

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Calvin Chang
 Chinese Name: 張喜洲
 Date of Interview: 12/19/79, 8/15/80
 Interviewers: S. Cheng & B. Chang
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Interview Number: 49
 Number of Tapes: 2
 Length: 1 Hour & 42 Minutes

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	012-015 016-020 021-024 025-029	Father was born in San Francisco. Grandfather came around 1870's. Father was born in 1879 in San Francisco. Mother never came to the United States. Father went back to [China] and got married. Calvin Chang (CC) was born in China.
2	030-051	Father was a manager of a herb store in Los Angeles for a while.
3	052-069 070-072 073-090 091-098	CC was born in 1908. After 1908, father came back to the United States and stayed in San Francisco, then went to Alviso. Father and his friends organized a cannery. They canned fruits and tomatoes. It was called Bayside Cannery Company. It was a big corporation owned by Chinese. During the fruit season (from January to August), they canned fruit, the rest of the season, they canned asparagus. The company's first capital was \$30,000, gradually built up to half a million to a million dollar business. The company was operating during the year of 1910 and 1938. In 1939, because of the Depression, the company announced bankruptcy. There were about four hundred people working in the cannery when CC first came. Half of the workers were Chinese men and Caucasian women.
4	099-105 106-110	Most male workers were single who lived in the dormitory. The company provided a little house for the married workers. Not many older workers.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	111-113 114-130 131-133 134-138	Cannery jobs were pretty much physically demanding jobs. In the 1920's, the work got \$0.45 an hour. CC graduated from the 8th grade, then was taken back to China to finish high school and college. CC came back to the United States and received a masters degree from Michigan.
5	139-144 145-151 152-155 156-164 165-177 178-179	After receiving a Masters degree, CC went back to China until World War II broke out. CC returned to the United States again and stayed in Seattle. When the war came, CC was working for the [Top Pacific Shipyard]. In 1949 he came to Los Angeles and stayed until the present time. Doctor advised CC to come to Southern California or to Arizona for the health reason and for the good climate. CC was not with his parents all the time. From 1923 on, father took CC back to China. Father stayed and passed away in 1936 in China. The sole income for the family was from the money CC's father made in the United States.
6	180-185 186-191 192-194 195-204 205-218	Father ran a small business in Hong Kong before he came to the United States. CC was born in Chu Young, Hui Ping (朝陽縣平). CC speaks Hui Ping Sze Yup (開平, 四邑). CC learned Chinese in high school and college. CC went to Chinese school while he attended grammar school in San Jose.
7	219-222 223-228 229-233 234-239 240-246 247-250 251-254 255-261	There were about twenty to thirty Chinese children in San Jose. Father hired a Chinese teacher to teach them Chinese from 4:00 p.m. on until 8:00 p.m. The students even ate at the Chinese school. All the Chinese children spoke Sze Yup to each other. Most workers came from 開平, 台山, 新會, and 鶴山 -- four districts. Among the students, both Chinese and English was used. In American school, CC made friends with non-Chinese easily. Aside from twenty Chinese students and some Japanese students, there were all Caucasians. There were about over one hundred students from first grade to eighth grade. CC associated with everybody. CC's main business was serving in the Chinese community in Los Angeles as an accountant.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	262-273	CC majored in Business Management in college, and received a masters degree in economic statistics.
8	274-283	While CC attended Ling Nam University (<u>嶺南大學</u>), all the textbooks in business were in English. The lectures were given in English.
	284-290	CC had no language problem when attending graduate school.
	291-298	In college, the Chinese literature and other courses were taught in Chinese.
	299-311	There were quite a few American born Chinese attending Ling Nam in 1929 to 1933.
9	312-330	There was an exchange program between American schools and Ling Nam.
	331-355	There were Caucasian students attending Ling Nam as exchange students and learned Chinese while they studied there main field.
	356-362	The public's opinion was that if you were a Chinese then you must speak Chinese. So the parents sent the children back to China to learn the language.
	363-370	Parents here preferred their children to marry Chinese born rather than American born.
10	371-392	Most of the parents would not send the American born daughter to China for marriage. They preferred the daughters to marry American born Chinese.
	393-395	In the mind of the Chinese parent, the China born girls know the Chinese traditional customs while the American born girls would not know the Chinese customs.
	396-403	When the woman married back in China, most likely they would stay in China.
	404-409	CC did not want to discuss his family affairs.
	410-413	Father encouraged CC to pursue an education in China.
	414-415	CC chose his own major in business.
	415-422	Father wanted him to become a doctor.
	423-426	Most of the parents wanted the children to be engineers, businessmen, and many other specialists.
	427-444	CC left his children to choose their own fields.
11	445-461	Chinese parents wanted their children to make good.
	462-465	In the old days, there was discrimination back in the 1940's.
	466-END	When CC came back to the United States, there was a Michigan University Alumni Association in Seattle.

