

ASIAN HERITAGE IN EDMONTON



The Edmonton Heritage Council recognizes and celebrates the city's diverse and rich Asian heritage within Treaty 6 history.

This selection of projects shows some of the history, traditions, experiences and stories essential to these communities and to Edmonton as a city.

Many collaborative initiatives were supported through City of Edmonton funding to the EHC's Heritage Community Investment Program (HCIP) and the Edmonton City as Museum Project (ECAMP).

We continue to support the work of our city's growing communities.



PODCASTS

[Remembrance as an Active Process - Season 2 Ep. 7](#)

In this episode about the Boyle Street and McCauley neighbourhoods, Lan Chan-Marples shares the history of Edmonton's Chinatown, Adriana Davies speaks about Little Italy. Poushali Mitra discusses the growing South Asian community in Mill Woods and recounts an effort in the early 2000s to erect a Little India arch.

ECAMP Podcast

[Mirama miniseries - Episodes 43-46](#)

A three-part miniseries that goes for a deeper dive into the histories and stories from Chinatown, around a community landmark: the Mirama Restaurant and building.

Let's Find Out Podcast
HCIP recipient - Chris Chang-Yen Phillips

VIDEOS

[Punjabi Pioneers](#)

This online documentary about the Punjabi trailblazers as early as 1903, starting with Edmontonian Sohan Singh Bhullar, whose trials and tribulations have directly shaped the representation and reflection of Asian Indian immigrants and other non-European Canadians who participate and identify with what they experience as Canadian life as Edmontonians today.

HCIP Grant Recipient - Robin Yusaf
([Read more](#))



Screen shot from "Punjabi Pioneers of Alberta" YouTube

[To Have a Better Life](#) is a video series exploring the histories of Filipina live-in caregivers in Edmonton from the 1990s to today. The series will explore why these women came to Edmonton, the different challenges and joys they found here, and the ways they forged alliances and worked to better their own lives and those of others. Migrante Alberta will conduct, film, and edit interviews with Filipina women who have worked as caregivers in Edmonton.

Videos: [The Quest for a Better Life](#); [The Canadian Experiences & Challenges](#).

HCIP Recipient - Migrante Alberta

[Seconds, Please!](#)

A documentary series on intergenerational conversations situated around through food and oral histories.

HCIP Recipient – Shawn Tse



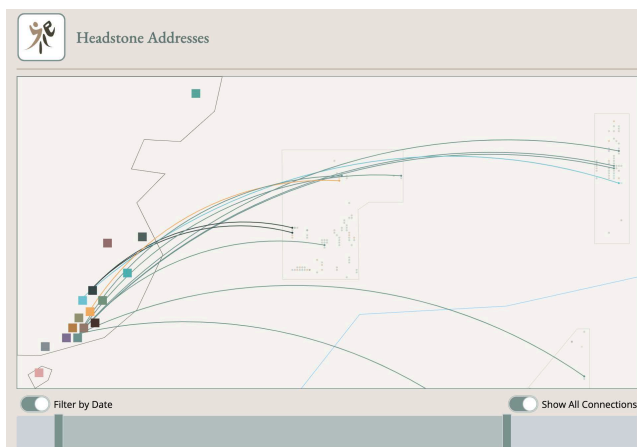
Screen shot from "Siu To & Kathryn (Ep. 5) | Seconds, Please!" YouTube

