

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Joe Lung Interview Number: 129
 Chinese Name: _____ Number of Tapes: 1
 Date of Interview: 9/15/80 Length: 1 Hour & 3 Minutes
 Interviewer: Beverly Chan
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: George Yee

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1 Side A</u>
1	003-012	Joe Lung (JL) thinks both of his parents came from the city of Canton. Father worked in grandfather's night club restaurant in Los Angeles during prohibition years. After prohibition, they had Sing Fat in Los Angeles.	
	013-024	Main branch of Sing Fat was in San Francisco. Father came at an early age. Grandfather was here even earlier. Grandfather came to Los Angeles after the San Francisco earthquake to open Sing Fat on Broadway extending through Hill Street where Los Angeles Theatre is now located. Sing Fat is a big importer/exporter in San Francisco.	
	025-033	After the crash of 1929, father did odd jobs. Ran a restaurant in Hollywood from 1930 to 1936 and then retired.	
2	034-044	JL was born in Los Angeles, on January 25, 1918. He spoke mostly English at home. Mother tried unsuccessfully to teach the kids to speak Chinese -- Chungshan dialect.	
	045-053	Chungshan is like Sam Yup dialect. JL did not go to Chinese school. It was too far away. JL lived in Hollywood nearly all his life. Mother has lived on Gower Street for 62 years.	
	054-064	JL was a month old when he moved to Hollywood. Only their house and the house across the street on Gower Street were standing. Ranch land was all around. Ranch in back of his house. No Chinese in the neighborhood.	
	065-068	JL attended Van Ness Elementary School, John Burrough Junior High School, and Fairfax High School.	

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	069-081	JL associated with Jewish and other Caucasians. He did not work while attending school. He attended Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. He did not graduate.
	082-085	JL came back to Los Angeles. He worked in the X-ray lab.
	086-095	Finally bought the place in the late 1940's. Not many Chinese in Hollywood area in the early years. JL went around with whites. Got along well with them.
4	096-105	JL never thought of going to Chinese school. It was too far away. His parents did not pursue it. JL went to Chinatown with his father on Sundays when he was small. He quit going in his teen years.
	106-126	They ate Chinese food half of the time. Father picked up Chinese groceries in Chinatown. JL does not believe in herbal medicine. His grandfather, who lived with them, took them. Grandfather spoke English to JL. Grandfather was in the import/export business. He was the first generation to come to the United States. He was a merchant. He came to San Francisco before the earthquake -- around 1905.
5	127-145	JL considers himself more American than Chinese. He does have mostly Chinese friends now. He did not mix with the Chinese until he was nineteen, in 1936 or 1937 when he started working in the movies as an extra.
	146-159	After the movie activities, he went to college. He worked on "Good Earth," and "(General) Dies at Dawn" and others. JL thought some movies portrayed the Chinese good, others bad. "Good Earth" was good. JL did not know why there was so much interest in Chinese movies in those days.
	160-172	Everything was cheap during the Depression. Depression did not affect JL's father's restaurant. A complete lunch was 25 cents. Dinner was 35 cents.
	173-182	JL used to go fishing and go play golf with his brothers. JL's father stayed at home and played some mahjong. Mother did not do anything.
6	183-187	Father's friends spoke mostly Chungshan. JL's parents had a few Caucasian friends.
	188-206	JL grew up with Caucasian friends. Later he lost track of them and slowly drifted over to American born Chinese friends. JL used to attend the First Baptist Church in Los Angeles. It was located on 7th and Westmoreland. It was an American congregation. JL attended the church regularly until high school.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	207-226	Led mostly an American social life until after high school. Neither he nor his parents belong to any organizations. He used to go down to Chinatown nearly every day to eat with his movie friends at Man Jen Low and Far East restaurant.
7	227-257	JL knew Bessie Loo. He had heard of Victor and Paul Quon who was with McGregor working on sound. Richard Loo was a well known villain in the movies. Bessie Loo worked in "The Good Earth." Anna May Wong was an earlier actress.
	258-266	JL did not pursue a career in the movies but went to college instead. Only his older sister in the family worked in movies besides JL.
8	267-285	He thought Y.C. Hong was an important person in the Chinese community. Peter Soo Hoo was a friend of his mother. JL did not personally know them too well.
	286-299	He has never thought of going to China. He never sent any money back to relatives in China. His grandfather sent money back. He still has some aunts back in China.
	300-308	His family did not go to gambling joints. His parents never thought of going back to China.
9	309-329	JL's brothers Richard and Walter are not married and are living at home. One brother is in Houston and married to a Hungarian girl. JL married a Chinese girl. His wife's mother, Grace, married a Chinese and living in Silverlake area.
	330-351	JL's parents did not like his younger brother marrying the Hungarian girl. Later on they accepted the marriage. His brother has had no culturally related difficulty with his marriage. He was brought up in a Caucasian neighborhood. He went to the University of Southern California and then went into the service. He has worked for Continental for over thirty years.
	352-374	JL has been in industrial x-ray inspection for the aerospace industry for over forty years. He has always been in the management end of the business. He bought out his partner in 1948.
10	375-395	He feels that Chinese are shrewd businessmen like the Jews. Most of his father's restaurant patrons were Caucasians.
	396-413	JL dated Caucasian women. He did not consider marrying one though. Interracial marriages were out of place those days, not like now.
	414-425	He has a son who was born in 1955 and who is now living away from home in a condominium. His son has mostly Caucasian friends.
11	426-252	JL knows of two or three friends who married Caucasians in

