

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Caroline Chan Interview Number: 62
 Chinese Name: 陳 珠 貴 Number of Tapes: 2
 Date of Interview: 1/29/80 Length: 1 Hour & 9 Minutes
 Interviewer: Suellen Cheng and Bernice Sam
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: George Yee

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u>	Side: <u>A</u>
1	000-018	Caroline Chan (CC) has lived at 573 South Berkeley since July 1979.		
	019-036	Both parents were from Sun Ning district near Canton. CC does not know what her parents did in China. Father worked as a court interpreter here. CC does not know when or for how long.		
2	037-047	Guesses it was prior to 1881. Remembers father working in the courts when she was a little girl. Father was also a pastor of the Chinese Methodist Church. Father's name was Chan Chu Sing (Chinese: Chan Gow Shin 陳九盛).		
	048-060	CC was born in Los Angeles. Spoke some Chinese when she was small until she went to school, then spoke English. Lived in an English speaking community. No Chinese near by.		
	061-071	Lived on East 3rd Street house for over 50 or 60 years. Lived there the longest of all her family members.		
3	072-082	Has one living brother and two sisters. One sister worked in Alaska in a government job as a case historian in a hospital. Does not know how sister worked on that job. Sister passed away last year.		
	083-096	CC attended Breed Street Elementary School, Polytech High School and the University of Southern California. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English.		
	097-121	Worked towards her secondary credentials. Did not make use of it. Was offered a job teaching elementary school in the 1920s. Needed a Chinese speaking teacher to talk to Chinese parents near the produce market district.		