END OF SIDE A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	045-051	CC's professor wrote a nice introduction letter to a fellow in Seattle Michigan Alumni Association for CC. The fellow was the chief auditor in a telephone company. He eventually introduced CC to many prominent Michigan alumni. What they could offer CC was: "We'll keep our eyes open and see what we can do for you." That was the end of it.
	052-056	It happened that a relative of CC opened a restaurant and invited CC to be the manager for the restaurant.
	057-058	When World War II started, all the jobs opened for everybody and the discrimination was gone. Everyone was needed during the war.
3	059-092	CC managed the restaurant until 1944. At the same time in 1942, CC worked for a shipyard. The shipyard built cargo ship and had 30,000 employees.
	093-096	CC worked as a payroll auditor in the shipyard. CC became known by the supervisor who happened to come to the restaurant. With his introduction CC started working in the shipyard.
4	097-109	CC came to Los Angeles and opened his own office without any trouble.
	110-114	CC opened the office on the First Street and 90% of the clients were Chinese.
	115-121	Most Chinese were in laundry, restaurant and liquor stores.
	122-126	Laundry was the backbone of the Chinese business before. Today, restaurant is the backbone of the Chinese business.
	127-129	Average net income for a Chinese in 1944 was between \$3,000 and \$5,000 a year.
	130-134	Laundry businesses' income was between \$3,000 and \$6,000.
	135-138	The big restaurant can net \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year while the small restaurant net about \$3,000 to \$10,000.
5	139-145	The former laundrymen started switching to grocery stores.
	146-151	While operating a grocery store, one needs to know English well.
	152-153	The grocery business income was from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to \$60,000 today.
	153-161	Around 1944, there were not many Chinese operating grocery stores.
	162-175	The workers of CC clients earned \$2,000 to \$3,000 a year which is equivalent to today's \$8,000 to \$10,000.
6	176-184	All Chinese loved to purchase real estate. It has been Chinese thinking all the time.

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	185-200 201-208 209-219 220-226	Chinese would also invest money in real estate in China. Before the Communists took over mainland China, most of the Chinese saved enough money and prepared to invest money back in China and prepared to return to China. Chinese people loved to gamble. Some of the old timers gambled their money away. Even though the police raided the gambling house, they could not stop the gambling which often occurred in the backroom of the store.
7	227-231 232-245 246-258 259-262	Most of the Chinese gambling was Pai Gao (牌九), they also played Fan Tan (翻攤). The gambling house could never lose and always made good commissions. There were only certain groups of people who loved to gamble. Before the War, most Chinese single men had no place to go, no recreation, no movies. Therefore gambling was the only available recreation.

