

The following submissions are written by Alan Love, who is a relative of James Short.
This posting is not an endorsement by The City of Calgary of the views that are expressed.

Date: Mon, 1 Feb 2021 at 00:07

Subject: James Short

Dear Mayor Nenshi,

My name is Alan Love I am a relative by marriage to James Short. His wife was Janet Lafferty, a member of the well known and respected Lafferty family. Who were doctors, lawyers, successful businessmen and politicians in Calgary and Southern Alberta, including an up and coming lawyer at the time, Erik Lafferty Harvie soon to become a well known Calgary lawyer, businessman and philanthropist who was James and Janet's nephew. My grandmother Marcella Love (nee Lafferty) and my father both officiated at the opening of the new James Short School in 1973. They were both very proud of their pioneer heritage. James Short and the Laffertys having arrived here in the 1880s and 1890s. Both my father and I have been past Presidents of the Southern Alberta Pioneers and Their Descendants.

I am writing to express my concern about the rush to judgement and cancel- culture that has happened to James Short. 9 days, that is all it took; July 13 to July 24. The history of James Short, a well respected, well thought of school teacher, principal, long serving school trustee, lawyer and crown prosecutor is erased and becomes, James Short bigot and racist, as referred to by Councilor Farrell. How does that happen I ask myself, 110 years after the fact. Yet in his obituary of 1942 there is nothing but accolades. How do I know this? I looked it up.

Which begs the question, how much actual research was actually done on James Short and what was actually put before yourself and the city councillors? Some of what I have seen are slices from articles and misquotes not giving the whole context in what and how it was said. For example it was A.J. McArthur MPP who stated that land values would depreciate at the council meeting On October 10th 1910, Not James Short as stated in one of the petitions Whereas. (Calgary Herald Oct. 11 front page.

I spent several hours looking up old Calgary Herald newspapers of that time and, in that brief time, I saw numerous mentions of James Short KC the Trustee, the trial lawyer and of course, Crown Prosecutor. There were only two mentions that I could find in regards to James Short and the Chinese community. One was October 11 1910, front page, James Short is described as a lawyer representing* some petitioners and along with several clergy (Rev.G.W. Kerby* and Rev.Mr. Sycamore) objecting to the location (in Debate before council) of locating a Chinatown on Centre street by 2nd AVE. the current location. They were asking that it be located by Langevin bridge, in a developing market area. They were not denying the Chinese a place to live. The city, on the suggestion of James Short and 2 others (having consulted with the Chinese community) decided to form a committee of 12 residents and 12 members of the Chinese community to look into the matter. I could not find any other information stemming from the committee, but I'm sure it's there somewhere. I can only surmise that the committee decided that centre street was the best location.

The second article dated April 30 1919, page 11, 2 long columns(Calgary Herald), I found where James Short was quoted as a private citizen living a block over from Chinatown, stating that he wished the Chinese area was elsewhere. Here James Short is speaking to the poor Sanitation conditions and poor upkeep of the buildings, he is not speaking about the Chinese people per se. This was in the middle of a scathing report/article on Chinatown 9 years after it was created. The article described the living arrangements, the rundown condition of the buildings and terrible sanitation conditions surrounding the whole area, including comments from the City Health Officer(DR. C.S. Mahood), a city commissioner(Mr. Samis) and graphic descriptions from the reporter. The comments made by James Short were the same as any neighbour could have made about how people did not look after their domain. It does not make him a racist.

I have NOT come across any mention of James Short being part of the anti Chinese League, as stated in the notice of motion and therefore reported in the current press. Where is the proof he was a lawyer for the Anti Chinese league. There was a story I came across about a Mayor(of Calgary) of the era who was responsible for starting the Anti-Chinese league. Any plans to go after him?

What I want is to actually see the research done by the city and presented to council, so that the councillors made an informed decision. Research that in no uncertain terms proves James Short was a racist.

In all the Whereas in the notice of motion for removing James Short's name there appears to be no definitive proof of racism, just a lot of conjecture. In talking with City Hall, it was suggested that the whole process was rushed including the quick removal of signage. Also in the notice of motion quotes are attributed to James Short with no identified sources.

