

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Florence Law Hoy Interview Number: 55
 Chinese Name: 周 黎 群 興 Number of Tapes: 5
 Date of Interview: 7/14/80, 7/22/80, 8/30/82 Length: 3 Hours & 39 Minutes
 Interviewer: B. Chan, S. Cheng & M. Kwok
 Others Present: none
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side <u>A</u>
1	001-020 021-033	Introduction. Florence Law Hoy (FLH) did not know her parents' origin. Mother worked in the rice fields in South Canton. Father passed away when FLH was very young.	
2	034-041 042-048 049-055 056-063 064-084	Mother gave FLH and sister away and kept FLH's brother. FLH was adopted by the Law family. Born in 1902. Came to the United States in 1911. Came to Los Angeles in 1931. Spoke Sze Yup at home. FLH's adopted mother worked and adopted father worked on and off. She doesn't know where her sister went.	
3	085-094 095-120	Adopted mother worked in a curio shop in San Francisco. FLH went to Cameron House in Stockton, which was run by a missionary. Originally the missionary rescued Chinese prostitutes.	
4	121-145	Cameron House was like an orphanage. There were prostitutes rescued by the missionary and young girls whose parents could not take care of them.	
5	146-152 153-157 158-173 174-196	FLH lived with her adopted parents for a while. After Cameron House, FLH went to Berkeley and helped in an American family while attending junior high school. She quit school after one year of high school and worked for a year back home. FLH got married in 1929. Husband worked in a restaurant in Denver. After he came back from the Navy he went to a Denver Navy Hospital. Then he found a job in a restaurant.	

