

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Sang Li Yee Interview Number: 78
 Chinese Name: _____ Number of Tapes: 1
 Date of Interview: 1/13/80 Length: 1 Hour & 15 Minutes
 Interviewer: Chuck Yee and Mary Yee
 Others Present: Sang Li Yee's relative
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side <u>A</u>
1	001-016 017-028 029-041	Introduction. Father came to the United States after getting married and went back to China in 1913. Sang Li Yee (SLY) came with father to Salina in 1913. Great grandfather had a farm in Castrafield where SLY spent his childhood on the farm.	
2	042-054 055-069	Father came to the U.S. after SLY. Father worked as a family cook in San Francisco. Great grandafther was a potato king and wanted to retire in China. .Twenty five cents for a sack of potatoes.	
3	070-077 078-083 084-096 097-102 103-113	SLY was born in Suei Long Village, Canton. He came to the U.S. when he was ten. SLY studied a couple of years in China. SLY worked in Santa Barbara. Then he helped his father handle his business. Had no choice as a kid therefore he came to the U.S. with his father. Mother stayed in China. SLY worked in the laundry in San Francisco in 1918 for three dollars a week. Father left SLY in Salina and went back to China. SLY went to school in Salina.	
4	114-124 125-133 134-151	SLY worked in the restaurant washing dishes during the inght. In the summer time, SLY worked in the sugar beet farm at King City. There was a Chinatown in Salina. Later SLY went to San Francisco Chinatown with his father. SLY worked in the laundry early in the morning. He went to school in Chinatown. He slept on the table.	

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Tape: 1 Side A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	152-160	SLY had to walk to school on Washington Street.
	161-164	In 1919, father built Sue Ying Hong on Grand Avenue and Washington Street.
	165-172	Father came back to the U.S. in 1918 with SLY's brother. They stayed in a small room with a community kitchen.
	173-189	SLY went back to China to get married in 1921 when he met Chuck Yee's father.
6	190-194	In 1942, SLY came to Long Beach.
	195-214	SLY associated with people who liked him. SLY paid the fees for him and for all his children to the Yee Family Association.
	215-223	SLY never had a doctor when young.
	224-238	SLY played softball and football in Salina.
7	239-245	SLY played mahjong in Santa Barbara.
	246-253	Couldn't write Chinese letters to his mother.
	254-295	SLY belonged to the Yee Family Association. He also belonged to other organizations. The Yee Family Association members were discussed.
8	296-312	The functions of the Yee Family Association was to know other Yees. In the old days the members donated money to build association buildings. Now everyone was for his own interest.
	313-325	During World War II, Sieu War was a wealthy man.
9	326-354	SLY left his parents in San Francisco and came to Long Beach. He was turned back when he tried to buy a house. Later he got the house through a Caucasian friend in 1943.
	355-375	SLY was mad at the discrimination. He wanted to return to China but gave up the idea after the Communist takeover of China.
	376-389	SLY worked all his life and wanted to see all his children and grand children go to college.
10	390-405	From 1918-1925, the Yees were mostly in the laundry business. Because of the lack of English, they had to work in the laundry.
	406-421	Chinese children in San Francisco always fought with Italian children.
	422-430	Chinese used to deliver laundry with horse and buggy before 1915.

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1 Side A
Tape: 1 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	431-442	SLY made about three dollars a week when he was 12 years old. Ironing white laundry for 12 dollars a week.
	443-457	SLY ran a restaurant in Long Beach.
11	458-482	SLY's mother-in-law was a widow. He sent money to China to support her and his brother-in-law.
	483-485	During the Depression, SLY was in Santa Barbara.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