END OF TAPE 1

TAPE 2 SIDE A

1	006-012 013-024 025-028	Calvin Chang's Chinese name is Chung Hei Chou (張喜洲). CC missed China, and has been back to China twice for education and work but has not been back to the village. Did not miss the village that much. In the village there was no electricity and other modern facilities. Wood was used instead of gas.
2	029-033 034-041 042-050 051-053 054-055	CC associated 75% of the time with Chinese and 25% of the time with the general public. CC felt more Chinese. CC encountered discrimination before but not in Los Angeles [after 1944]. CC conversed with his Chinese clients in Chinese, except the ones who were born in America. CC used Chinese herbs once in a while and did not trust Chinese medicine.
3	055-084	CC's parents had to rely on Chinese medicine. In Alviso, father went to American doctor because there were no Chinese doctors.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	085-100	CC believed in Chinese nutrition herbs like Jin Sing (人參). Even today CC takes Jin Sing once in a while.
4	101-016	Before 1945, recreation for Chinese here was mahjong. Only once in a long while, there was a Chinese opera. Playing tennis was quite popular among the educated Chinese.
	107-110	CC played tennis almost everyday when he was sixteen to twenty-five years old.
	111-124	Ling Nam University had a lot of tennis courts.
	125-135	Tennis, as well as volleyball, soccer, basketball, were popular games among Chinese high school and college students.
	136-141	CC liked Chinese music, Chinese opera -- both Cantonese and Peking.
5	142-146	CC went to Tien Sing (天津) for high school for four years. That is where CC learned to appreciate Peking opera.
	147-153	CC was in Tien Sing in 1924.
	154-157	CC went back to China with his father in 1923 and attended the primary school in Canton for one year.
	158-175	In 1934, CC came back to the United States and attended Michigan University. Subsequently received a masters degree in Economic Statistics in 1935. Spent another year for doctoral degree, did not finish.
6	176-193	CC arrived in Los Angeles in 1944.
	194-203	Y. C. Hong was a well-known Chinese attorney, Peter Soo Hoo, Thomas Wong, Quon family of Quon and Quon Company, were considered prominent Chinese in Los Angeles.
	204-216	CC joined Long Kong, CACA, CCBA, Chinese organizations.
	217-218	Long Kong (龍崗) is typical family association and the members tried to help one another.
	219-220	CCBA concentrated on the social activities as a whole in the Chinese community.
7	220-229	CACA mostly concentrated on immigration matters.
	230-234	In the 1940's, CACA had a little bit over one hundred members. Now CACA has more members.
	235-246	The activities were mostly social activities, picnics, etc.
	247-253	CACA had no political activities around 1940's. Only the political figures asked for help. Then the Board would discuss whether CACA would help raise funds or invite politicians for speeches.
	254-255	Father's idea to send CC back to China and to be educated in the Chinese way.
	256-261	CC was the only son.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	262-275	It was common that the Chinese parents would give children both Chinese and American educations.
	276-280	There was a separate class in Ling Nam (嶺南) for the overseas Chinese students. About one hundred of the Chinese students were from America, Nam Yung (南洋) and other parts of the world.
	281-307	There were about over twenty Chinese Americans in Ling Nam (嶺南).
	308-316	In the old days when you made only \$50 to \$60 a month, and you had to spent \$150 to send a son for the Chinese education, it would be considered an expensive education.
9	317-334	Father made more money than average workers who made about \$700 to \$800 a year.
	335-349	Father felt that CC did not have enough Chinese and deep in his heart, he did not want CC to become an American, like a white American. And CC felt that father wanted him to go back to China and serve in China.
	350-358	Father was not educated, and wanted his children highly educated and to serve in mainland China. Father's heart was always in China.
	359-365	Father did want to do business here and made some money here.
	366-379	Father wanted CC to become a successful businessman.
	380-384	CC could have gone back to China and worked there, but because of the war, CC did not have a chance to go back.
10	385-394	CC married wife from China.
	395-404	Chinese preferred to go back and marry in China and raise family there.
	405-407	Chinese before CC's generation preferred son more than daughter.
	408-421	CC's generation did not care whether they had a son or daughter. They preferred not to have too many children.
	422-429	Most Chinese here were laundrymen, restaurant workers, who did not do better than the general Americans.
430-444	Now, Chinese are doing very well and are treated very well and there is no discrimination.	
11	445-451	In the 1940's, there were about three or four Chinese public accountants in Los Angeles.
	452-472	CC majored in accounting in Ling Nam.
	473-474	CC planned to get into business statistics in a major corporation but did not. First he did not have more training. There was discrimination, and nobody would take care of CC.

END OF SIDE A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	013-022	CC worked for Top Pacific Shipyard as payroll auditor for two years and came to Los Angeles due to his health.
	023-028	When CC came to Los Angeles, CC felt the demand for accountants in the Chinese community was greater than in the American community, so he opened his own office.
2	029-043	98% of CC's clients were Chinese.
	044-050	Public accountants did not have to take an examination due to their educational backgrounds.
	051-061	CC joined the Society of California Accountants and the National Association of Public Accountants.
3	062-069	Back in the 40's, CC did not buy property. In the 1950's, he purchased a house. In certain areas he was not allowed to buy there, such as in Beverly Hills, Los Feliz
	070-075	When CC got his real estate license, he tried to get the Multiple Listing of Los Feliz area and was not allowed to in 1947.
	076-078	At the time CC could not belong to the Los Angeles Realty Board.
	079-090	CC did not protest because he felt it was useless then.
	091-100	Chinese played in the movies as substandard. CC did not feel that Chinese were stereotyped.
4	101-110	CC felt that Chinese could not get anyway.
	111-122	CC felt the discrimination can never end. Today the discrimination is less. Before, even if you were equipped with knowledge, you would not be able to find a job easily.
	123-132	CC never thought of moving the office out of Chinatown, because most of his clients are in Chinatown.
	133-140	CC's son is a lawyer as well as an accountant and is taking care of some of CC's business.
5	141-143	CC felt that if he was more aggressive he could get more business.
	144-145	CC started as a one man office and now the office is expanded to six employees office.
	146-160	CC is also in the real estate business and the son in legal counseling.
	161-167	CC went into real estate business because of the needs of the clients.
	168-179	Some Chinese CPAs have gone to white neighborhoods.
6	180-185	CC would not consider himself successful but content. He felt that he made a comfortable living, even if the earning was not too high.
	186-188	CC never heard of people making comparisons between Chinese and Jewish people.

END OF TAPE 2

END OF INTERVIEW

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