WEB

Headstone Addresses

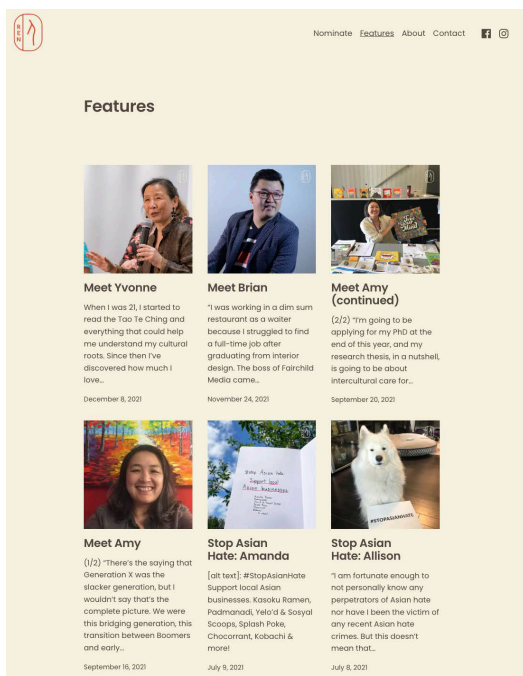
A data visualization “map” of ancestral hometown listed on Edmonton cemetery headstones, this project connects tomb-sweeping and burial practices of Chinese-Canadians.

These stories connect the roots and origin stories of Chinatown communities in Canada since the early 1800s, represent diverse ethnocultural histories including the Cantonese, Toisanese, Hokkienese, TeowChoew and many others.



Screen shot from “Headstone Addresses”

HCIP Recipient – Elaine Yip



Screen shot from “REN Project”

REN Project

The REN Project is a channel for the Chinese-Canadian diaspora to start conversations, celebrate heritage, and share stories not often heard.

Started in the Fall of 2020, the REN Project was created by a group of young Chinese-Canadians based in Edmonton, Canada who believe in the power of storytelling and that everyone has a story to tell.

HCIP Recipient – Megan Tsang

Edmonton Maps Heritage - Archival Buildings

Edmonton Maps Heritage is part of ongoing work to map and connect Edmonton's heritage places.

Some of these are officially designated heritage places, many of them places of community significance of memory, experience and tradition. In time, EMH is being integrated in the Edmonton City as Museum Project (ECAMP).



Screen shot from "Edmonton Maps Heritage"

'Little South Asia'

The diverse South Asian community in Edmonton comes from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Indian diasporas in Africa and the Caribbean.

Mill Woods is known as the 'Little South Asia' of Edmonton and the South Asian community has been integral to the community's development. In 1971, the City of Edmonton bought six thousand acres of land on its southern boundary to develop Mill Woods—an urban settlement estimated to house one hundred and twenty thousand people.

"Chinatown"

Edmonton's earliest Chinese citizens were migrants (like many Edmontonians) who had established small businesses on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River as far back as the late-1800s.

Since then, three Chinatown's have risen in Edmonton. The first, Old Chinatown, dates back to the pre-World War I period and was a male dominated Chinese immigrant community. The so called "Replaced Chinatown" developed in the 1980s to the east when Old Chinatown succumbed to the construction of Canada Place on 97th Street. New Chinatown (north of 104 Ave and 97 Street) took shape during the influx of Chinese and Vietnamese migrants who arrived in the 1980s and established businesses in this part of the city, creating a mosaic of Asian cultures.

Edmonton Maps Heritage - EMH

PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS, & MOMENTS

Guru Nanak Dev Healing Garden & Mazankowski Heart Institute

The South Asian community has long played an active role in the healthcare system in Edmonton. Nowhere is this more evident than inside the state-of-the-art Mazankowski Heart Institute at the University of Alberta Hospital.

Edmonton Maps Heritage - EMH

Goji Paradise

Research series of heritage plant history as well as the planting of 99 Goji berry trees as a symbol of Chinese heritage history in Treaty 6. A small print booklet documents local community history of goji berries and harvesting celebrates how multicultural heritage co-exists with nature.

HCIP Recipient – Yong Fei Guan

A House for Guidance: The Baitul Hadi Mosque and the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Community in Edmonton

The Baitul Hadi Mosque is one of at least twenty mosques and prayer spaces in the City of Edmonton. Like many Muslim community groups, their educational, charity, and outreach initiatives continue to define the Ahmadiyya, and more importantly, are what drives their communal efforts for the future.

