

Fonds Level Description

Title: New Westminster Chinese Benevolent Society fonds (IH980.30)

Extent: 1.4 m of textual records, publications, and 13 photographs (b&w).

Dates of creation: ca 1904 to 1974

Administrative History: The first meeting of the New Westminster Chinese Benevolent Society ("NWCBS"), also known as the New Westminster Chinese Benevolent Association, was held on March 16, 1915. This meeting elected a business firm called Si Yuan Hao as the president, and Xin Jin He as the Vice President. The Executives were: Tai An Zhan, Guang An He, Jin Yuan Hao, and Tai Li He. The NWCBS held its second meeting on March 22, 1915, which was attended at by 12 business representatives, and Mr. Huang Dusheng. The twelve businesses were: Si Yuan Hao, Xie Sheng Long, Yuan Sheng Hao, Yi Xiang Hao, Tong Sheng Hao, Guang An He, Jin Yuan Hao, Tai Li He, Xu Hua Xuan, Ying Tai Hao, Xie Yuan Hao, Chang Sheng Hao. In the same month, four more meetings were held, and on March 29, 1915 a meeting was held to discuss matters about electing officers for the NWCBS office, which was located at 826 Victoria Street, New Westminster, a building often referred to as the New Westminster Chinese Centre ("NWCC").

The first meetings of the NWCBS were prompted by the concerns over the City Hall's inspection of the then Chinese cemetery in 1915 and the municipality's intention to use the cemetery land for other city purposes. From that point on, the NWCBS held regular meetings up to the late 1940s. Some of the most involved members were, in addition to those already mentioned before, businesses such as Xin Chuntang, Sheng An Hao, Sheng li Long; and individuals such as, Liu Fuzhao, Feng Dewen, Li Zhaoping, Huang Baiyun, and Jiang Qin. The issues discussed at the NWCBS meetings include matters of importance to the local Chinese community, fundraising for various causes, such as for the operation and maintenance of the NWCC, the support for the NWCC in observing traditional Chinese festivals, in defending the rights of Chinese in legal proceedings and other legal matters, for the war of resistance in China, for the natural disaster relief in China, and for caring the wounded soldiers and refugees. The meetings of the NWCBS became less regular in the early 1950s. In 1955, Mr. Huang Baiyuen resigned his position as the Executive Director of the NWCC, after which Jiang Qin and a few others assumed the responsibilities for

the NWCC, until the early 1960s. After that, there was only sporadic documentation of the meetings of the NWCBS with the last meeting record dated March 24, 1969.

The Chinese Hospital was a significant undertaking of the New Westminister Chinese. Although the records of the Chinese Hospital predated the first NWCBS meeting, it is apparent from the Hospital records that some of the prominent members of the NWCBS were also sponsors of the Morgue, and, by extension, of the Chinese Hospital. Guang An He donated \$100 to the Morgue in 1904. Other founding members of the NWCBS, such as Jin Yuan Hao, Xin Jin He, Tai An, Jin Yuan, Tai Li He, were among the first donors to the Morgue. At a November 11, 1923 meeting, the NWCBS discussed issues on how to improve the rules and regulations for admitting patients to the Chinese Hospital. No more activities of the Chinese Hospital were documented after 1967. Utility bills of the Chinese Hospital from 1948 to 1967 were mailed to an address at 825 Holbrook Street, New Westminister, c/o P. O. Box 685. The P.O. box is that for the NWCBS.

The NWCBS was also the sponsor of the New Westminister Chinese Public School, which was first opened in the early 1940s, using the meeting room of the NWCBS building. It appeared that the School became inactive subsequently, and was reopened pursuant to a decision made by the NWCBS in March 1955. The names and addresses of two individuals, Mr. Wah Leung of 443 Jackson Ave, Vancouver, and Rev. C.C. Shiu of 905 Hecate St, Nanaimo, B.C., were stamped on some of the Chinese textbooks that are present in this fonds.

Custodial History: The NWCBS records were rescued by the staff of the New Westminister Museum and Archives from 826 Victoria St., New Westminister, prior to its demolition in 1979.