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
		the 1930s and 1940s. He had a friend who married a Caucasian girl--divorced--and remarried a Chinese girl. The break-up may have been due to a lack of children.
	453-482	People stared at interracial dating in those days. However one was never barred from anywhere because of it. JL doesn't run into discrimination in his business.
	483-487	JL's parents' friends thought it was useful for them to go to Chinese school.
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1	001-015	JL's mother did not push the children to go to Chinese school. It was too far away. The street cars took forty-five to sixty minutes to reach Chinatown. There were four to five thousand Chinese in Chinatown in those days.
	016-033	Chinatown had restaurants, grocery stores and curio stores. Some friends lived in Chinatown. The Lee family of the Man Jen Low restaurant were friends of mother. Young family in the herb business.
2	034-041	Chinese herbs were popular in the early 30s. JL did not believe in it.
	042-057	JL played mahjong occasionally. Family was close. Parents taught them to respect family. Now days only Jews stick together.
	058-068	Feels that some Chinese stick together. Others are out for themselves. Most of the people JL knows are in business for themselves.
3	069-081	JL's business is nondestructive testing. No Chinese are in his field. Chinese consider his profession an ideal job. There were few professionals in those days.
	082-101	JL does not consider his work as professional, an X-ray technician. His job pays better than average. No Chinese are in his field. Asked Chinese to work for him but they showed no interest.
4	102-109	Got into his job as something to do for survival.
	110-119	Never went to Hong Kong. Not considered a traveling man. Did not like business travel. Lived at present place for twenty-five years.
	120-137	Classify his Chinese American friends as business owners. Thinks Chinese have done better than average. A lot of professionals, such as doctors and lawyers. Considers these professions as an ideal job for his children. Tried to get his son to go into medicine, but his son has a masters degree in computer science and is working for Lockheed.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	138-150	Chinese prefer having sons. JL has step-daughters and would not have tried again if he had a daughter. Only wanted a small family. Chinese want sons to carry on the family name.
	151-160	Do not know of any American or China born Chinese who went back to China to live.
	161-177	Considers himself as a typical third generation Chinese American. All of his friends are American born. Parents feel like Chinese in the back of their minds, but they are naturalized citizens and now feel American.
6	178-191	Father passed away eight to ten years ago. Mother did not work much. Chinese women worked little until after World War II.
	192-219	Knows Bessie Loo was working. JL's sister worked for the National Dollar store. Had another sister who did embroidery. JL's first wife did not work. It was rare for Chinese women to work.
7	220-246	Thinks one has to be aggressive and westernized to get anywhere. Belongs to the American Society of Non-Destructive Testing. Was very active before the 1940s.
	247-266	Some of his work is secret. All his business is with Americans. He knows there are Chinese in quality control on the outside, but he doesn't know them.
8	267-285	His business consists of flaw inspecting aircraft parts with X-rays.
9	286-332	Only known Chinese in his field. He considers his key to his success--work up a stock deal and paid off. Work hard and save money. Used to work over eight hours a day and on Saturdays. Used to have two shifts but now only has one. Had twenty-five employees, now only fifteen because of efficiency.
	333-371	Name of JL's company is IND-X-RAY Laboratory. There was another industrial X-ray laboratory in Seattle. The air force wanted one to change its name. A coin was flipped and JL changed his name by shortening it to IND-X-RAY. There are a half dozen such laboratories in the Los Angeles area but his is one of the oldest.
	372-382	Still works everyday for the past thirty-nine years.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	383-403	JL visits his mother every week. Keeps in contact with other relatives. Cousin in Vancouver corresponds with JL's mother and comes down once in a while.
	404-412	JL has four Chicanos working for him.
	413-440	Had some Japanese friends who were interned during the war. Had no hard feelings against Japanese friends before the war. They returned after the war but he has lost track of them.

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