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	197-202 203-234	Husband spoke mostly Chinese with FLH. Husband went to San Francisco for vacation and was introduced to FLH. FLH was working in a gift shop. A year later they were engaged. Then it took another year for them to get married and went to Denver for two years.
7	235-258 259-287	Came to Venice in 1931 and bought a neighborhood grocery store from a friend. It was a mom and pop grocery store on Venice Boulevard, a block from the ocean. It was during the Depression and FLH just paid for the inventory and took over the business. They quit the business in 1961.
8	288-303 304-324	There were hardly any Chinese around, maybe one Chinese family whom she didn't know. FLH didn't know how her friend started the business. There were Mexican and Caucasian customers but not any Black customers. After World War II few Blacks came. They shopped at other stores where it was cheaper.
9	325-329 330-344 345-380	Sold American goods only. Lived in the house behind the store. First the Hoys rented the house, then they bought it. There was another Chinese family from Bakersfield. After they stayed for a couple of years, they moved to West Santa Monica. Husband was an engineer.
10	381-387 388-393 394-428 429-447	Husband passed away about nine years ago. No trouble buying the house. Paid \$40 a month for the store and \$25 a month for the house. The owners were nice people. FLH worked with her husband in the store six and a half days. Sunday from morning until noon. Opened from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
11	448-451 452-456 457-469	Hoys ate at the store. Cooked in the little kitchen in the back of the store. Always cooked Chinese food. Had a car and a pick up truck. FLH did not drive.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	009-020	Never took vacations. Sometimes FLH just went to San Francisco by herself.
	021-025	Older son was born in Denver. Younger son was born in Santa Monica Hospital.
	026-034	Had some Chinese friends who would visit the Hoys because the Hoys didn't have time to visit them.
2	035-045	During the Depression, bread was 5¢ a loaf, a penny for a bunch of carrots and 5¢ for a pound of onions.
	046-049	The store was about 200 square feet.
	050-059	Everything they sold they added 20% for profit. 35¢ for a pound of coffee. 10¢ for a quart of milk.
	060-066	The price raised a little bit after World War II.
	067-074	Got vegetables and produce from the 9th and San Pedro produce market. Husband drove there at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock in the morning and came back about 7 o'clock to open the store.
3	075-079	It was kind of hard work but not too hard. You had to stand in the store and could not go to picnics or socials.
	079-082	Nothing for recreation. Sunday afternoon they might take a ride to Chinatown and eat dinner there.
	083-095	FLH did not know her birthplace so she didn't miss China.
	096-101	Had some casual Caucasian friends.
	102-109	FLH felt more Chinese and didn't feel sorry for being Chinese.
4	110-115	Children were very Americanized. Didn't send children to Chinese school because they lived too far away from Chinatown.
	116-117	FLH studied Chinese at the Mission Home.
	118-128	All subjects were taught in English.
	129-144	FLH took mostly American medicine for colds.
5	145-151	Children liked ball games. Husband did not have time to play mahjong.
	152-177	FLH belonged to the church. In San Francisco FLH went to the Chinese Presbyterian Church on Stockton. In the early days, she went to Los Angeles Chinatown Church on Adams Blvd, once in a while.
	178-191	Didn't go to an American church because they opened the store on Sunday morning.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	192-212	After the second world war, FLH did not write to China. Before World War II, her husband used to send money to his brothers in China to get married.
	213-232	FLH didn't think of buying property in Chinatown. All of her friends were scattered around.
7	233-251	The Hoys lived in the house until 1951. The house did not meet city codes. It cost too much to rebuild so they sold the land and demolished the house.
	252-261	FLH did not know the names of the prominent Chinese in Los Angeles.
END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B		
1	002-015	Introduction.
	016-043	The Young family was a friend of the Hoys. They used to have a business selling clothes in downtown Los Angeles. They lived near the Crenshaw area. They sold womens clothing to Caucasians before World War II.
2	044-056	Some Chinese had restaurants or Chinese grocery stores. In those days, Americans didn't hire Chinese. Most Chinese did odd jobs.
	057-068	After World War II, there were Chinese engineers. Before the war there were no Chinese engineers.
3	069-091	The Hoys paid cash for the store and paid the rent for the house for a couple of years. Didn't remember how much they made in the business.
	092-111	Husband cut the meat from the wholesale place. In those days there was no refrigerator so her husband had to cut the meat to each customer's order.
4	112-119	Both husband and FLH took care of the cash register. Hoys did pay income tax.
	120-134	Hoys couldn't charge too high of a price otherwise the customers would have gone to a bigger market. In those days there were no big super markets. They had a small Safeway market.
	135-139	The Hoys never thought of changing businesses, because the children were going to school and they wanted the children to stay in the same school.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	002-005	Introduction.
