

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Wally Wong Interview Number: 114
 Chinese Name: 黃偉棠 Number of Tapes: 1
 Date of Interview: 6/25/80 Length: 21 Minutes
 Interviewer: Beverly Chan
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1 Side A</u>
1	001-007	Introduction.	
	008-012	Wally Wong (WW) came from Toishan. Chinese name (黃偉棠). Parents came from Toishan.	
	013-020	Grandfather came to the U.S. first as a laborer working for the Union Pacific from Sacramento to Ogden, Utah around 1851-1852.	
	021-026	Grandfather came to seek a better living and brought WW's father over before he went back to China in 1908.	
	027-029	WW was born in 1904.	
	030-033	Father started working at hotels in San Francisco.	
2	034-044	Chinese usually followed the railroad to earn a living by buying restaurants near the railroad station. Most of them packed lunches and sandwiches for the railroad workers. Father also was in the restaurant business. That is how the Chinese moved their way into America.	
	045-048	Chinese also did business near the courthouse because the location of the courthouse usually was in the center of the city. Due to the traffic there was enough people moving in and out.	
	049-054	Chinese restaurants almost operated 24 hours a day. By their endurance and hard work, Chinese survived. They survived the best way they knew how.	
	055-064	Father was a farmer in China. Everybody who came from China was a farmer before. Before 1900, industrialization in China was scarce.	
	065-080	WW's father had two sisters who did not come to the U.S. due to the Chinese Exclusion laws. Grandfather could have brought his wife over before the exclusion laws, but he did not.	
3	081-083	In the early days, the language barrier was probably a big reason for not bringing Chinese women over.	
	084-086	The life of Chinese men was quite lonely, that is why Chinese men always got together.	
	087-089	Father did not bring his wife over.	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
	090-093	WW came to Los Angeles many times. Came to Los Angeles to live in 1947. Came to America in 1916.
	094-103	Father bought a restaurant in Duluth, Minnesota by the railroad station and lived there for about a year. Later bought another restaurant in Minneapolis in 1917. WW lived there until 1960.
4	104-112	WW came to Los Angeles in 1947 for his daughter's education. He went back to Minneapolis to remodel the old house. He stayed there until 1960.
	113-122	WW first came to Los Angeles in 1939 and drove to San Francisco to see the World's Fair. Then he took his family back to Los Angeles because WW's wife had a sister here.
	123-128	Stayed in Minneapolis during World War II.
	129-135	WW became a citizen as soon as he came to the United States as a son of a citizen. Father obtained citizenship through WW's grandfather.
	136-148	Before World War II, WW came to Los Angeles once a year for about two to three years. WW liked Los Angeles, so he moved here to live in 1960. Most of his wife's sisters were in Los Angeles.
5	149-154	Landed in San Francisco when he first came. Lived on Grand Avenue but not too long. Lived in Oakland for a year with his aunt.
	155-165	WW went to Lincoln School in Oakland. WW learned English in Duluth, where there were hardly any Chinese. Most of WW's playmates were of Italian extraction and Canadian extraction.
	166-178	There was some racial prejudice among the teenagers and up, but not amongst the children under 10 years of age.
	179-188	WW bought his first house in Los Angeles on Gregory. Before World War II, when he came to Los Angeles he lived in a hotel.
6	189-192	In 1939 WW had no problems renting a hotel room.
	193-200	WW's communication in English was good enough in any place, so there was no problem encountering different people in Los Angeles.
	201-220	WW spoke Chinese with his father. WW didn't acquire Sum Yup until he went to Canton in 1923.
	221-233	He returned to Kwong Chow in 1923 with his father who built a housing project for the poor around Sai Moon (西門).

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	234-245	Father used his American experiences to build this housing with a community kitchen and community bath for laborers. He charged \$5 a month for a room.
	246-252	Five dollars was a lot of money for coolies but was cheap compared to other available housing.
	253-259	WW admired father's idea of building the housing.
	260-265	WW came back to the United States in 1924 to further his education. Father did not come back.
	266-271	WW never had the opportunity to go back to school. WW's formal education was up to eighth grade.
	272-275	WW went to Chinese school when he was a little boy and was able to retain his native tongue.

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