

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Albert Hing Interview Number: 58  
 Chinese Name: 羅有享 Number of Tapes: 3  
 Date of Interview: 1/19/80, 1/26/80 Length: 2 Hours & 12 Minutes  
 Interviewer: Beverly Chan  
 Others Present: None  
 Language: English  
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side <u>A</u>
1	001-017	Introduction.	
	018-031	Mother born in San Francisco in 1896 and was sent back to China for an education. Albert Hing's (AH) maternal grandparents were well-to-do.	
	032-036	Mother spoke Sam Yup.	
2	037-042	AH spoke Sze Yup because everybody spoke Sze Yup in Oregon where he grew up.	
	043-045	Father was born in China.	
	046-051	Paternal grandfather owned property in Shanghai.	
	052-059	Father was sent to Utah for an education. But father met AH's mother in San Francisco and got married. Went to Oregon and became a farmer.	
3	060-068	Father felt the soil was better in Oregon than in California.	
	069-074	AH had one sister and six brothers.	
	075-077	AH was born in 1915 in Oregon.	
	078-085	Spoke Sze Yup at home. Farmers in Oregon all spoke Sze Yup.	
3	086-118	Mother had little education in China. She complained about foot binding therefore didn't have bound feet. Mother might have had a couple of years of education from tutors. AH's uncles were sent to London and Paris for schooling.	
	119-121	Mother got married at a very young age.	
3	122-139	After father passed away, mother was squeezed out by the cousin involuntarily. Mother had to work in a restaurant.	
	140-148	Mother supported six children. In between times she became a runner for the lottery.	

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1 Side A

Tape: 1 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5&6	149-236	AH ran a gambling joint when he was 11 because of the tough times. AH explained the Chinese lottery game and a runner's job. There were 80 characters on the lottery ticket.
7	237-253 254-279	Mother got paid a certain amount by each house. AH went to school in Portland. The school was mainly for Chinese and Japanese students.
8	280-287 288-308 309-329	Stayed in Portland until 1931 when he came to Los Angeles. During the Depression, things were too tough that he had to look for a job in Los Angeles. AH ran out of money due to his illness. He heard about Los Angeles and came to San Bernardino first.
9	330-337 338-360 361-390	AH had never seen so many blacks and Mexicans before he came to Los Angeles. AH was connected to one gambling joint. One time when people of the next door's gambling joint got arrested, he got scared and decided to quit and sold out the place for about \$70. AH went to San Dimas and picked lemons for 10¢ a box. One could make \$2.50 - \$4.00 a day. AH worked with Pilipinos.
10	391-406 407-415 416-427 428-465	AH talked to the foreman and the foreman let him pick lemons before going to school. AH was able to send some money to his mother. The step-father had a gambling joint. AH got all his experience through his step-father. AH went to San Dimas High School for one year. Then he came to Los Angeles for the rest of his education.
11	466-475 476-485 486-490	It cost AH \$15 a month for food. During the Summer of 1932, AH left San Dimas for Los Angeles Chinatown. Associated with Pilipinos, Mexicans and Caucasians in San Dimas.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

Tape 1 Side B

1	001-012	Blank.
	012-019	Left San Dimas in the Summer of 1932.

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Tape: 1 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	020-035	Made friends in high school, mostly with Mexicans.
2	036-046 047-083	AH stood up because of his size and was not afraid of Caucasians who picked on him. AH came to Los Angeles as a houseboy near LaBrea and Beverly Boulevard for a stockbroker. He got \$1.50 a week plus room and board. At that time you could get a complete dinner for 15¢.
3	084-087 088-101 102-108	The average salary for a full time job was \$12 a week. Chinese were in gambling, laundry, restaurants, import and export in the Chinese community. Few Chinese were in white collar jobs.
4	109-119 120-151	In the early days, Chinese had to sit in the balcony in Portland. AH had similar experiences in Los Angeles. As a child, AH had no experiences of racial discrimination until one day when he was invited to an indoor pool and was refused entry to the pool at the door.
5	152-223	AH finished high school at Fairfax High in 1935 and decided going to UCLA. He worked in a night club as a dishwasher getting 15¢ an hour from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM from Thursday to Sunday. After a semester AH ran out of money and left.
6	224-235	Then AH got his first full-time job in house work and earned \$40 a month.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

Tape 2 Side A

1	001-011 012-034	Introduction. AH was a butler for six months. Then worked for a director. Got a job through other houseboy's introductions.
2	035-064 065-071	AH was a chauffeur and script boy for the director. The director wanted AH to apply for a job at RKO in the make-up room.
3	072-095	AH wanted to be in the cutting department but he didn't get the job. At the time AH was 21. AH didn't know why he couldn't get the job.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	096-109	AH got \$135 a month just being a chauffeur for Warren McCarthy and was able to go to college. AH was his favorite chauffeur. He built a special wing right next to the garage for AH to live in.
4	110-129	McCarthy offered 100 shared of Hollywood Park to - if - would stay with him. That was in 1937.
	130-155	When AH drove him to San Francisco, McCarthy would give AH a hundred dollars for room and board. AH always handed change back to him. Maybe that was the reason why he took a liking to AH.
5	156-157	AH took him to Hollywood Park while it was under construction.
	158-161	Most of AH's friends were Chinese houseboys.
	162-174	AH joined the Chinese Tennis Club in his senior year of high school. It was a cheap sport at the time.
	175-188	The boss gave AH Sundays off. AH didn't know what to do. Later ran into a couple of Chinese and joined the Tennis Club.
6	189-202	AH went to Chinatown once or twice a week to visit friends in the 1930's and 1940's.
	203-228	AH stayed with McCarthy for about a year. Then the director called him back and made a very attractive offer. AH trusted this director more than McCarthy.
7	229-243	Then he stayed with McCarthy for a few months. AH was called back by McCarthy again. AH decided to quit everything and try the produce business.
	244-264	AH got a job at \$39.50 a week working 60 hours a week was a swamper for six months.
	265-269	AH met his wife in the produce market where brother-in-law was a salesperson.
	270-279	Generally you met girls through a friend.
8	280-293	AH wanted to work himself up to become a salesperson who could get \$25 to \$27.50 a week plus commission. But the hours were bad and the job ruined his social life.
	294-299	After that AH worked for a sewing factory as a maintenance man for a month. Then he became a bartender.
	300-313	In 1939, an insurance salesperson came to the bar and gave him the idea of selling insurance.
	314-334	AH worked for the Guarantee Insurance Company until they closed down about 25 years ago.