Tape 1 Side B

1	005-017	During the Depression, one could sell a couple of cups of coffee in a week. SLY sent his wife and children to China in 1932. Children studied in Canton.
	018-019	In 1936, wife returned to the U.S.
	020-036	It was very difficult to find a house in Long Beach in the 1940s. But after he purchased the house he had no problem getting along with the neighbors.
2	037-061	In the early days, SLY's wife couldn't speak English. Dr. Harsty took care of her anytime she needed care. Later he treated SLY and was considered the best doctor the Yee family ever had.
	062-068	SLY picked a doctor as long as he was good. It didn't matter that he was Chinese or Caucasian. SLY's son is a doctor now.
3	069-079	There were very few Chinese in Long Beach. A friend of SLY recommended that Long Beach was a good place to have a Chinese restaurant. He purchased Chinese groceries from the international grocery store on Spring Street.
	080-101	SLY went back to China in December 1920. A neighbor introduced him to his wife-to-be. They got married in 1921. The immigration officer questioned them. Mrs. Cumberland from the Presbyterian Church and other important members of Santa Barbara all wrote letters to the immigration officers and got SLY's wife into the U.S.
	102-112	SLY supported his brothers who went through college. One got a degree in chemistry from Stanford. One got a masters degree from USC.

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1 Side B

Tape: 2 Side A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	113-159	SLY took care of his mother. His brothers were against SLY and accused him of not taking good care of his mother. Father and brothers took mother back to Santa Barbara. SLY paid for all the medical and funeral expenses.
5	160-179	SLY went to Chinese Presbyterian Church in Santa Barbara. There were a few Chinese in the church.
	180-182	It is difficult to tell whether there is a life after.
	183-185	SLY seldome went to the movies. He worked fifteen hours a day.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

Tape 2 Side A

1	001-006	Introduction.
	007-017	When SLY went to Hong Kong in 1913 from China on the way to the U.S., he was examined by the immigration officer to see whether he had any special illnesses. Sixty years later, now nobody can embarrass you like that.
	018-024	SLY was not ashamed of being Chinese.
	025-028	SLY had four sons and four daughters.
	029-033	It didn't make any difference to have sons or daughters.
2	034-056	He liked his children to be in a different field, like a farmer, pharmacist, doctor, etc. It's up to the children to make up their career choice. In 1946, SLY sent one of his sons to China Lingnam University. He encouraged his son to learn his own trade and later he could live a comfortable life.
	057-069	There were about three or four people working in SLY's restaurant. He hired Caucasian waitresses and Chinese cook.
3	070-072	SLY learned the Chinese restaurant business from his father.
	073-092	Father sold his 35 acres of land to Santa Barbara High School for \$75,000. Father gave all his money to SLY's brothers.
	093-102	SLY's father couldn't decide to stay with SLY or not. That bothers SLY a great deal.
	103-117	One son had two master degrees.

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Tape: 2 Side A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	118-122	Children will not go back to China.
	123-129	In 1933, SLY went back to China. Many Chinese smoked opium and discussed many things.
	130-181	SLY read a Chinese statement which indicated a Chinese man's wish to return to China. He also read a family book which recorded all the family members and their ranks.
5	182-189	SLY tried to teach his children to remember where they came from.
6	190-219	SLY felt that the U.S. should have supported Chiang Kai-shek's government more. If so, there would not have been the Vietnam war.
	220-226	Without U.S. support, Taiwan would probably turn to Russia.
7	227-249	SLY was on Angel Island and was separated due to the outcome of the immigration health examination.
	250-260	Mrs. Cumberland helped him out of Angel Island.
	261-282	SLY was not on Angel Island for too long. He was questioned by immigration officers.
8	283-321	Father came to attend SLY's daughter's wedding in 1946. He brought some cakes to distribute to relatives and friends. A friend recommended that his father purchase a lemon ranch in Santa Barbara. In 1955, he sold the lemon ranch to the city of Santa Barbara.
	322-359	SLY didn't have much education and didn't have a choice in jobs. Brothers had more education but didn't seem to be liked by SLY.
9	360-372	SLY has 25 grandchildren.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

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