

Chung Collection Information

History:

In 1999, the Chung family made an exceptional gift to the University of British Columbia Library with their donation of the Wallace B. Chung and Madeline H. Chung Collection. In making the generous gift of this unique and extensive research collection, Dr. Chung hoped to give back to Canada some of what he and his family have gained since his grandfather came from China to Victoria more than 100 years ago. As Dr. Chung has said, "We are giving the collection to UBC so as many people as possible can have the opportunity to understand and appreciate the struggles and joys of those who have come before them."

Inspired to start collecting by an illustrated poster of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's steamship R.M.S. Empress of Asia in his father's tailor shop in Victoria, Dr. Wallace B. Chung amassed more than 25,000 items over sixty years. Starting with small items clipped from newspapers and magazines for his scrapbook, Dr. Chung assembled an extensive research collection of items in various formats related to early British Columbia history, immigration and settlement, particularly of Chinese people in North America, and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The Chung Collection is one of the most exceptional and extensive collections of its kind in North America and has been designated as a national treasure by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board.

Facts about the Chung Collection and exhibition room:

- The Chung Collection has three broad themes: British Columbia History, Immigration and Settlement and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.
- Only 5% of the collection is displayed in the Chung Collection exhibition room.
- Dr. Chung began collecting CPR materials when he was 6 years old. Dr. Chung's fascination with CPR began with a large print of the Empress of Asia that was hung in his father's tailor shop in Victoria (now in case 12).
- Dr. Chung collected much of his collection one piece at a time. An early example of this is the miner's pan in case 3 found by a young Dr. Chung in a Barkerville creek bed.
- The model ship in the centre of the room is the Empress of Asia. Dr. Chung spent 4,000 hours restoring the model after purchasing it from a seller in Toronto.
- The steam train model on the right side of the exhibition room was built by a retired CPR engineer and was at one time fully operational. The engine alone weighs over 300 pounds.
- The china in case 16 was recovered by a plant pathologist in the Georgia Strait. The china was discarded through portholes by overwhelmed kitchen staff who were working onboard the Empress of Asia.
- The exhibition in the top of the four display cabinets in the back of the room rotate periodically.
- There are many cabinets in the Chung Collection that house light-sensitive items and artifacts. Visitors are encouraged to open drawers and look around.

To Learn More:

- The Chung Collection website: (<https://chung.library.ubc.ca/>)
- "Passage of Dreams: The Chung Collection" documentary on Youtube (22 minutes): (<https://youtu.be/MXe7LkUYMg8>)
- The Chung Collection on Open Collections: (<https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/chung>)
- The Chung Collection on Access to Memory: (<http://rbscarchives.library.ubc.ca/index.php/wallace-b-chung-and-madeline-h-chung-collection>)