

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Ethel Cannon Interview Number: 64
 Chinese Name: 黃新彩 Number of Tapes: 2
 Date of Interview: 2/12/80 Length: 1 Hour & 42 Minutes
 Interviewer: Beverly Chan
 Others Present: Ethel Cannon's Nephew
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side <u>A</u>
1	001-013	Introduction.	
	014-016	Ethel Cannon's (EC) Chinese name is Wong Sang Tsoi (黃新彩).	
	017-024	Father was born in Canton, China in 1893. He was a bookkeeper for a Chinese market.	
	025-031	He came to the U.S. when in his teens with his uncle. EC's grandfather was a music professor in China.	
	032-059	EC's father worked for EC's uncle as a bookkeeper. Later he became involved in the grocery business. He and his cousins opened a market in the Old Chinatown. The store sold Chinese sausage and roast pork and had a very good business. Just before World War II, the partners decided to quit the business. Father went to Sacramento and opened a gambling joint.	
2	060-063	EC's father came back to Los Angeles and was very ill. Father liked Sacramento and mother liked Los Angeles, so they separated.	
	064-086	Mother was born in Los Angeles in 1907. She worked for Douglas Aircraft. First she started as a riveter during World War II. Later she passed an oral test and started working in the electric laboratory.	
3	087-095	EC was born in Los Angeles at Ferguson Alley next to a Chinese temple.	
	096-099	Parents were married in 1925. EC was born in 1926.	
	100-108	EC had two sisters and one younger brother. They spoke Chinese at home, both Sam Yup and Sze Yup.	
4	109-131	EC went to Chinese school at the age of ten. Parents moved to Ferguson when they got married. They later moved to Arcadia Street, then to Sanchez Street.	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	132-161	EC went to California Street School. EC went to Central Junior High School where the Board of Education was located. Later she went to Lincoln High School. While in high school she went to Sacramento. A year later came back to Belmont high school.
5	162-167	There were quite a few Chinese students in Central Junior High School.
	168-207	EC and her family moved to Sanchez Street in 1932. The family rented a house from a Quan family. The neighbors were all Chinese, the Lews and Quons.
6	208-223	EC's father worked for the Eastern Grocery store. The old Chinatown now became the State Historic Park.
	224-267	EC's family moved from Sanchez Street in 1949 to Silverlake area. A lot of people would not sell their house to Chinese. The neighbors were mostly Caucasians. The neighbors signed a petition to get them out, but two neighbors next door to them. The owners were willing to sell the house to EC's family.
7	268-285	EC played with friends of different ethnic backgrounds at school. There wasn't discrimination at school.
8	286-293	There were very few blacks in Central Junior High School. No discrimination was discussed at school.
	294-323	After World War II started, Chinese were mistaken as Japanese, etc. All the department stores laid off all the Oriental employees.
	324-333	The students in Lincoln High School were mostly Mexicans and Italians.
9	334-34	EC identified herself both as Chinese as well as American.
	349-358	When the neighbors petitioned to exclude them, EC and her family felt more Chinese than ever.
	359-369	EC spoke more English. They spoke more Chinese with her father.
	370-375	When EC was young, the family used some Chinese herbal medicine. Now they don't use them any more.
	376-389	Mother went to four years of American public school. Mother was the oldest of nine children in her family and had to take care of the younger brothers and sisters.

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1 Side A

Tape: 1 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	390-435	EC went to a Chinese school. Each time EC paid about \$2.50 to \$3.00 when it was time to pay for Chinese education. At school, EC was not treated nicely at the Chinese school. The Chinese school took up too much time, so EC decided to quit.
	436-452	Father wrote to China. Later father became blind.
11	453-469	EC took her father to an American doctor instead of a Chinese doctor.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

Tape 1 Side B

1	001-007	Blank.
	008-016	The father's Chinese doctor would not speak Chinese to EC's father. So EC took her father to an American doctor. Her father threw away all his Chinese letters.
	017-028	Father had a twin brother and an elder brother in China. But EC and her family didn't know where they are now. They lost contact with their relatives in China.
	209-041	EC still remembers some Chinese characters. There were three grades in the Chinese school. Each room had thirty to forty students. There were about a dozen students in EC's class.
2	042-061	Mother did knitting, embroidering, etc. Mother used to teach Caucasian people to play mahjong at the May Company's display window and got paid for showing people how to play mahjong.
	062-079	There were no other recreations. When EC was 4 or 5, her uncle used to take her to the Third Street Theater for 4 or 5 movies for 5 cents every week.
3	080-082	EC didn't like Chinese movies.
	083-091	EC worked as a movie extra for "Good Earth" and other war movies.
	092-120	EC thought that the Charlie Chan movies were very interesting. The Shanghai Gesture had a Caucasian portray a Chinese lady.
4	121-131	Anna May Wong always played villain-type of roles. Chinese didn't like the roles she portrayed.

