL REMAIN THEREIN UNTIL SUNRISE ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, AND NO SUCH PERSON SHALL GO OUT OF HIS USUAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE AFORESAID UPON THE STREETS OR OTHERWISE DURING THE HOURS BETWEEN ... AND SUNRISE: ... JAPANESE RACE SHALL HAVE IN HIS POSSESSION OR USE IN ... CAMERA, RADIO TRANSMITTER.



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William Lyon Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour, heads a Royal Commission and assesses the damages claimed by the merchants. Japanese merchants receive \$9,000.

1908 The Hayashi-Lemieux “Gentlemen’s Agreement” further restricts Japanese immigration to 400 male immigrants and domestic servants per year. This restriction does not include returning immigrants nor their immediate families. “Picture bride” system of marriage becomes widespread.

1914 Outbreak of World War I.

1916 After being rejected in BC, approximately 200 *issei* volunteers travel to Alberta to join battalions of the Canadian expeditionary force and are shipped to Europe to fight for Canada in World War I.

Ms. Chitose Uchida is the first Japanese Canadian to graduate from a Canadian university.

1919 BC reduces the number of fishing licenses to “other than white residents.” Over the next five years, licenses to Japanese Canadians continue to be reduced.

1920 Japanese Canadian millworkers form the first Japanese Canadian union.

1921 Asiatic Exclusion League is formed with the purpose of excluding Asians from immigrating to BC.

1924 and 1928 Amendment to the “Gentlemen’s Agreement.” Japanese immigrants not to exceed 150 per year.

1927 The Japanese Labour Union gains affiliation with the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada. The first agricultural producers’ cooperative, the Maple Ridge Berry Growers Co-operative Exchange, is organized by Yasutaro Yamaga.

1929 Jun Kisawa, an *issei* fisher, wins a court battle to overturn restrictions against Japanese Canadians using motorized fishing boats.

1931 Surviving *issei* WW I veterans finally receive the right to vote and become the only Japanese Canadians to be enfranchised.

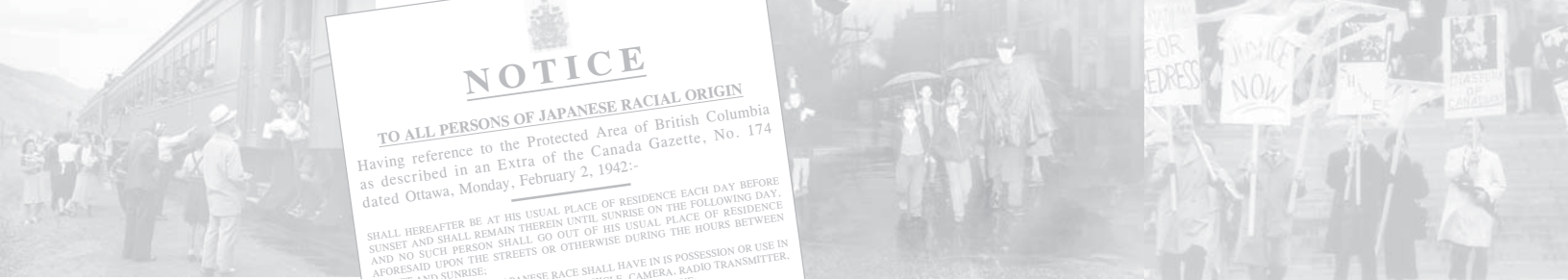
1936 Japanese Canadian Citizens’ League is formed and sends a delegation to Ottawa to petition for the franchise. The petition is unsuccessful.

1938 The New Canadian is established as the first English-language Japanese Canadian newspaper. It becomes the only Japanese Canadian newspaper allowed to publish during the years of uprooting.