Scope and Content: The fonds consists of the minutes of the meetings of the NWCBS, the Society's financial records, the Chinese Hospital records, fundraising records, and general records of the Society. Published material in the form of newspapers, magazines, pictorials, as well as the classroom textbooks are also part of this fonds.

Notes: The records were previously known as MSS.182.
Title based on provenance of the fonds.
File list is available in Chinese (traditional and simplified), Mandarin Pinyin, and English.

English handwritten notes on scrap paper and found among the original records were made by the Museum staff prior to July 2006.

All records are in Chinese, except for utility bills and bank credit books, which are in English.

Access to Chinese Hospital Patient Registers is subject to review under the *Personal Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Related Materials: IHP 8044, and The New Westminster Branch of the Chinese Nationalist League (Kuo Min Tang) Fonds (IH981.31).

Series Level Descriptions

Series I

Title: Minutes of the Meetings

Extent: 16 cm of textual records

Dates of creation: 1915-1969

Scope and Content: The series contains three volumes of the minutes of the meetings of the NWCBS. Issues documented in those minutes include fundraising activities, interactions of the early New Westminster Chinese with the larger society, their reactions to and protests against the 1923 federal regulations over the Chinese immigration, their concerns for the developments in China and Taiwan, and their efforts in helping China fight against foreign invaders, and cope with the natural disasters, the education of the Chinese youths at the public and Chinese schools, and the increasing presence of the New Westminster women's group in various social functions. Matters on decorations of the New Westminster Chinese Centre for royal visits of the Prince and the Queen of England were also discussed at the NWCBS meetings held in September 1919 and May 1939 respectively. .

Notes: Title based on content of series.
File arrangement is chronological.
All records are in Chinese.

Series II

Title: Financial Records

Extent: 32 cm of textual records
Dates of creation: 1906-1974

Scope and Content: The series contains two volumes on festival contributions and expenses, in particular, for three traditional Chinese festivals: Qing Ming Festival (April 5 each year in the Chinese calendar), Meng Lan Festival (July 15 each year in the Chinese calendar), and the Double Ninth Festival (Sept. 9 each year in the Chinese calendar). The first is for paying tribute to deceased immediate relatives. The second is for paying tribute to ancestors and other ghosts and spirits, and the last is dedicated to honoring the living elderly seniors. The series also contains two account books on the revenues and expenses for the New Westminster Chinese Centre, one register book on donations for the renovation and maintenance of the Chinese Centre, and other miscellaneous financial records.

Notes: Title based on content of series
Records are in Chinese, with the exception of bank credit books.

Series III

Title: Chinese Hospital Records
Extent: 12 cm of textual records
Dates of creation: 1904-1967

Scope and Content: The series contains a volume on revenues and expenses for the Morgue, two volumes of patient registers, some loose sheets of death records, as well as utility bills for the New Westminster Chinese Hospital from 1948 to 1967. Patient registers provide patient name, place of origin, admission date, discharge date or death date. Some death entries also contain tombstone numbers. .

Notes: Title based on content of series
File arrangement is chronological.
Records are in Chinese with the exception of utility bills.
Access to Chinese Hospital Patient Registers is subject to review under the *Personal Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Series IV

Title: Fundraising Records

Extent: 24 cm of textual records

Dates of creation: 1938 to 1952

Scope and Content: The series consists of fundraising records for supporting China in its war of resistance against Japanese in World War II, for assisting refugees, wounded soldiers, and for providing relief to China of natural disasters.

Notes: Title based on content of series
Records are in Chinese.

Series V

Title: General and Miscellaneous Records

Extent: 8 cm of textual records, and 13 photographs

Dates of creation: 1944-1967

Scope and Content: The series contains 13 photographs (b&w), 10 of which were of the Chinese Benevolent Society taken by Leong Ding Bong, and removed from an album in February 1987 for conservation purposes. Chinese Centre officer election records from 1956 to 1967, a notice acknowledging donors for help with fence building and landscaping of the Chinese Centre, and other unused receipt or donation books are also part of the series.

Notes: Title based on content of series.
The album previously had two metal rings holding the volume together. The rusty rings were removed and discarded when the album was housed in an acidfree folder in July 2006.
Only up to 5 samples are kept of records with multiple duplicates.
Records are in Chinese.