In the Whereas it appears to say that James Short will be used as a form of discussion about racism. I would suggest that the city make sure that it has the facts correct before it embarks on this path.

I would also like to suggest that the city concentrate on dealing with racism in the present day and future. If the city wants to look for racism in the past, the whole of the country's early history is built in a way on a form of cultural racism. Not that the people of the day thought they were racist in any way.

In closing, I want to thank you for reading my letter, and I look forward to seeing all the information and the sources upon which the council acted, to remove James Short from Calgary's pioneer history. If there was only conjecture and hearsay, then I would expect the city to reverse course and reinstate the good name of James Short.

Much, much faster than all the research that went into renaming the Langevin Bridge to Reconciliation Bridge. As I have been informed from city hall.

Sincerely and with Respect,
Alan Love

Fast Track on the Cancel Cultural Line
Druh Farrell and Calgary City Council “All Aboard”
RE: Notice of motion regarding James Short Park and Parkade July 2020

Opinion by Alan Love, relative of James Short, on the PROCESS of “Denaming” James Short Park. This is not an opinion on the anti-Chinese sentiment that was prevalent in 1910. But rather a review of the hurried and more or less unresearched process in regards to the above mentioned Notice of Motion.

I have spent months looking up historical sources including Calgary Heralds, The Albertan, Alberta Historical Review 1974, historical books and other materials. One thing I have learned is that you can't do it in a week, you have to read past the headlines and you have to cross reference the sources, if they even exist. Also, reporters of the time who were the record keepers probably had preconceived biases. The newspapers of the day definitely had an anti-Chinese bias, which can be determined from the language used. For example in the Calgary Herald October 14 1910 in an Article titled; Told The Chinamen How They Must Sleep, a subheading uses the phrase “Champion of the Chinks”. There is also a mention from a Chinese Cultural Centre published piece, Frontier Violence in Early Alberta. This article states that “early Canadian newspapers did even more damage by depicting the Chinese in extremely derogatory ways”. It also wouldn't have helped public opinion that the press of the day continually mentioned stories of local police raids on opium and gambling dens.

On July 14th 2020 Councillor Druh Farrell brought forward a Notice of Motion, “denaming” James Short Park and James Short Parkade. A mere 6 days later on July 20, 2020, Druh Farrell and Calgary City Council (except Diane Colley-Urquart) passed the notice of motion. With no research, except a few conversations between Druh Farrell and a few members of the Chinese community and some misinformation (quoted in the Notice of Motion) from a pamphlet by the Chinese Cultural Centre, which has since been withdrawn from circulation. This action nullified 51 years of positive historical influence (1889-1942) of a man they knew nothing about, James Short KC (King's Council). July 2020 was during the height of the Black Lives Matter protests across North America. I believe Druh Farrell and the City Council saw an opportunity to score some political points and ran with it. Immediately after the notice of motion was passed, all references to James Short were quickly removed from the park and parkade; fortunately for the City, there was no statue. After all this, City Hall then hired a Historian to look into the life that was James Short's. Not the first time they have been SHORT sighted.

The research done to change the name of the Langevin Bridge took several months.

Druh Farrell stood up in the council and called James Short “a racist and a bigot”, these are the words that got my attention. I knew then that she did not know James Short or the history of Calgary. Farrell and the city council had decided to make James Short the “Poster Boy” for anti-Chinese feelings, sentiment and racism. City council decided to judge our city pioneers, James Short in particular at a point in time, 110 years ago, by our slightly improved anti-racist framework of today. When, in fact, it is well documented that anti-Chinese feelings were held by the majority of the white population living in Calgary at that time.

From the Notice of Motion you might get the idea that James Short was a fervent racist over a long period of time, when in fact the building issue to which the Notice of Motion refers lasted 7 to 10 days. Many citizens, many of them prominent, were against the location of the site of the proposed building permit. The Albertan cites 3 petitions, a letter and a report that were all filled at a commissioners meeting on October 9th 1910. Why? The first reason was that it would be owned by Chinese people and second, local residents did not want a large commercial and residential building adjoining their residential neighbourhood.