THE WAR YEARS AND BEYOND - YEARS OF SORROW AND SHAME

- 1938 to 1940 RCMP keeps surveillance on the Japanese community. However they record no subversive activity.
- 1939 Canada declares war on Germany.
- 1941 Jan. 7 – a Special Committee of the Cabinet War Committee recommends that Japanese Canadians not be allowed to volunteer for the armed services on the grounds that there is strong public opinion against them.
- March to August – Compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians over 16 years is carried out by the RCMP.
- Dec. 7 – Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. Canada declares war on Japan. Under the War Measures Act, Order in Council PC (Privy Council) 9591, all Japanese nationals and those naturalized after 1922 are required to register with the Registrar of Enemy Aliens.
- Dec. 8 – 1,200 fishing boats are impounded and put under the control of the Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposal Committee. Japanese language newspapers and schools close. Insurance policies are cancelled.
- Dec. 16 – PC 9760 is passed requiring mandatory registration of all persons of Japanese origin, regardless of citizenship, to register as enemy aliens.
- 1942 Jan. 16 – PC 365 designates a 100 mile-wide area inland from the West Coast as a “protected area.”
- Feb. 7 – All able bodied male “enemy aliens” aged 18 and over are forced to leave the protected coastal area before April 1. Most are sent to work on road camps in the Rockies.
- Feb. 24 – PC 1486 empowers the Minister of Justice to control the movements of all persons of Japanese origin in the protected area.
- Feb. 26 – Notice is issued by the Minister of Justice ordering all persons of “the Japanese race” to leave the coast.
- Mar. 4 – BC Security Commission is established to plan, supervise and direct the expulsion of Japanese Canadians.
- Mar. 4 – PC 1665 – Property and belongings are entrusted to the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property as a “protective measure only.”



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June 29 – PC 5523 – The Director of Soldier Settlement is given authority to purchase or lease farms owned by Japanese Canadians. He subsequently buys 572 farms without consulting the owners.

- 1942 Oct. – 22,000 persons of whom 75% are Canadian citizens (60% Canadian born, 15% naturalized) have been uprooted forcibly from the coast.
- 1943 Jan. 23 – Order in Council grants the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property the right to dispose of Japanese Canadian properties in his care without the owners' consent.
- 1944 Aug. 4 – Prime Minister King states it is desirable that Japanese Canadians are dispersed across Canada. Applications for "voluntary repatriation" to Japan are sought by the Canadian government. Those who do not apply must move east of the Rockies to prove their loyalty to Canada. "Repatriation" for many means exile to a country they have never seen before.
- 1945 Jan. – 150 second generation Japanese Canadians (*nisei*) are accepted into the Canadian Intelligence Corps after pressure from the British government.
- Sept. 2 – Japan surrenders. Atom bomb is dropped on Hiroshima on Aug. 6 and on Nagasaki on Aug. 9. All internment camps except New Denver are ordered closed and settlements of shacks bulldozed. BC Security commission office in New Denver closes in 1957.
- 1946 Jan. 1 – On expiry of the **War Measures Act**, the **National Emergency Transitional Powers Act** is used to keep the measures against Japanese Canadians in place.
- May 31 – Boats begin carrying exiled Japanese Canadians to Japan.
- Dec. – The Privy Council upholds a Supreme Court Decision that the deportation orders are legal.
- 1947 Jan. 24 – Deportation orders are cancelled. 4,000 Japanese Canadians have already been "repatriated."
- April – The **Citizenship Act** extends the franchise to Canadians of Chinese and South Asian origin, but excludes Japanese Canadians and Aboriginal peoples.
- Jul. 18 – The Bird Commission is formed to inquire into losses through sales at less than market value and through theft of property by the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property .



