

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Ray Lue Interview Number: 81
 Chinese Name: _____ Number of Tapes: 2
 Date of Interview: 12/1/79 Length: 1 Hour & 42 Minutes
 Interviewer: George Yee
 Others Present: None
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side <u>A</u>
1	001-010 011-022 023-034	Introduction. Ray Lue (RL) was born in Toishan, Canton, China. It was a mile from Tai Kong Market. RL's birthday was October 13, 1910. Father's name was Lue Hing Gou. RL has one brother and one sister. Brother was adopted. Parents and brother passed away. Sister was in China.	
2	035-045 046-064	Father was in produce business when he came to Los Angeles one month after he arrived in San Francisco. Later he went into the laundry business and then the restaurant business in 1921. Father came to the United States in 1896 and returned to China twice. Finally came to Los Angeles in 1910 after RL was born. Since then he never went back to China.	
3	065-077 078-086 087-093 094-101 102-115	Grandfather was in the United States in 1870. Father took RL's grandfather back to China because grandfather was sick. He passed away in China. Father went back to China in 1948 and returned to Los Angeles in 1953 and passed away in 1955 in Los Angeles. RL came to the United States in 1921. RL can read and write Chinese. He went to Chinese school in China for five years. First RL lived on Sixth and Flower Streets. He lived and worked for someone else's laundry as a school job. The store was on the south side of Sixth Street, two blocks from Flower Street.	
4	116-120 121-130	The laundry had eight Chinese workers. Father had his restaurant business called Tien Sing Cafe. Father lived in the back of the laundry which was owned by a Lue.	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	131-147	RL helped cleaning floors and dishes. He went to the Grand Avenue School which was moved a year later. RL then went to Cambria School for six months.
5	148-155	Then he went to Third and Freemont School. RL went through junior high school.
	156-168	RL started out at 50 cents a week working in the laundry. He got up at 5:30 a.m. and got through the day about 9:30 p.m. The laundry workers got 25 dollars a week plus room and board. A year later he made 5 dollars a week. Father took him to help father's business.
	169-191	After completing junior high school, RL ran a laundry for his father on 5th and Wall Streets for a year. Father got out of the restaurant business in 1923.
6	192-195	Mother never came to the U.S.
	196-220	RL went back to China in 1930 by President Taft. There were about 150 Chinese on that trip. The third class ticket from San Pedro to Hong Kong was 110 dollars. There were six to eight people in one room. The trip took twenty one days.
	221-230	RL took the train from Hong Kong to Tai Kong Market.
7	231-241	RL stayed in the village from 1930 to 1933 and got married. After RL came back to the U.S., he took over his father's laundry business.
	242-253	RL's wife was in China. RL and father sold the laundry business in 1937 and went back to China because his father was sick.
	254-262	RL came back in 1939. Father remained in China and returned to the U.S. four months later. Wife stayed in Hong Kong.
	263-271	RL worked for a laundry on 9th and San Pedro Streets for 10 weeks and bought a laundry on 6th and Union Avenues.
	272-277	RL's wife came over in 1948. Father left for China in 1948 and returned to Los Angeles in 1953.
	278-295	RL has three boys and three girls. RL left one daughter in China.
8	296-301	Father could understand and converse with people in English.
	302-310	RL missed his mother when he got to the ship. But after he got to the U.S. he did not miss home anymore because it was nice in America.
	311-320	RL went back to China in 1974 and visited his village.

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1 Side A

Tape: 1 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	321-331	The village did not have electricity and running water. the family had three acres of rice field.
9	332-340	Father had to send money back to China. Father had two brothers and two sisters.
	341-367	RL played with everyone and got along fine with Caucasian kids.
	368-379	He felt more Chinese. But the Caucasian kids treated him very well.
	380-401	When RL played baseball he had Chinese friends.
10	402-425	Most of the Chinese laundries did delivery. But his father's laundry was cash and carry.
	426-451	RL went to Chinese doctors when sick. There were very few American trained Chinese doctors. Samuel Eng was one of the first Chinese American doctors.
	452-457	RL's family used herbs for cooking.
11	458-477	RL started going to Chinese school in 1925. That was how he got to play baseball with Chinese children in Chinatown. They played hardball with Japanese children. Later they got together and formed a team.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

Tape 1 Side B

1	001-002	Blank.
	003-008	The old timers only gambled and did not have other recreations.
	009-013	A group of children played baseball. There are dances in the later years.
	014-020	RL did not join any Chinatown organizations.
	021-024	The important people belonged to the organizations.
	025-032	Father wrote to China, RL did not.
2	033-039	Most Chinese engaged in laundry and restaurant businesses. There were 450 Chinese laundries in Los Angeles fifteen years ago.
	040-050	There were gambling houses, a few grocery stores in Chinatown but there was not any laundry.
	051-070	A cook made around 150 dollars a month before World War II. A laundryman made around 20 to 25 dollars a week including room and board in 1921 to 1924. The wages declined after 1925. By 1933 the wage for a laundryman was 12 dollars a week.