	006-020	In the old days, Chinese saved some money and sent money to China. Husband sent money for his brothers weddings.
	021-023	Didn't know anybody in China.
	024-033	All businesses were affected by the Depression.
2	034-057	There used to be some hostility. Caucasians looked down on Chinese. Chinese couldn't get good jobs or work in professional jobs.
	058-092	Before World War I, there were no Chinese medical doctors. Only when the American born later went to school that there were some Chinese doctors after 1920.
3	093-096	Those teenagers who came from China didn't even finish high school. They had to go to work to support themselves and supported the family in China.
	097-101	Husband came to U.S. at the age of 16. He cooked in the restaurant. Some Chinese worked in the laundries.
	102-113	Maybe some of the children were confronted with some sort of discrimination in the early days.
4	114-119	FLH's children played with American children without problems.
	120-134	If the Chinese wanted to work they could make as much money as white Americans.
	135-146	FLH thought that they did pretty good. Each generation gets better than the older generation.
5	147-159	Black people were just like Chinese who didn't have good positions. In Boston, Blacks couldn't ride the street cars with whites back in the 1920's. Chinese could go to any restaurant and hotel in Boston when FLH was there.
	160-169	Chinese connected the stingy Chinese with Jewish who were tight with money.
	170-178	Sometimes Chinese men had a matchmaker or friends to introduce girls to them.
	179-193	Before the first World War, Chinese men went back to get married and left their wife in China. Some were able to bring the wife over. Some left the wife in China to take care of the old parents.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	194-207	In the early days, Chinese liked to have sons to carry on the family name. Now everything is different.
	208-225	In the early days, Chinese parents wanted children to go to Chinese school. Now the parents also want children to go to school but children didn't want to go. FLH wanted her children to learn Chinese but at that time there wasn't a Chinese teacher around the neighborhood. They couldn't send them to Los Angeles, it was too far.
7	226-242	Children were born in 1930 and 1935. When they went to high school, they played ball, piano and so they didn't have time to learn Chinese. FLH felt that they were going to stay in American and would not go back to China. But it was nice to learn how to speak Chinese.
	243-250	FLH and her husband spoke English with the children because they were in the business they didn't want to speak Chinese in front of Caucasian customers.
	251-265	Chinese stayed in America, unless they had family in China.
	266-281	Before parents were against interracial marriages. Now it is different. Parents would rather have their children marry someone with the same racial background.
8	282-311	FLH heard of some Chinese who married Caucasians. She did not know them. Some Chinese did marry Koreans and others, very few married Blacks.
	312-340	In FLH's early years, she wouldn't have thought of marrying a Caucasian. Everybody would look at you on the street. If the young children or grandchildren were in love with a Caucasian it was okay. Now it doesn't matter to FLH any more.
9	341-346	When FLH was young she used to go to movies but not any more.
	347-356	FLH didn't know any Chinese who felt embarrassed to be Chinese.
	357-377	Most Chinese liked to have their own business. They liked to see their children have an education. Most parents wanted their children to be a doctor or a lawyer.
	378-396	FLH never thought of having her own career. To have your own career, you need an education. FLH did not aim at being a career woman.
10	397-424	FLH learned mostly Christianity at the Cameron House. She graduated from high school and dropped out.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	425-454	FLH had friends from the Cameron House. Some married out of state and lost contact. They did go out for dates. FLH had her first date in her 20s.
11	455-486	At Cameron House she could not go out at a young age. In the old days most people stayed home, they were not as sociable as today's young people. They didn't have cars. FLH went to dinner and a show for the first date.
END OF TAPE 3 SIDE A		
1	001-011	At the Cameron each girl worked for a week. The house mother, either a Caucasian or Auntie Wu, the interpreter for Ms. Cameron, would be in charge of the house.
	012-018	Some girls had conflicts among themselves and told on each other.
	019-027	FLH came to the U.S. when she was around nine years old. Moved in to Cameron House in 1914.
	028-053	There was no sex education in the early days. Younger girls would ask the older girls about menstruation instead of asking the teacher.
2	054-070	Sometimes, girls would sit together and talk about sex and marriage.
3	071-081	FLH got married at the age of 26. Girl friends got married at a different age.
	082-088	FLH got married because of love.
	089-098	There was plenty enough work to do in the grocery store and taking care of the children. Couldn't afford to hire help.
	099-107	Husband would discuss family finances with FLH. FLH let her husband make the final decision.
4	108-119	FLH's wedding was held at the Cameron House.
	120-125	No family planning. Children just came by nature.
	126-137	Didn't have time to join the PTA or other activities.
	138-151	First lived in the room in the back of the store. Then moved to an old house in back of the alley.

