

**Gladys Nipp and Stephen Mah Family Award 2020 Honourable Mention  
Research Proposal by Oliva Hart, Faculty of Social Sciences**

One of my first dates with my fiancé was to the Royal BC Museum. He is from Hong Kong and it was his first time in Victoria. I took great pride in telling him that Victoria's Chinatown is the oldest in Canada, and he was really impressed by the Chinatown replica in the museum and how much he felt at home. However, I was quickly embarrassed as we continued through the museum to see the fish filleting machine which was nicknamed 'The Iron Chink' because of its purpose of removing jobs from Chinese workers.

During this time, I was enrolled in HSTR 366, a class about war and revolution in China. By this point in my student life at UVic, I had become really interested in China, taking classes in Chinese language and politics. What I was really amazed about in this class, was how the events in China created a wave throughout the Chinese diaspora, causing the divide between China and Canada to narrow. It really taught me about the vibrancy of this community, something that I had never learnt about. When I saw this award advertised on UVic's Library Page, I was so shocked because I did not know that we held a collection of original documents that did teach about the incredible perseverance and growth of Victoria's Chinese-Canadian community. Even after having taken Chinese-related courses in the Pacific and Asian Studies, Political Science, and History departments, I did not know that such incredible information was available to students.

The greatest lesson that I have learnt at university is the importance of making information accessible. My dream is to become a university professor, specializing in China and Chinese politics. While the information available within the collection will certainly help me in my research, I feel it of utmost importance to bring attention to its existence. Considering these times of social distancing, an outreach initiative that I propose is making a series of video lectures on the content matter of these documents: segregation, intra-community relations, conflicts of assimilation, etc. Considering my hopes to become a university lecturer, this is the exact type of information that I would need to learn how to convey in a meaningful and comprehensive way. Most importantly however, I hope that by making this collection more accessible and to make people more aware of its contents, is to express the incredible contributions of the Chinese Canadian community to Victoria, and to challenge the narrative that they were simply undesirable workers to be replaced by machines, that they no longer existed after the National Railway was completed and industrialization began. I consider it of great importance to my future children to ensure that the legacy of Chinese people in Canada is appreciated on an individual level, and to help combat the racism that Chinese people still experience today, 160 years on from the first Chinese immigrants to Victoria.

Thank you for your consideration,

Olivia Hart

4<sup>th</sup> year student at University of Victoria