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2 Side A

Tape: 3 Side A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	335-365	After a few months of selling then he became an agent. The company helped him to obtain his license. At the same time, he stayed as a bartender, that way he got to know more people.
	366-392	AH got married in 1940. At the time his wife was working. In 1941 the war started. AH was a bartender and insurance salesman. He started working at the defense plant and going to USC.
10	393-429	AH couldn't continue schooling after about a year due to a family reason. AH didn't have enough time to do everything at one time.
	430-438	AH also worked in the movies as an extra.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

TAPE 2 SIDE B - BLANK

Tape 3 Side A

1	001-016	Introduction.
	017-025	There were certain places like night clubs and so on where Chinese could not go in.
	026-061	During AH's school years AH was not allowed to go to the bath house. There were Chinese boys and girls clubs in Los Angeles, because Chinese were not allowed to go into dance halls pre-World War II.
2	062-065	during the war, Chinese still faced some discrimination because Caucasians couldn't tell Chinese from Japanese.
	066-089	It was very difficult for Chinese to find a more desirable neighborhood to live in. The real estate brokers didn't even show the houses to Chinese. AH just made the excuse that this is white man's country. As a Chinese you just have to live with it.
3	090-109	Chinese never had the opportunity to get a better job.
4&5	110-137	AH felt bad that even during World War II, because Chinese were mistaken for Japanese.
	138-187	The term "Chinaman" was used in a degrading sense. It was used all the way in the <u>Pork Chop Hill</u> script. AH and a number of fellows wrote a letter and protested it. Finally, they cut out the word "Chinaman."

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Tape: 3 Side A  
3 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6&7	188-206	Racial prejudice is in the closet today. It appears from time to time.
	207-281	Chinese were portrayed as laundrymen, cooks, etc. Before World War II, AH wrote letters to protest the misuse of the word Chinaman. Usually they just ignored you. Since Chinese didn't have any political clout, no one paid any attention to Chinese even though they protested.
8	282-293	Before World War II, "Chinaman" was widely used, mostly was misused.
	294-316	Chinese and Jewish people always admired each other for being smart businessmen.
	317-332	AH became a member of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance in 1940. It was for the betterment of Chinese.
9	333-379	The Wongs, Ungs, Lees, and Chans were important families in Los Angeles' Chinese community because their sizes and also because of their contributions in the produce business.
	380-407	Y.C. Hong, Peter SooHoo, D.Y. Hall (only Chinese insurance agent at the time) were very prominent people.
10	408-412	Chinese congregated together partly by choice and partly by prejudicial circumstances.
	413-427	Chinese were very loyal to their own group.
	428-430	Some Chinese gambled. Chinese did save money. In general, they were more thrifty.
	431-468	In the early days, Chinese were not allowed to buy houses if they were not citizens. If Chinese were allowed to purchase property they would be very powerful today.
11	469-471	A large percentage of Chinese had family in China and sent money back to China.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE A

Tape 3 Side B

1	001-013	Blank.
	014-021	A large percentage of Chinese had family in China.
	022-030	AH had relatives in China. The relatives had property in Shanghai and kept on sending money to AH's family.

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Tape: 3 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	031-042	Before World War II, Chinese Americans were either directly or indirectly involved in politics in China.
2	043-054	AH donated a daily wage to the China Relief fund in the late 1930's. The community donated the money to China.
	055-061	Chinese did a little better than the Hispanics and a little under the Caucasians economically.
	062-071	Chinese met their wives wherever they could find them, in family gatherings, social, church gatherings.
3	072-095	Very few Chinese went back to China to get married. They were the more affluent ones. They always thought that China born girls were better than native born. The native born Chinese men married mostly to native born Chinese women. Only the traditional wealthy father could afford to send their sons to marry in China through a matchmaker.
	096-108	Parents sent their children to China for education also for them to get married.
4	109-113	American born Chinese were not as eager to have sons as the older generation.
	114-161	Chinese thought that the less interracial marriages the better. It was the fear of losing their culture. AH would not like to have his son marry a non-Chinese.
5	162-172	AH was not born in China but would like to visit his parents homeland and possibly settle there.
	173-186	Parents like to see their children get some Chinese education. But the children didn't want to. Children could get jobs among Caucasians. They didn't have to learn the language and work in the Chinese community.
6	187-199	AH sent his children to Chinese school for a while. Children have so much advantages today.
	200-206	AH's children still associate more with Chinese.
	207-224	As long as the ideal job is concerned, the job that makes more money is the better job, such as medicine and other professions.
	225-227	Before World War II, most Chinese thought engineering was a good field to be in.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW

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