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1 Side B

Tape: 2 Side A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	132-150	She worked for the "Good Earth" and other films. EC still works as an extra. EC's uncle used to take her to play in the movies as a backgrounder.
5	151-167	Tom Gubbins lived next door to EC's grandmother. Mr. Gubbins used to hire Chinese working in the movies. Gubbins used to ask EC's grandmother to work in the movies but she wouldn't do it.
	168-183	Later Dr. Chee became an agent who hired Chinese to act in the movies. Bessie Loo came in the later days.
6	184-193	EC's father belonged to the Wong Family Association. He then joined Bing Kong Tong in Sacramento.
	194-233	EC's Sunday school teacher at the Methodist Church, Mary Chan Lee, a Korean, was a member of the American Women's Volunteer Services. A lot of movie stars' wives, such as Mrs. Bob Hope, etc. belonged to the group and helped the servicement. Mary Chan Lee always took her Sunday school class to help in the canteen in Chinatown.
7	234-265	Father was a Buddhist. They had a family altar. They worshipped ancestors during the holidays. Both EC's father and mother believed in worshipping ancestors.
	266-269	The family also attended church activities.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

Tape 2 Side A

1	001-014	Introduction.
	015-029	Children went to church. Mother believed in God, both in the church and at home. They also believed in Chinese religion.
	030-043	Mother always prepared Tsai () a vegetarian dish for Chinese New Year. EC's husband never objected to the Chinese customs.
2	044-065	EC's uncle Joe Wong was very prominent in Chinatown. He was the owner of the Eastern Grocery Store and some gambling places. EC never recalled that he ever got into trouble. Peter Soo Hoo Sr. was very prominent.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	066-101	There were many Chinese families in Chinatown. The Quon family was an asparagus ranch owner and restaurant owner. The Ung family was prominent also. Margaret Quon Lee was EC's neighbor too.
	102-110	EC worked part time at Bullocks. During World War II, all the Orientals were laid off. EC got in through a friend's introduction. It wasn't easy to get a job then.
4	111-128	A lot of Chinese women worked in the sewing factories. Mother used to work for F. See On Gift Shop as a saleslady. After she was married, mother worked in the sewing factory.
	129-149	Very few Chinese women worked as secretaries. EC's aunts and grandmother also shelled pecans and walnuts. A lady named Mrs. Sally Brown would bring a 100 pound sack of pecans and walnuts. Everybody in the family worked. Mrs. Brown would come and pay for the job.
5	150-156	Grandmother used to peel waterchestnuts.
	157-177	The family followed all the Chinese customs in different Chinese holidays, such as May Fifth Day.
	178-188	Grandmother lived by herself. EC's mother had three brothers and five sisters.
6	189-194	EC didn't own a car before World War II. Most Chinese men worked in the restaurant, laundry or in the market.
	195-209	EC's father's uncle was in San Francisco (who was in the professional field). Y.C. Hong was an attorney in Chinatown.
	210-227	Most Chinese were considered in the lower income categories. Some Chinese worked in the produce market. The Louie family was very prominent, the family owned their own business.
7	228-242	EC got 52¢ an hour working at Bullocks in the 1940s.
	243-256	EC ate mostly Chinese food at home, sometimes Mexican food.
	257-275	The gambling was very popular among Chinese men but not among women. The games were Pai Gao, Fan Tan and mahjong.
	276-283	There were quite a lot of single men here who sent money back to their families in China.
	284-290	Father had a bank account. He put his savings in the bank.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	291-297	Mother though herself as a Chinese.
	298-315	EC's relatives on her father's side were from China but they were educated in California. EC's grand uncle graduated from Stanford University and became a bank manager in San Francisco. EC knew her background was Chinese and yet was able to take advantage of being an American citizen.
	316-339	A lot of Chinese men went back to China to get married because there weren't many Chinese women in Los Angeles. Even the American born Chinese girls were married by the arrangements of matchmakers.
9	340-374	Parents were separated due to their different interests. Father's cousin also divorced his wife in the 1940s.
	375-398	EC though people probably didn't like interracial marriages. EC married a Caucasian husband. Parents liked him very much. They couldn't say too much because EC's mother's uncle and aunt had interracial marriages. Nobody in EC's family objected to EC's marriage to a Caucasian. But they would have preferred that EC marry a Chinese.
10	399-401	EC got married in 1954.
	402-408	There were quite a few Chinese married to non-Chinese at the time.
	409-427	EC didn't care whether she had a son or daughter. She had only one son. EC had two younger sisters but father wanted to have a son so her mother gave birth to her four child, a son.
	428-454	Chinese went back to China for marriage because they didn't socialize with the American born girls. All they did was work in the restaurants and laundries, etc. Now they still do the same thing. They though the American born girls were no good.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

Tape 2 Side B

1	001-007	Blank.
	008-044	EC knew a young man who went back to China to get married. They had the thought that American born girls were not good. EC used to date a Chinese man. But EC is a widow and has a son. EC's boyfriend's relatives didn't like the idea of marrying a widow with a son. He went back to Hong Kong to marry a Chinese girl.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	045-054	EC knew a Chinese man who was a waiter and felt that he had to marry a girl from China.
	055-072	Chinese no longer feel that it is important to send their children to Chinese school. Before World War II, every child had to go to Chinese school. EC wished that she had more Chinese education. At least it helped to order in a Chinese restaurant.
3	073-081	When EC's son was young. There was a nearby Chinese school. So EC had to take him to Chinese school.
	082-096	Before World War II, nobody went back to China to live. Mother's brother went back to China to get married. He didn't bring the family over until after the World War II.
	097-107	Chinese left wives and family in China as an old Chinese theory of leaving roots in China.
4	108-116	Quite a few Chinese family sent children back to China for education, both high school and college.
	117-122	Parents naturally like their children become doctors, lawyers, an engineer, or any kind of job in the professional field.
	123-128	EC didn't know whether Chinese were affected by the Depression or not.
	129-139	EC never felt anybody treated her any differently.
	140-149	The neighbors moved away. They never bothered EC's family after the petition.
5	150-188	EC heard that Chinese people were like Jews. EC felt that the recent immigrants were more like Jews. They were more like refugees. They managed money in business very similar to Jews.
6	189-210	On the whole, Chinese had it better themselves. But there is no way to compare the Chinese community to the American community. Chinese still stay on the lower part of the totem pole.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE B

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