

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Paul Quon Interview Number: 29
 Chinese Name: _____ Number of Tapes: 2
 Date of Interview: 2/14/79 Length: 1 Hour & 3 Minutes
 Interviewer: Jean Wong
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Johnny Yee

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape 1 Side A
1	015-060	Parents came from Canton "Hay Peng" on Darling ship which took two or three months. Most Chinese came over to build the railroad. My father was a cook for Americans in a Los Angeles hotel. All of my relatives lived in this city. He retired and returned to China at age 75. He worked for a resort hotel in the summer time. He was a chief cook at \$200 per month. Dishwashers made \$30 per month. About 12 hours per day and seven days per week. My mother was in China, she died long ago, she never came over.	
2	061-085	My father sent money to my mother regularly. My father had three children. I'm the second in the family. The oldest died a long time ago. I do not know where he is. The youngest died too. The oldest did almost anything but mostly was a cook. The youngest was also a cook, that was all there was for Chinese to do - either be a cook or the laundry business or open your own business.	
3	086-109	When did your father roughly come to the United States? I was born in China Kwong Suey - 24th year. I came to the United States when I was about 14 years old. I first went to mission school and church and Catholic school. I never got to the 5th grade because I had to work. I just went as far as the 4th grade. Most of the Chinese people worked at the market.	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	110-120	After quitting school I returned to China to get married. I was about 22 or 23 years old. It was a match marriage. My wife never came to the United States.
	121-146	I went to National Auto School when I returned from Canton for one and a half to two years and stayed at school to practice. I ran the Q & Q garage for about twenty years. At first it was the Q & C - we were a partnership. Q stands for Quan and C for Chan. The other Quan is still alive. The garage was located on 8th Street.
5	147-193	There was one Chinese or none in auto class. Now there are more Chinese. Most customers were American. My prices had to be reasonable otherwise the customers would not return. I earned about \$200 per month. My partner and I worked six days a week. I ran my shop from 1924 to 1946.
6	194-199	I got by a lot better in the depression than the American because we do not eat high priced foods.
	200-212	I sent money to my wife in China when I had it. She died on November 1st. I have nobody in China now.
	213-228	After 1946 I just took it easy and became kind of lazy.
7	229-250	My son is married and has two sons living in San Francisco. He also died. He was a photographer in the army in World War II and followed General McArthur. He died in 1975.
	251-277	We speak Chinese at home. My son was about 18 years old when they came over.
8	278-310	I lived on Plaza Street in Los Angeles - North Main next to the Plaza. My address was 130 Plaza. I lived there ten to twelve years. Afterwards I moved from place to place. Now I live with a friend. I always liked to live near Chinese.
	311-340	I went to Chinese school in China but not here.
9	341-374	My god daughter, Margret, said I was a great inventor. During the war the relatives chipped in money so I built a generator with a spot light. When a bandit came they would turn it on and shoot them. Now there is good law and order in China.

Interviewee: Paul Quon

Page: 3

1 Side A

Tape: 2 Side A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	375-424	Margret said that people nicknamed me Gee Hee Ton - my name is Ton - Gee Hee (means machine). I repair almost anything. Now that I'm old I've forgotten everything.
10	425-480	They talk about the tunnels of Chinatown. I don't think there are such things. French people owned the cafe where the theatre is. The Quon family bought the place, called it the Paris Cafe from the Plaza Park three doors from Plaza Park. All the buildings had basements. There were no tunnels there in the basement.
END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A		
1	000-011 012-023 024-037	Introduction Before the war there were fights among associations, after the war it became peaceful. The family associations gave free meals to people and helped immigrants who just arrived in the United States. Once in a while I go to the free meals. On Chinese New Years it lasted for several days. Meals are pretty good. The wealthy Chinese merchants make the donations. There many rich merchants in Chinatown.
2	037-040 041-057 058-074	I do not belong to any other clubs in Chinatown. .Chinese more or less had to belong to family associations. If you refused to belong and spend foolish money, but most do belong. I'm still a member of the Quon Family Association as long as I live. Associations like the Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association are important in Chinatown because they settle a lot of things peacefully. I never have any problems to be settled because those guys are always kind of busy.
3	075-089	What kind of jobs did the Chinese do before the war - they did anything - waiters, cooks, farmers, markets, laundries, restaurants, just like a typical American. Chinese were engaged in almost everything. James Wong Howe was engaged in motion pictures.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	089-108	I don't think the Chinese were hindered by language, 95% of the Chinese here speak Cantonese and 5% of the Chinese are from the North and were mostly students. I learned my English from a mission school and stayed with a Christian lady. I had about 2 1/2 years of mission school and went in 4th grade but did not go to 5th grade.
4	109-120	Before the war if a person made \$200 per month he had it good. For thirty-five cents you could get a T-bone steak, with salad, coffee and pie. Now it costs \$3 to \$6. If the average wage were \$100 a month. I cannot be sure.
	120-129	Medical payments before the war was less. Medicine I now take goes up each month.
	130-138	I do not know for sure what the Chinese did with their money before the war. Some gambled it or saved it I'm not sure.
	139-145	I cannot say if the Chinese had obligations in China because different people are different, some will do it a different way.
5	146-162	Before the war most of the Chinese went back to China to get married. Now the younger generation gets married here. Not very many got married here in the United States especially the ones born in China. Not that many Chinese families were here before the war. After the war it was a different story.
	163-194	There was interracial marriages before the war. Reuben F. See On married a Caucasian but it ended up in divorce and he later married a Chinese lady.
6	195-205	I think Chinese or Americans rather have a son than a daughter, because it costs less money to raise a son.
	206-219	I think most Chinese parents want their children to learn Chinese and go to Chinese school, but you cannot force them if they do not want to.
	220-229	I cannot say how many came over here to work and returned to China. Some returned to see their family and returned to work for a while and died. I cannot say for sure. It is hard to tell.
7	230-235	More than 75% of the people from Sze Yup district have their families over here now.