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	122-179	CC last visited Chinatown two weeks ago. Chinatown is different from the old days. In the old days the buildings were made of wood. The site was different. Gave the Chinatown directory to the Chinese Historical Society. The directory used to belong to her father. It listed all occupations and stores. Kept directory all these years because it was interesting.
5	180-211	CC's Chinese name is Chan Kin Qwhy (陳珠貴). Associated with all kinds of people. Had some difficulty in grade school. Some people had no use for Chinese. College was different. There was no difficulty in entering the University of Southern California (USC).
6	212-233	Few Chinese at USC. No Chinese girls. CC was not the first Chinese girl to attend USC. Remembers USC had a preparatory school. Her sister Cather went there. Margaret Chung (doctor in San Francisco) also went to preparatory school there. CC only went to college there later.
7	234-285	Never felt entirely at home in American society. General race prejudice. Some people were kind, others were not. Some teachers did not like a Chinese in their midst. Remembers a remark made to her "all foreigners should stay in their country." Did not have any problems with children.
8	286-314	Never felt more Chinese or American. Never discussed comparison with her family. Did not go to Chinese school. She had a Chinese lady tutor who lived with them, who taught the family Chinese.
	315-324	Father gave all the kids a good education. They all attended college except for one. Father had one son and four daughters.
9	325-334	Mother never worked. Do not know if mother came to the United States with her father. All her brothers and sisters were born in Los Angeles. CC was the second born.
	335-348	Remembers seeing herbs at home, cooked food with herbs.
	349-370	Parents never had time for recreation. Kids played with neighbors. CC never went to Chinese movies or operas until she was an adult.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	371-386	Family has no relatives in China. Family went to Chinese Church and American Church. Chinese Methodist Church was located on Los Angeles Street in the north corner of the plaza area.
10	387-413	Does not remember how many members the Chinese Church had. Thinks her father was a member of the Chan family association. CC did not belong to any associations.
	414-460	CC was a charter member of the Chinese Women's Club. Lily Quon was founder of the club. Joined the club for social reasons. Dues were \$10 a year. Bessie Loo, Lily Chan, Grace Chow were all members.
11	461-495	The club once wrote a cook book to raise money for high school students to go to college. Took in 4 to 6 students from various high schools.
END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A		
1	000-021	(Garbled) CC was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, a national society for remedial education. First Chinese woman in that chapter.
	022-049	Father died while she was working (teaching). Mother passed away in the 1950s. CC does not know of any important or influential Chinese families in Chinatown.
2	050-064	Peter Soo Hoo helped found New Chinatown. He was Lily Soo Hoo's husband. He may be influential.
	065-072	Before World War II, Chinese were in restaurants, store keepers, vegetable dealers and farmers. Does not know what the average income was.
3	073-086	Does not remember what her beginning teaching pay was. Kept her own money. Worked in the May Company (adjustment office) for two summers besides teaching.
	087-096	Had no idea of what things cost before World War II. Cannot remember. Worked in the May Company because a friend asked her to go along to work there.
	097-102	The job was nice, but did not pay much. No teachers pay during the summer months.
	103-114	One Chinese family in the area. Her father liked the location, had a 10 room house built for 6 children family.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	115-125	Was the first house her father built. Does not know how Chinese spent or kept their money. Does not remember how she spent her money.
	126-138	CC led a quiet life. Does not know of any Chinese involved in politics. Heard of the Kuomintang (Nationalist party), but does not know if her father was a member.
	139-153	Many Chinese had obligations in China. Chinese sent back relief money. CC helped to raise relief money but does not remember what she did.
5	154-172	Father was not forced to donate relief money like some Chinese employees were. CC cannot remember other organizations she helped to raise money. Did not belong to any New Life Movement or Mei Wah club.
	173-207	Mei Wah Club was for younger people. Los Angeles Chinese Women's Club had older members. There was a junior group the girls belonged to until age 35, then they would join the Women's Club.
6	208-224	Women's Club demonstrated Chinese cooking during Chinese New Year in the 1960s and 1970s. They had a membership cook book. Tyrus Wong's wife (Ruth) used to select recipes from members to publish.
	225-234	CC cooked mostly American food. Too far from Chinatown to buy any Chinese food. Her mother cooked half Chinese and half American food.
7	235-238	Mother spoke English. Does not know where her mother learned English.
	239-253	Mother was a visitor from a home mission. CC has a scrap book of news clippings of her father and mother. Her mother was educated in China. Did not go to school here.
	254-269	CC did not feel general hostility of Americans against Chinese. Feels it as a personal thing. Her friends and family did not discuss this subject.
	270-273	Did not know how Chinese in general fared during the Depression relative to others.
	274-297	Had good Jewish neighbors - good friends, nationality had nothing to do with it.
8	298-316	Old days Chinese went back to China to get a wife. CC has two brothers. None are married.
	317-320	Both sisters were married here. They met their husbands in school.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	321-336	Does not feel it's only Chinese Americans who want a boy instead of a girl baby. It is universal.
9	337-352	CC knows of many interracial marriages. They get along well. The family took it in stride.
	353-361	Attitudes on interracial marriages are changing, "it is a matter of choice." Does not know what Chinese think of interracial marriages.
	362-377	Chinese felt it important to learn Chinese. CC enjoyed it. Does not read Chinese newspapers.
	378-388	Does not know of any Chinese returning to China to live. Father never thought of it. He was too young.
10	389-397	Father was 77, still working when he was struck down and killed.
	398-408	Does not know what Chinese Americans think of Chinese school. Doesn't think many Chinese sent sons back to China to learn.
	409-428	No opinion about Chinese in the movies. Never heard of anyone who was embarrassed to be Chinese.
	429-436	Does not know what an ideal job would be for Chinese.
	437-444	Father encouraged CC to be a teacher.
445-477	Older sister also teaches. One brother is dead. One brother attended USC for pharmacy. Did not work in this field. No openings so he did other work in farming and produce market, and movies.	
11	478-496	CC did not consider her teaching job as breaking out of a stereotypical Chinese job.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

1	015-024	CC does not know what her key to success was. It was just hard work.
	025-038	CC also taught Chinese men and women during regular school hours.

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