ECAMP Story – Nadia Kurd

Sikh Community's 'Seva Truck' Tackles Food Insecurity & Poverty Through Heritage

"As immigration laws relaxed In the 1960-70's, the largest growth of Sikh immigrants was experienced in all parts of Canada including Edmonton, where most Sikhs arrived as Teachers, International Students, and for work in Alberta's agricultural and oil industries."

ECAMP Story - Amrita Gill

A History of My Father's Market Gardens

"Market gardening offered men like my father a bit of independence – to be their own boss and take control of their own destiny. Away from the stifling quarters of Chinatown, Bark Ging lived on the land where he gardened, along the fertile banks of the North Saskatchewan River. Chinese market gardens operated on both sides of the North Saskatchewan River; countrymen Gee Gut farmed in Walterdale and Hong Lee had a market garden adjacent to the Victoria Golf Course."

ECAMP Story – Wei Wong

Colours of the Vaisakhi Nagar Kirtan Sikh Parade

"The annual Vaisakhi Nagar Kirtan Sikh Parade in Millwoods connects Sikh Edmonton community to decades of neighbourhoods development history in the SouthEast wards."

ECAMP Story - Gagan Kaur Hoonjan

Filipino Pioneers of Edmonton

"The earliest documented Filipinos in Canada came in the latest 1800s, those who were mostly sailors travelling to the West Coast and settling there. In the 1950s, many Filipino migrants to Canada were doctors who came with the U.S. Exchange Visitors Program."

ECAMP Story - Ida Beltran Lucila

The History of Filipino Businesses in Edmonton

"Convenience, reliability, nostalgia, and familiarity: for a Filipino-Edmontonian, these are just a few of the draws of transacting with businesses owned by fellow Filipinos in Edmonton. There is also the chance to switch languages and communicate in the mother tongue when English fails to express one's perspective or needs."

ECAMP Story - Giselle General

World War II and the Chinese Women's Club in Edmonton

"Levina would have been in her thirties when she came to Edmonton. The Chinese Women's Club may have started around 1934, soon after her arrival. It was probably a small club since there were only 27 Chinese women in Edmonton in 1931."

ECAMP Story - Lan Chan-Marples

A-Yin's Chinese Persons Street or Amy's Chinatown

"I want to share my personal history of growing up in one of Edmonton's Chinatowns in the 1970s. The Chinatown, where I spent my early years of life, no longer exists. My Chinatown has now become Canada Place and the Winspear Centre. My childhood house, just east of 102A Avenue, has been long demolished and turned into a brown brick law office and parking lot. My old Chinese school, which was housed in a church basement, no longer teaches Chinese to children, as children no longer live in the area."

ECAMP Story – Amy Wong

Edmonton's South Asian Community

"Thousands of people from around the world including the Indian Subcontinent begin their own Edmonton story each year...and just as many marvel, muddle or suffer through its Prairie winters. They do so enabled by a spirit of co-operation, understanding and opportunity; a belief that Edmonton is for them."

ECAMP Story - Sam Singh

Judi Singh - A Black & South Asian musician from 1950s-70s Edmonton

"Judi was born on May 9, 1945 to Sohan Singh Bhullar and Effie Jones who were pioneer Sikh and Black Albertans. Sohan Singh landed in British Columbia from Punjab, a state in north west India, around 1907 and moved to Alberta around 1911. Judi's maternal grandparents were from the founding families of Amber Valley."

ECAMP Story - Poushali Mitra

Connecting Through Dance

"For the first time ever, South Asian dance began to be included in Alberta's mainstream dance community in the late 1990s. I still remember as if it was yesterday. Finally, a group of Edmonton brown girls had won and earned accolades as professional dancers! We were recognized as professional dancers, not some ethnic side show addition. This was a profound moment of dignity for me."

ECAMP Story - Soni Dasmohapatra

EdmontonHeritage.ca