Interviewee: Paul Quon

Page: 5

2 Side A

Tape: 2 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	236-298	Before people with the same surname did not marry but now it does not make any difference. They marry anybody. Even before the war if a person with the same surname got married but generally it was not a good practice. In China certain provinces have the same surname for many miles. Therefore the people had to marry within the family name. If the generation is too close these people got more stupid. That is what they say ("old folks").
8	299-325	Conditions in Chinatown were poor before the war. A person just had a room. Usually a few people would live together and share a place. Money was hard to come by. Each chipped in \$3, which was the usual cost.
9	326-340	People now coming are looking for businesses, before they look for jobs. The new comer from Asia all look for businesses. I do not know where they got all their money.
	341-360	Not much change in women. Now the women all go to work to help support the family.
	361-421	I did not do very much traveling. I came from China to San Francisco and then to Los Angeles. I came to Los Angeles because all of my relatives were here. I stayed at Angel Island for one month. I did not like it, but I had to stay. For a pasttime we would play games.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

1	000-014	All immigrants went through San Francisco, later on Los Angeles had an immigrations office.
	015-022	I was not the first Chinese to cut my queue off but soon after the revoltaion all the Chinese cut off their queues. I cut off my queue before I came over here.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW

- Angel Island, 2A:9
 Arranged marriages, 1A:4
 Automobiles, 1A:4-5
- Children
 preference for sons, 2A:6
- China
 continuing ties to, 2A:7
 law and order in, 1A:7
 marriages in, 2A:5
 money sent to, 1A:2
 returns to, 1A:1; 2A:6
- Chinatown (Los Angeles), 1A:10
 housing in, 2A:8
- Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, 2A:2
- Chinese language
 and dialect spoken, 2A:3
- Chinese schools
 attitude toward, 2A:6
- Cooks, 1A:1
- Depression (economic 1929-1939),
 1A:6
- English language
 learning of, 2A:3
- Families and family life
 language spoken in, 1A:7
 members remaining in China, 1A:
 1,4
- Family associations
 disputes between, 2A:1
 functions of, 2A:1
 membership in, 2A:2
- Food, 1A:6
- Gambling, 2A:4
- Housing patterns
 Chinese American clustering,
 1A:8
- Howe, James Wong, 2A:3
- Immigrants and immigration
 arrival, 2B:1
 mode of transportation, 1A:1
 and mutual aid societies, 2A:1
 reasons for, 1A:1; 2A:9
- Incomes
 averages of, 2A:4
 expenses compared to, 2A:4
- Interracial marriages, 2A:5
- Marriages
 in China, 1A:4; 2A:5
 restrictions upon, 2A:7
- Money
 sent to China, 1A:2
- Occupation patterns
 typical job, 1A:2; 2A:3
 among women, 2A:10
- Paris Cafe, 1A:10
- Queues, 2B:1
- Quon, Paul
 birth of, 1A:3
 courtship and marriage of, 1A:4
 education of, 1A:3,4-5,8; 2A:3
 emigration from China by, 1A:3;
 2A:9
 father of, 1A:1-2,3
 inventions of, 1A:9
 language spoken by, 1A:7
 mother of, 1A:1-2
 organizations involved in, 2A:
 1-2
 residences of, 1A:8
 siblings of, 1A:2
 son of, 1A:7
 wife of, 1A:4,6
- Quon family, 1A:10
- Quon Family Association, 2A:2
- Railroad construction, 1A:1
- See, Reuben F., 2A:5
- Sojourning, 1A:1
- Sze Yup, China, 2A:7
- Women
 occupation patterns among, 2A:10
 remaining in China, 1A:1,4