

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Jacqueline Gee Ung Interview Number: 144
 Chinese Name: _____ Number of Tapes: 1
 Date of Interview: 1/8/81 Length: 1 Hour & 3 Minutes
 Interviewer: Jean Wong
 Others Present: None
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Ann Lau, Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape No. <u>1</u>	Side <u>A</u>
1	008-012	My parents came from Canton, China.		
	013-018	My mother was 3 years old when she came over in 1901 (she was born in 1898). My father came a little later, when he was in his twenties.		
	019-022	My mother came with her family and settled in San Francisco.		
	023-024	My father first landed in San Francisco. He worked for a Chinese grocery store in San Francisco.		
	025-027	After my parents were married, they settled in Fresno and my father opened a grocery store and remained in the grocery business.		
	028-030	When we moved to Los Angeles, he worked as a butcher for a Chinese grocery store.		
2	031-036	We came to Los Angeles in 1921, when I was four.		
	037-041	I have two brothers, one older, one younger. Their names are George Gee and Randolph Gee		
	042-047	I feel that it was the depression that brought father to Los Angeles. He had to give up his business and work for someone else so he could support a family.		
	048-050	In the thirties, 1933 or 34, the depression really hit everyone and my father was out of work.		
	051-054 055-067	We were supported by the county. My mother did not work. Chinese was spoken at home when father was alive. After he passed on though, mother did not carry on with the tradition. We spoke Sam Yup (三邑). Mother wanted to speak English real well so she would not speak Chinese. There was no conflict in languages, we just followed what my dad said.		
3	068-082	My parents sent us to Chinese school for maybe six months		

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	068-082	to a year. The Chinese school used to be on Adams Street. The Chinese Presbyterian Church was there also. We stopped going to Chinese school because we weren't learning anything. The teachers tried to be strict, but could not discipline the students at the same time. I was in a class that was very mischievous.
	083-085	My brothers did not go to Chinese school.
	086-089	One had to supply his/her own books for Chinese school. I don't remember if there was tuition or tuition was very nominal.
	090-092	My parents did not force us to go to school. We were supported to take our studies seriously.
	093-095	I was born in Oakland in 1925.
	096-102	I was in Los Angeles when I was four. I attended Twentieth Street School, John Adams Junior High School and Poly High School. I graduated high school in 1943.
	103-105	I worked as a junior typist for Bethlehem Steel during the second world war.
4	106-109	We moved out to Iowa for about a year. There is where I picked up Chemistry and decided to go into Nursing.
	110-113	I went through the Nursing Cadet School program. Through this program we trained in the country with city college instructors.
	114-116	I graduated from the program in 1947. I took my state boards and am now a registered nurse.
	117-118	I worked for a while and then got married and had children.
	119-129	I have three children. They are all grown. There were quite a few Chinese at Bethlehem Steel. There was Lilly Soohtoo, Alice Quon, and another Chinese girl. Between 1943 and 44 I worked for Bethlehem Steel.
	130-137	I don't remember how much the wages were. Maybe close to \$40 a week.
	138-146	As a graduate nurse I was making \$180 a month, before taking state boards. A little more after state boards.
5	147-153	During Junior or Senior High School I worked down at China City selling novelties and also worked as a waitress in China City.
	154-158	I was married in 1947. Husband's name is Richard Ung.
	159-160	He was an artist, does layouts and cartoons.
	161-163	Have one child who is a teacher.
	164-172	Our community was Chinese, white, Spanish of Mexican descent - a mixed neighborhood. I associated with both white and Chinese; neighbors on one side was Chinese and on the other, white.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
	173-175	Our parents associate mostly with Chinese, in fact, all of their friends are Chinese.
	176-194	I spoke Chinese with Chinese people. I don't remember any problems in elementary school. Being a Chinese didn't bother me that much.
6	195-197	I never felt sorry for being a Chinese.
	198-210	I cannot remember any disagreement with my parents. We celebrated Chinese and American holidays. Mother always encouraged us to learn as much as possible. She felt it would be to our benefit since we live in this country.
	211-217	Mother came when she was three. Father came when he was in his twenties.
	218-223	My father passed away in 1939, my mother in 1959.
	224-228	She had a little Chinese grocery store, Lucky Market, down on Central Avenue. She supported the family.
7	229-234	My brothers and sisters helped in the store. It was a small store with a small amount of produce and canned goods.
	235-248	I think I am a typical Chinese.
	249-262	Parents used one or two kinds of Chinese herbs for colds.
	263-264	Always go to American doctors.
	265-272	I used some herbs for cooking.
	273-284	The children have not acquired the taste for it but I think it tastes good.
8	285-305	I did a lot of jumping rope, roller skating when I was small. As a teenager, I attended quite of a lot of dancing parties. I met my husband at a party.
	306-312	Husband was born in Anaheim. His parents were born in Los Angeles.
	313-315	I got married in 1947.
	316-330	Parents played mahjong. We played later after we got married. Folks took me to see a Chinese movie once. I didn't enjoy it. The formal language is quite different from what was used at home.
9	331-348	Mother's father was a minister and her mother taught Chinese at home for children in San Francisco.
	349-361	We didn't join Chinese family associations. I don't know their activities.
	362-376	Husband's family was very active in the family association. May Wong was active because her husband Thomas Wong was active. Eugene Yee's family is very active in the Chinatown community.
	377-406	Barbara Jean Wong's family was well-known, because she was on stage in the 1940s. Before the war, Peter Soo Hoo, Sr. was very active and tried to build up the Chinese community.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	377-406	His family was important.
10	407-430	My generation people believed in having businesses for themselves. My mother had her own grocery store. Our closest friend had a vegetable-fruit shop. Most Chinese businesses were in groceries.
	431-438	Before the war the average income for a family of four or five was about a hundred forty dollars a month.
	439-460	Not much money was saved. Very few owned their own home. Rent was thirty to thirty-five dollars a month for a two to three bedroom house.
11	461-472	My mother put the money in the bank.
	473-485	We played a lot of mahjong. It's not like going to Chinatown someplace to gamble.
END OF SIDE A		
1	001-002	Don't know anyone involved in politics.
	003-017	Chinese were affected by the Depression. Mother had to sell the grocery store and started all over again. There were not many jobs. Many were supported by the family.
	018-021	I don't remember any hostility against Chinese.
	022-027	I was told that Chinese were not allowed to buy property in certain areas which Chinese were not welcome.
	028-035	I myself never experienced any discrimination but I have heard people saying that they were discriminated in different places.
2	036-047	I think Chinese have done pretty well. We are able to organize ourselves in Chinatown. Now we have quite a few lawyers and other professionals.
	048-050	I think Chinese do better than a lot of other Americans.
	051-054	I don't think we do as well as Japanese. They are more aggressive than Chinese.
	055-074	I have friends who have teased me about being a Chinese Jew. They know that there are certain things I won't spend money for. I think Chinese are similar to Jewish people.
3	075-093	I think American born Chinese tend to marry to American born. A few of them who were born here, with the family tradition, would be sent to China for a wife. But it was a small percentage.
	094-099	We were different from those who were born in China.
	100-114	I don't think Sum Yup people prefer to marry to Sum Yup people and Sze Yup to Sze Yup people. Because we don't speak that much Chinese. I married to Sze Yup and had to learn Chinese all over again, because his folks spoke a