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3 Side B

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	152-177	FLH thought that they belonged to the lower-middle class. Friends were from the same class. Did not associate with the upper class or upper-middle class.
	178-192	Children got married and left home in the 1950's. FLH still had the store until 1961. Husband passed away in 1971.
6	193-206	After they retired from the store they stayed home and played with their grandchildren.
	207-216	There was no difficulties in FLH's life. She only wishes to be young again.
	217-234	Has had a happy life with no family problems. No fighting between FLH and her husband.
7	235-248	If FLH had her life to live over again, she would like to have more education, a better job, and more money. In the old days you were lucky to make 50 cents per hour.
	249-252	After World War II things got better.
	253-269	Adopted parents went back to China and lost contact with FLH. When FLH was in Cameron House, they visited her once in a while. Didn't have a chance to go to school while living with her adopted parents. FLH didn't want to go back to her parents.
	270-294	Had no dreams and no idols. At Cameron House, they did not go to the movies until they grew up. The boyfriends would take them to shows.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE B

1	001-007	Introduction.
	018-027	Explaining the picture FLH showed the interviewers.
	028-049	Husband was a cook in the navy during the first World War. He was too short to be in the army. He was in the navy only for a year.
2	050-061	Husband went to the University of Denver. Later came to San Francisco where he met FLH.
	062-067	Husband was a cook in Denver.
3	068-071	Took one month honeymoon to Washington, D.C. and New York.
	072-087	They had \$1000 in 1929. They had to take a train to Boston. Then they visited a friend in Vermont. Back in Denver they worked for two years and then moved to Los Angeles in 1931.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	088-095	Chinese restaurant in Denver was a partnership. The business was fair.
	096-125	They lived in an American apartment near Curtis Street. Chinatown was just on one street. Mostly there was restaurant business, very few Chinese lived there..
4	126-144	Picture of Venice Chamber of Commerce was shown. Husband Joe Hoy was the only Chinese member in VCC.
5	145-159	There was another Chinese family, Jack Chu, in Venice. FLH didn't have time to notice other Chinese.
	160-188	Grocery store was opened in 1931 and closed in 1961. The business became better. The store was on 33 N. Venice Blvd. Central Market was the name.
6	189-196	There were some other grocery stores.
	197-211	FLH showed some pictures taken by her husband. Husband's family was in China.
	212-231	FLH used to have a box camera. She took pictures of Cameron House and the girls. FLH explained the photo album.
7	232-243	The Cameron House girls used to have picnics on Angel Island.
	244-253	Friends sent pictures to FLH from the east coast.
	254-257	More pictures of Cameron House.
	258-293	Girls picked the plums and dried them at Los Gatos for Caucasians. They got paid and had fun. They stayed on the farm in the summer time.
8	294-318	Picture of farewell party for Miss Higgins and her mother. Miss Higgins was a teacher.
	318-327	Showed another picture of camping in 1917.
9	328-349	When FLH went to junior high school at Berkeley, she stayed with an American family. The girls from the family was a dancer. FLH cooked for the family and got \$12 a month plus free room and board.
	350-360	Girl on the motorcycle was living on the coast. Her husband had a restaurant in Vermont.
	361-379	Showed another plum picking picture.
	380-396	Showed a picture of a boat that they took to Angel Island; a picture of Mrs. D. Cameron, Waghorn, Miss Higgins, Mt. Hermon.

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4 Side A

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	397-429	A picture of Double Ten Parade. All the Angel Island pictures were taken by FLH.
	430-435	Most of the Cameron girls passed away. Some went to the East Coast and lost contact with FLH.
	436-447	Picture showed Cameron girls playing nurse.
11	448-457	Playland-at-the-beach picture, Florence is on the right.
	458-479	There were classes held in Cameron House. English class was from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Chinese class from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. A Chinese lady stayed at Cameron House and taught Chinese there.

END OF TAPE 4 SIDE A

1	002-019	Miss Wu was an interpreter. She grew up at Cameron House too.
	020-025	All the girls had to take turns cleaning the house and to work in the kitchen. Every week they were assigned to a different task.
	026-065	There were 50 or 60 girls at Cameron House while FLH was there. More pictures were shown.
2	064-084	The girls took the train to Los Gatos to pick plums. Some of the girls were older than the others. FLH described more of her photos.
3	085-089	Older girls had to take care of the babies at Cameron House.
	090-123	There were social gatherings and games at Cameron House. More pictures were described.
4	124-159	One picture showed a Chinese male supporter of Cameron House, Mr. Low. He helped around the home. FLH continued describing the photos.
5	160-176	At the prune picking camp, there was an older girl who did the cooking, the other girls did the chopping and washing. Cameron House was run by a missionary. They took care of everything including picnics.
	177-194	Showed a picture of a Christian Ce Conference in Oakland in 1921.
6	195-209	Showed pictures of the Old Clothes Days at Willard Junior High.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	210-219	Went to Berkeley High but did not finish school there. FLH was assigned to work in an American family in Berkeley. That is why FLH went to Berkeley for an education.
	220-268	More pictures were shown. FLH was a bridesmaid for her friend in one of the pictures.
7	269-309	FLH showed some pictures of the Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, the church choir and a play.
8	310-344	FLH got married at Cameron House in the parlor. She met her husband through a friend's introduction.
9	345-355	FLH had brothers and sisters but lost contact with them.
	356-388	In the old days, Chinatown was all alleys. Restaurants were upstairs. FLH didn't have time to go to Chinatown often. They went to town by a pickup truck. During Christmas, FLH would take a street car to downtown.
10	389-438	FLH just cooked some special food for Chinese New Year. She shopped often at the Produce Market. Husband went down quite early to pick up vegetables. American meat wholesalers would deliver to the store. They had to pick up canned goods there too.
	439-467	Hoys didn't sell seafood due to a lack of refrigeration.