One of the WHEREAS mentions “tackling systemic Racism”, which I believe refers to institutional racism. They may have included this because they refer to James Short as an Alderman of the city, which he never was, but this is cited as such in the Chinese Cultural Center pamphlet. The city archivists have since verified that James Short was never an Alderman.

The Notice of Motion also states that James Short petitioned to prohibit the establishment of the current Chinatown. Yet again in the Calgary Daily Herald and the Alberta Historical Review of 1974 (Calgary Library), James Short (lawyer) is mentioned as representing citizens opposed to the Chinese proposed building on the selected site. There is no mention in the Herald article that James Short signed such a petition. He along with Rev. G. W. Kerby, Rev. Sycamore and numerous others did sign a letter recommending that the new building be located in a new market to be located by the former Langevin Bridge. The Alberta Historical Review (1974) also states that James Short was reading from a statement.

The same WHEREAS also says that Short made the claim that “Chinese Canadians would lower property values”. Yet in the Calgary Daily Herald Oct. 11, 1910 the Herald quotes A.J. McArthur MPP, a large landowner in Crescent Heights, as having made this statement.

In at least four of the WHEREAS there is reference that James Short was a member of or a Lawyer for The Anti-Chinese league, and insinuates that the Anti-Chinese league was part of the attempt to prevent the building of the first Chinese owned building in 1910. I and the Historian can find no reference, that the Anti-Chinese League still existed in 1910 or that James Short was EVER a part of this organization.

ONE WHEREAS states that the Chinatown Context Paper identifies the Short site as an “excellent opportunity” to interpret the broader story of the Anti-Chinese Leagues' role in opposing the relocation of Chinatown. Again City Hall is trying to tie James Short to a more sinister ideal. There seems to be no reference that can be located that the Anti-Chinese League still existed in 1910, or possibly even since 1892.

There is one WHEREAS that states that James Short later changed his attitude toward the Chinese. Yet if he did, then why 110 years later, would you go after him as an example of racism, when you say he became an example of a new order of thinking? Not really a way to encourage people to rethink their values.

I believe the Notice of Motion, renaming James Short Part Park and James Short Parkade is a poorly researched and flawed document full of misinformation. It should be withdrawn and a more meaningful Notice of Motion dealing with anti-Chinese racism of the past be put

forward. One that deals with the issue in its totality and does not target one person, to make Council feel good about themselves. City Hall found someone to point a finger at, for the societal wrongs of a past era. A notice of motion is needed that is more forward thinking, and more beneficial to Calgarians and the Chinese community. Otherwise society as a whole does not learn from its historical past, especially when we put all the blame on one individual. Society itself remains blameless and will continue to repeat its past historical mistakes.

A Different Perspective

By Alan Love

This perspective is a view of the events in October 1910 surrounding James Short and his involvement in the preliminary stages of the first Chinese building in Calgary. This is a very different view from those stated in the Notice of Motion and passed by Calgary City Council on July 20, 2020.

In chronological order, the following daily events were recorded in The Calgary Daily Herald, The Albertan and Calgary City Council meeting minutes of the time:

October 9 1910: At a meeting of the City Commissioners, there was a gathering of a group of Chinese citizens and their solicitor Alderman Stanley Jones and a large group of citizens opposed to the granting of a building permit to the Chinese. Those against the permit had brought forward several petitions, some communications, a report and also a letter, as reported in both newspapers. The letter was signed by Rev. G.W. Kerby, (the founder of Mount Royal College and the namesake of the Kerby Centre), Rev. Sycamore, A. Lambert, James Short, Richard Standervick, and W. Georgeson. The letter, according to the Herald, was suggesting that the Chinese locate in the new Bernie Market area that was yet to be developed. It is interesting that none of these documents mentioned above can be located in the City Archives.

It is recorded that after consulting with members of the Chinese population, James Short, Richard Standervick and A. Lambert put forward a motion to create a committee composed of Chinese, their representatives and citizens representing the city. This motion was adopted and sent to the city council.