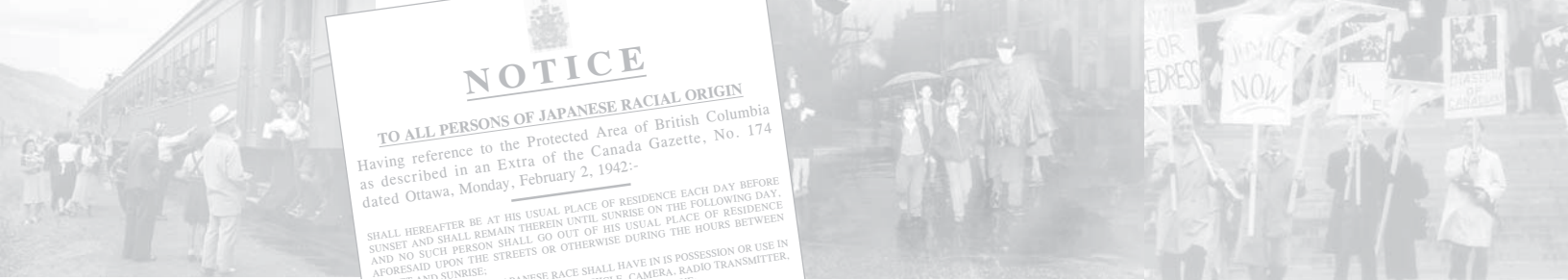
- 1947 Sept. – The National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association is established at a conference in Toronto.
- 1949 Mar. 31 – Restrictions imposed under the War Measures Act are lifted and franchise is granted to Japanese Canadians. Japanese Canadians are free to move anywhere in Canada. This is the last of the WW II restrictions to be lifted.

1950s TO THE PRESENT - REBUILDING, REVIVAL, AND REDRESS

- 1950 Bird Commission findings award approximately \$1.2 million but reject the National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association appeal that further claims be considered as well as an indemnity for general losses.
- Order-in-Council PC 4364 revokes an order prohibiting immigration of "enemy aliens," and provides for some of those deported to re-immigrate to Canada.
- 1967 Canadian government announces a point system for new immigrants. "Race" is no longer a criterion for immigration.
- 1977 Japanese Canadian centennial is celebrated across Canada. Informal groups begin discussing redress.
- 1979 *The Nature of Things*, hosted by Dr. David Suzuki, goes on the air.
- 1981 Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* is published.

REDRESS EFFORTS IN THE 80s

- 1984 Jan. – The National Association of Japanese Canadians' council meeting in Winnipeg unanimously passes resolutions seeking an official acknowledgement and redress for the injustices committed against Japanese Canadians during and after World War II. The council also calls for a review of the War Measures Act to ensure that no Canadian will ever again be subjected to such wrongs.
- Mar. – The Special Committee on Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society (Task Force), an all-party parliamentary committee, publishes



1950s TO THE PRESENT

Equality Now. They recommend that “the Parliament of Canada should officially acknowledge the mistreatment accorded to the Japanese in Canada during and after World War II and the Government of Canada should undertake negotiations to redress those wrongs.”

- 1985 Jan. 28 - Toronto City Council unanimously passes a motion urging the Government of Canada to re-open negotiations with the NAJC towards a full and just redress settlement for the treatment of Japanese Canadians during and after WWII.
- 1986 May 9 – Price Waterhouse Associates assesses income and property losses at not less than \$443 million in 1986 dollars.
- 1987 July 12 – The NAJC appeals to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to intervene personally to resolve the redress issue.
- Sept. 17 – The US House of Representatives passes the Civil Liberties Act of 1987, offering an acknowledgement and \$1.37 billion in redress to Japanese Americans interned during World War II - \$20,000 to each of the estimated 66,000 survivors and a \$50 million fund to educate the American public about the uprooting.
- Oct. – Public support for the NAJC is mobilized in the birth of the National Coalition for Japanese Canadian Redress. The Coalition consists of a broad cross-section of individuals, ethnic organizations, unions, professional associations and cultural groups.
- Oct. – Rally on Parliament Hill, Ottawa by supporters of redress.
- 1988 Sept. 22 – Achievement of redress. The NAJC and the Government of Canada sign the Terms of Agreement. It includes an acknowledgement, apology and compensation for the injustices suffered during and after the Second World War. The compensation is to be \$21,000 per successful claimant.
- 1996 The Census of Canada shows a Japanese Canadian population of 77,130, of whom approximately one third indicate multiple ethnic backgrounds. Demographers report a current intermarriage rate of more than 90%.
- 2002 125th Anniversary of Manzo Nagano, the first immigrant from Japan.