END OF TAPE 4 SIDE B

1	002-012	Introduction.
	013-031	Every Sunday all of the Cameron House girls went to the Presbyterian Church.
2	032-078	FLH walked in Chinatown accompanied by someone. She would take her film to the China Pharmacy for developing. China Time was in back of the China Pharmacy.
3	079-083	FLH just took pictures of picnics, the beach, and the park.
	084-097	FLH was the only one who had a camera. Her friend Edna took pictures of FLH. FLH got interested in the camera and bought one for herself.
	098-111	A picture showed a group of girls getting ready to go to camp.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	112-128	FLH went to the Presbyterian Church on Adams once in a while. She didn't have time to socialize with others.
	129-139	Children understood Chinese but didn't speak it. Lived too far away from Chinatown, children played with white American children.
	140-149	Showed a picture of her older son Joe Hoy, Jr. in front of the store.
5	150-167	People came to Venice Beach in the summer. They fished and left. Children went to the beach a lot.
	168-187	Didn't make enough money to hire help. During the Depression, they took in about \$20 to \$30 a day. If they took in \$50 a day they were happy. They sold soft drinks to the beach goers and other groceries to the local residents.
6	188-208	Customers just came and went. A Caucasian plumber and wife were their friends.
	209-247	FLH came to the United States when she was around seven or eight years old. First stayed in a hotel. Then lived with her adopted parents. There were not many Chinese in San Francisco. Not many teenage girls.
7	248-265	Chinatown was pretty much built up in 1911. There were restaurants, gift shops, and a dry goods store.
	266-288	Adopted mother worked in a department store on Grand Avenue and California Streets.
8	289-295	Before FLH was married, she worked in a Chinese owned department store on Grand Avenue.
	296-303	Adopted parents didn't believe in christianity.
	303-308	Went to Cameron House for an education. Had no education before.
	309-328	After grammar school, FLH left Cameron House for Berkeley for a high school education. Later came back to help at Cameron House. A year later moved out and stayed with a friend. Worked in a department store.
9	329-341	FLH was a receptionist for Cameron House.
	342-351	Miss WU was an interpreter for Mrs. D. Cameron whom they called "Low Mou." They called Miss Wu, auntie.
	352-356	FLH worked at Cameron House for room and board.
	357-389	FLH lived with her girl friend nearby the Chinese Hospital.
10	390-407	There was Commodore Stockton Elementary School. FLH did not attend that school.

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5 Side A

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	408-433	FLH remembered the tunnel on Stockton Street. One time a baby was found there and was taken care of at Cameron House.
	434-479	FLH and the girls took cable cars on Powell to Market Street for shopping. Only went to movies with her husband. They were not allowed to go to movies while at Cameron House. The Board did not support that sort of recreation.
11	480-489	FLH and the girls did sewing and for once a customer paid them. So they could go to Playland-at-the-beach and paid for their own rides.

END OF TAPE 5 SIDE A

1	004-008	Some who prostitutes came to Cameron House had their own money. Sometimes they would pay the younger girls 10 cents for washing the dishes for them.
	009-019	They were not supposed to go out alone. They could go out with their boyfriends.
	020-024	FLH got married at Cameron House because she was used to the place.
	025-049	FLH had a box camera. The film and prints were cheap in those days. The old pictures brought back a lot of memories.

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