Representing the Chinese at the Commissioners meeting of October 9th was Alderman Stanley Jones, a solicitor. In The Calgary Daily Herald of October 11, 1910, there was an article entitled, 'Council Trying to Straddle the Fence', in which Jones (as their solicitor) stated "that the Chinese were willing to comply with any regulation on sanitation and

also let council say how many may sleep in a bed or room, in fact conform to any bylaw except those which would discriminate against them based on race or religion. They do not want to live in a hive. They want a better place for business.” In *The Albertan*, it was stated, “The Chinese want to live throughout the city as it is better for business.”

October 10, 1910: In the City Council minutes, it is recorded that the motion suggested by James Short, A. Lambert and Richard Strandervick from the October 9th Commissioners meeting the night before, was approved.

October 12, 1910: James Short was sent an invitation (which can be found in the City Archives) from the Mayor to discuss the Chinese location. Mayor R.A. Brocklebank appointed him (as one of 12) to represent the city in Council Chambers at 3 o'clock, in a meeting with the Chinese. The Chinese group also was composed of 12 members, eight Chinese and four representatives.

October 13, 1910: In *The Calgary Daily Herald*, there was an article titled 'Official Opinion of Chinese Puzzle'. This article consists of the varied opinions of several councillors and city officials. When you read the article, you see what having the Chinese living in one area potentially meant to the rest of the community. The opinions could be summarized as maintaining the Chinese in one area makes it easier to watch over them for sanitation and security reasons, even if they had no ill feelings towards the Chinese.

October 14, 1910: The Herald's report on the meeting of October 13th implies that it was quite an animated discussion with back and forth dialogue, not against the Chinese but opinions stated by representatives of both groups. The Herald stated that the complaints and suggestions of the citizens against the Chinese building permit were left flat. People from both groups spoke, including the Chinese whose members represented different areas of commerce. Eventually, James Short made the suggestion that a by-law regarding sleeping arrangements and sanitation be considered. It was eventually moved by J. Emmerson and seconded by Sheriff Van Wart and passed unanimously.

October 24, 1910: The City Council got the minutes from the committee dealing with the Chinese location. The committee of 24 plus other attendees from City Council recommended that the by-laws be revised. “The by-laws would be revised to regulate the number of persons who shall reside or sleep in a given space and if necessary for sanitary efficiency the regulations in that behalf be made more stringent.”

Signed, Jas Short

Secretary (of the committee)

It should be noted that this by-law covered everyone in the city, not just the Chinese.

October 27, 1910: The Council meeting minutes stated: “Report of committee inquiring into the Chinese locating on Centre Street be adopted.”

That pretty much wraps up the saga of the first Chinese-owned building in Calgary as covered by the Notice of Motion. The building permit was allowed to stand. James Short, along with 2 others, suggested the idea of a committee of 24. James Short suggested the concept of the by-law at the meeting regarding the “Chinese location”. Having talked to the Chinese previously, I think Mr. Short knew that this idea would be accepted, and it was, unanimously.

James Short, in actuality, did not try to stop the Chinese from establishing a Chinatown as accused in the Notice of Motion (July 20, 2020). Nowhere is there a mention of the anti-Chinese league. It is time for the City Council to rectify this grave error and proceed as I suggested in my first article. The Council loses credibility when they focus on and attack one man who cannot speak for himself. The Council does not tackle the issue of anti-Chinese sentiment that was prevalent 110 years ago. Council has done a disservice to the Chinese community and to an outstanding Calgary pioneer.

Other than the actions taken by the citizens of Calgary, the City Council and James Short in October 1910 (over the one building that was

constructed) and the subsequent petition in 1919 from Crescent Heights citizens asking for the removal of the same building due to its worrisome condition, there is no written word or documented deed that James Short acted or spoke in any way that was unfavourable towards the Chinese community.

If a person should be so inclined and do the research, you can find out more about James Short, High School Principal and Teacher, School Trustee, Lawyer (48 years), Crown Prosecutor and sports enthusiast. Over 800 people attended his funeral in 1942 (during the war years). He was 80 years of age and still practising law. He was highly regarded by those who spoke at his funeral.