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	100-114	lot of Chinese. When you get older you try to recapture it. I was glad that I have had the opportunity to learn it all over again.
4	115-122 123-133	Our children do not speak Chinese at all. I feel Chinese still want to have sons. I don't know whether it is so much to carry on the family name or whether it is that they feel they (sons) were easier to raise. Chinese fathers worry about their daughters, such as will they get married or not. The boy, they felt, can take care of themselves.
	134-137	I have one son and two daughters.
	138-157	I had no restrictions on whom I dated.
5	158-163 164-172	I don't know any case of interracial marriage. Although my mother didn't put any restrictions on dating, I felt down deep that she would have resented it if I dated a Japanese.
	173-177	Interracial marriage would not have bothered me.
	178-187	Chinese felt it important to send their children to Chinese school. Some sent their children to China for an education.
6	188-192	Most American born Chinese whom I associate with felt that Chinese school was more of a social thing.
	193-194	The Chinese school was everyday school.
	195-207	I feel offended now about the way Chinese are portrayed in the movies.
	208-251	There was a person, Monroe Leong, who used to do a lot of writing to the movie companies protesting the way Chinese were portrayed in the movies.
7	252-259	My parents wanted us to become professionals. If either of my brothers became a doctor, my mother would have been thrilled. Most people think of doctors very highly.
	260-267	As far as my family is concerned, I tried to encourage my children to do something that they would be earning in their life, to do something that they would try to enjoy. From there I kind of let them fill their needs.
	268-283	I became a nurse in 1947. I worked in the county hospital. Then I had my first child. I worked at the Queen of Angels. I worked there for quite a number of years. About eight years ago I worked in the French Hospital in Chinatown for six years.
8	284-305	In the past fifteen years quite a few Vietnamese have settled in Chinatown. I heard about Wah Ching (華青)

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	284-305 306-313 314-324	(Chinese youth gang) created a lot of problems in Chinatown. Family mostly lived on Adams and Wall Streets, then moved to Central Avenue area. My husband lived in Temple and Grand area for forty years. Chinese actually moved to the Silverlake area for about thirty to thirty-five years.
9	325-335 336-344 345-360 361-365 366-373 374-380 381-392	I think Belmont High School had about thirty percent Oriental students. I think just from being in school in this area, eventually they would marry someone from there. My mother attended church. We children all attended Sunday school and later on to church. My children went to Sunday school for a short time. Brothers and sisters and I were baptized. One of my children got baptized in the Presbyterian Church. Mother did not try to convert father. For the weekend we had friends visit and had them over for dinner. We worked on Saturdays but not Sundays. I associate with half Chinese and half non-Chinese. Both of my children are married to Japanese.
10	393-410	During the Chinese New Year we visited Chinatown and relatives there.

END OF TAPE 1

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