Series VI

Title: Published Material

Extent: 48 cm of textual records

Dates of creation: 1932-1969

Scope and Content: The series consists of published material, in the form of newspapers, magazines, pictorials and other general publications. Chinese textbooks and other books on education are also part of this series.

Notes: Title based on form of series
Records are arranged by type of publications, and within each type, chronologically.
Records are in Chinese.

Fonds Level Description

Title: THE NEW WESTMINSTER BRANCH OF THE CHINESE NATIONALIST LEAGUE (KUO MIN TANG) FONDS (IH981.31)

Extent: 14 cm of textual records

Dates of creation: 1928-1968

Administrative History: The earliest record of the New Westminster Branch of the Chinese Nationalist League of Canada ("NWBCNL") fonds indicates that Mr. Liu Fu Zhao was appointed as the Executive Director for the NWBCNL in 1928. The NWBCNL had its office at 1037 Royal Ave, New Westminster,¹ maintained close ties with the Chinese Nationalist League of Canada, and the Nationalist Party in China.

The Chinese Nationalist Party, commonly known as Kuo Min Tang or Guomindang in Mandarin, was founded by Song Jiaoren (1882–1913) and led by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925). It evolved from a revolutionary league working to overthrow the Qing dynasty into a political party. In the early 1920s, the party stressed nationalism, democracy, and people's livelihood. The Chinese Nationalist Party led by Sun's successor, Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), governed all or part of mainland China from 1928 to 1949, when the Nationalists were driven to Taiwan. There they maintained a monopoly on political power until 1989, when the first legal opposition party won seats in the legislature. The first non-Nationalist president in Taiwan was elected in 2000.² One of the main purposes of the Kuo Min Tang and its subsidiary leagues and branches after 1949 was to reclaim mainland China.

The NWBCNL records indicate that it made great efforts in recruiting new members. The NWBCNL appeared to have become defunct after 1968.

Custodial History: Records were kept in the NWBCNL office at 1037 Royal Ave, New Westminster, until April 1981,³ when they were rescued by the New Westminster Museum and Archives staff.

¹ Property tax notice was mailed to an address at 1013 Royal Avenue in 1955.

² Encyclopedia Britannica Ready Reference 2004.

³ Note from Archie Miller, Curator of the New Westminster Museum and Archives from 1973 to 2000. Original handwritten note is kept in box 1 file no. 9.

Scope and Content: The fonds consists of records on the Chinese Nationalist Party affairs, including certificates of appointments, minutes of a 1947 meeting attended at by representatives from western branches of the Chinese Nationalist League of Canada., the NWBCNL work and financial reports, as well as work and financial reports received from the Chinese Nationalist League of Canada. Published material, such as Writings Mourning the Death of Sun Yat-sen, and Government by All the People which was translated into Chinese, is part of this fonds. .

Notes: The records were previously known as MSS.181.
All records rescued from the Royal Avenue house were preserved, except for records with multiple duplicates, in which case, only up to 5 samples were kept.
Title based on provenance of the fonds.
All records are in Chinese.
Arranged into two series: Records on Nationalist Party Affairs, and Published Material.
File list is available in English, Chinese (traditional and simplified), and Pinyin.

Related Materials: New Westminster Chinese Benevolent Society Fonds (IH980.30).

Series Level Descriptions

Series I

Title: Records on Nationalist Party Affairs

Extent: 6 cm of textual records

Dates of creation: 1928-1968

Scope and Content: The series contains certificates of appointment for Liu Fu Zhao, minutes of a 1947 meeting attended at by representatives from the western cities, and work and financial reports of the Nationalists League of Canada and New Westminster branch. Some records were marked "Absolutely confidential, and Circulate only within the party". Blank application for membership and reference in support of application forms are also part of this series.

Notes: Title based on content of series.

Only up to 5 samples were kept of records with multiple duplicates.
File arrangement is chronological.

Series II

Title: Published Material

Extent: 8 cm of textual records

Dates of creation: 1920-1968

Scope and Content: The series consists of publications on various subject matters, including the death of Sun Yat-sen, a book on government by all the people translated into Chinese by Liao Zhongkai, and other miscellaneous publications.

Notes: Title based on form of series
File arrangement is chronological.