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1 Side B
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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	071-089	The wage for Caucasian workers was better. They made a hundred dollars a month. Chinese laundrymen worked long hours, 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.
	090-106	The washing machine was used in the laundry. The flat iron was heated by the oil burning stove.
4	107-116	Very few Chinese lived outside of Chinatown. RL's family was considered outsiders by people from Chinatown.
	117-125	Chinese could not buy property outside of the Chinese community.
	126-139	Some Chinese gambled their money away. Some Chinese keep their money in the bank. Long Gee worked for the California Bank. Gee Shoo Yin worked for the Security Bank.
	140-147	Some Chinese put money in Chinese stores that they trust.
5	148-180	Father had a queue when he came to America. RL's mother had bound feet.
	181-186	Some Chinese were loyal to China.
6	187-197	During the Second World War there was a fundraising effort among Chinese.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

Tape 2 Side A

1	001-004	Introduction.
	005-012	Quite a few Chinese were out of a job. The laundry business was down a little bit.
	013-026	It was very hard for a Chinese to find a job before World War II. During the war Chinese started working for the defense industry.
	027-034	The first Chinese salesman RL knew was Walter Chung.
2	035-039	Chinese managed to make a living.
	040-041	RL did not feel that Chinese ran businesses like Jewish businessmen did.
	042-051	China born Chinese went back to China for marriage but very few American born Chinese did.
	052-056	American born Chinese did not want to get married in China because they could not bring their wives to America. RL and his wife were separated for 18 years.
	057-059	Chinese prefer to have sons.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	060-068	A few Chinese intermarried with white and Mexican Americans.
3	069-071	Most Chinese in Los Angeles were single men in the early days.
	072-087	Most of the Chinese children went to Chinese school. RL went to Chinese school in the evening after American school.
	088-093	RL and friends had a lot of fun at Chinese school during recess.
	094-103	Some Chinese sent their children back to China.
4	104-109	American born Chinese did not want to learn Chinese or to go back to China.
	110-118	The Chinese portrayed in American movies did not seem right to RL. Nobody protested it.
	119-123	RL never heard of Chinese saying that they were ashamed of being Chinese.
	124-139	A Chinese considered a bank job was a good job in the thirties. Being a secretary was a good job for a Chinese girl.
	140-158	RL never saw tunnels or opium dens or prostitution houses in Chinatown. One saw gambling houses all the time.
5	159-165	On Sundays, Chinese old timers all talked and gambled.
	166-188	RL's father was 6 feet 7 and one hundred ninety pounds. He first arrived in Seattle. He went in a laundry business in Manhattan Beach. He made eight dollars a week.
6	189-210	Father was good at kung fu and was not afraid of any robbery attempts.
	211-222	Chinese children were well behaved and did not get into fights.
	223-232	RL wrote to his wife in China. Wife never said anything about coming to America when she married RL.
7	233-285	RL saw around 25 Chinese women with matchmakers before meeting his wife. RL saw his wife in a school parade but never talk to her before marrying her.
8	286-292	A month and a half later he married his wife.
	293-298	RL did not feel funny about the old fashioned marriage.
	299-310	There was no problem of communication between RL and his wife.

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2 Side A

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	311-339	RL described the marriage ceremony which was held in his house.
9	340-364	RL's wife brought furniture to RL's house. There was no honeymoon.
	365-384	The village of Ming Kong had about 150 people. There were brick houses. Everybody was a Lue.
	385-394	RL's wife's family had a party before she married RL and did not come to RL's wedding party. It was the old custom.
10	395-409	RL never saw any oldfashioned Chinese weddings in Los Angeles Chinatown.
	410-423	Very few Chinese owned cars and telephones in the twenties.
	424-435	In the twenties the family had an ice box.
	436-447	The streets of old Chinatown was dirt and brick roads.
	448-458	All the Chinese in RL's village wanted to come to America.
11	459-471	All the villagers wanted to have their daughters marry a Chinese from America.
	472-482	Quite a few Chinese returned to China but not necessary for staying.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

Tape 2 Side B

1	001-013	RL was happy to come to America.
	014-024	RL came with just one suitcase and two dollars. RL's first cousin borrowed the money and gambled the money away.
	025-035	RL took a Chinese boat, Namking, to the United States. The journey was thirty-one days. There were 360 Chinese on the boat.
2	036-043	Some crew were Chinese, some were Caucasian. Chinese food was served. RL came with his first cousin who was 22 at the time.
	044-056	Everybody got seasick except for RL. There was not any girls on the boat.
	057-068	RL stayed on Angel Island for thirty-one days. Then he stayed in San Francisco for a month until someone came to take him to Los Angeles.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	069-075	RL's cousin did not pass the interview. RL reviewed the questioned asked in Angel Island.
	076-079	RL stayed on Sacramento Street in San Francisco.
	080-090	Father was very good to him when first met him and took him shopping for clothes.
	091-109	RL first tasted pie on the boat. An English man in Angel Island gave him a nickel every morning.
4	110-147	American food was served on Angel Island. Men and women were separated. More Angel Island experiences discussed.
5	148-177	In 1923, the laundry charged 15 cents a shirt. Later it went down as low as five cents a shirt. An eight pound iron was used. RL saw a hand laundry on 18th and Main Streets.
	178-192	In the twenties, if a laundryman could make fifty dollars a week, it was considered good business. During the Depression, a hundred dollars a month income would be considered good income.
6	193-199	Midwife was used by Chinese.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW

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