

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Margie Leong Hee Interview Number: 143  
 Chinese Name: 許梁翹歡 Number of Tapes: 2  
 Date of Interview: 1/13/81 Length: 1 Hour & 15 Minutes  
 Interviewer: Bernice Sam  
 Others Present: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Language: English  
 Summarizer: Grace Fu

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1 Side A</u>
1	000-004 005-008 009-019  020-027	Introduction. Margie Leong Hee (MLH) is living in Pasadena. MLH was born in Los Angeles during the First World War. At that time, there were only seven thousand Chinese living in Los Angeles. MLH has three brothers. The oldest one, Edward, was born in China, the other two, Gilbert and Edmond, were born in Los Angeles. MLH is the only girl in the family.	
2	028-036 037-042 043-047 048-059 060-062	MLH's father, Leong Jeung (梁長) came from Sze Yup (四邑), Sun Wui (新會) Village, southern part of Canton (廣東). Her father came to the United States when he was very young. He was in the produce business in Ninth Street and San Pedro wholesale market. Her father came to the United States to seek a better life and for economic reasons. Her father came from a middle class life. Her grandfather was in the farming business. He had even been to the United States for a few years and then returned to China. MLH does not have too much knowledge about her grandfather or where he stayed in the United States.	
3	063-071 072-079	After her father spent his young years in Ninth Street Market, he went back to China and married her mother, around 1934. Her father, like most Chinese people, brought home with him his monetary savings.	

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	080-097	Her father met her mother through a third party introduction.
	098-100	Her father married her mother probably after a one month engagement, and then came back to the United States.
4	101-106	Her mother brought their five years old son with her to the United States to join MLH's father.
	107-108	MLH's mother was a school teacher in Los Angeles.
	109-111	Her mother came from a very well educated family.
	112-115	Her mother did a lot of religious work in the Baptist Church in Canton (廣東) and Macao (澳門).
	116-117	Her mother was studying in Macao (澳門).
5	118-145	Her mother's students from school went to Church for Sunday service.
	146-150	After mother arrived in America, she was teaching in the church.
	151-153	Her mother spent a lot of time teaching in the church.
	154-157	Her mother was successful in drawing a lot of students to the church.
	158-164	The church was located at 522½ North Los Angeles Street, right on the corner of Los Angeles Street and Margel Street in Old Chinatown.
	165-172	Her father stayed with his produce business after he returned from China until 1928.
	173-174	He made money in his business.
	175-176	He owned the store himself.
	177-182	The store is still there today, but under a different name.
6	183-184	Someone else owns the store, the owners are not related to her family now.
	185-187	After 1928, her father retired from the produce business.
	188-194	He made an investment in his friend's restaurant and bought a Chinese restaurant in Hollywood.
	195-206	At first there were two or three partners in the business, but then her father became the sole owner from 1928 to 1932.
	207-208	MLH's father made money in the restaurant but lost money there during the Depression time.
	209-214	Her father closed the restaurant in 1932.
7	215-228	MLH's father and eldest brother, Edward, learned a lot from their experiences from that restaurant.
	229-230	Her father came down to Old Chinatown and opened the Soo Chow (蘇州) Restaurant in about 1933.

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	231-237	The Soo Chow Restaurant was located at 504 North Los Angeles Street, just a few doors from the Church.
	238-243	They had the restaurant until 1947.
	244-248	The whole building was to be torned down eventually, so they had to close the restaurant.
	249-260	Her father had opened another restaurant in the meantime, in 1940. That was called the New Soo Chow on 454 Chung King Road in New Chinatown.
	261-265 266-272	Her father made a lot of money with these two restaurants. MLH's family owed a lot of thanks to Mr. Tang (唐).
8	273-277	Mr. Tang is part of East and part of Chinese, and spoke excellent Chinese. He was born in Macao (澳門).
	278-284	Mr. Tang was the landlord, he brought a lot of movie people to their restaurant.
	285-292	MLH's mother continued teaching while her father managed the restaurant.
	293-302	Her mother was a housewife, a teacher in school and in Church, and also a good businesswoman.
	303-305	Her mother supported her father.
	306-307	Her father was a very easy going person. He was a delightful man and had a very pleasant personality.
	308-319	The third restaurant was opened about 1952, at the corner of Sunset and May.
9	320-339	They owned the first restaurant from 1933 to 1947, the second one from 1940 to 1968. They did not have the third restaurant for too long, about five years. The landlord asked for the building back.
	340-359	MLH's family does not have any restaurants at all since They sold the New Chinatown restaurant in 1968.
	360-367	Her father passed away about 1961. Her mother passed away in 1962.
	368-369	Her family has been very influencial in Chinatown.
	370-373	Her family did a lot of work to bring the Chinatown to its present condition.
10	374-395	MLH's parents did quite a lot for the Chinese community.
	396-405	Her father was a very simple, pleasant and thrifty person, but also very generous to the different charities, Church, Associations, even during the Depression time.
	406-419	Her father paid the rent and the utlities for the Church. This lasted for a few months.
	420-440	Her father also helped the Kong Chow Association (崗州會館).

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
11	441-449	Her father contributed to the Kong Chow Association (會舍官) in 1930 and after that Depression time.
	450-460	Her father would like to help the Church or the Association when they were in need of financial help.

END OF SIDE A

TAPE 1 SIDE B

1	000-005	MLH's father did not bring the whole family back to China after MLH was five years old.
	006-008	She does not have any relatives in China.
	009-011	She visited China in 1966 and 1972 for a couple of months, but did not go back to the village.
	012-015	Her family spoke Chinese at home.
	016-020	Her parents spoke Chinese with the children. They learned Chinese customs and culture.
	021-022	Her parents thought that the only way the children could practice Chinese was to speak at home.
	023-028	Her mother was teaching her Chinese after dinner time for half an hour each day.
	029-030	Her brothers also learned Chinese from their mother.
2	031-033	Edward, the oldest brother, had a better grasp of the Chinese language than the three younger children.
	034-035	Edward had studied Chinese in Macao (澳門).
	036-037	Edward spoke more Chinese with parents and had more contact with the Chinatown people.
	038-041	MLH studied at the University of Southern California.
	042-043	Her major was Sociology at USC.
	044-049	After she graduated from the university, she worked with International Institute in Los Angeles for quite a long time -- about eight years.
	050-051	She got a lot of experience from working.
	052-053	She likes working in that Institute.
	053-055	She got a chance to work with the Chinese community and other foreign elements.
	056-059	Since she could speak Chinese, she got the chance to handle the Chinese cases.
	060-061	Because of poor health, she quit the job at the Institute and did not work for a long time.
	062-065	After her father passed away, her oldest brother carried on the business.

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	066-069	Most of the customers in the restaurants turned out to be friends with her family.
	070-071	Later on, she put her time in the restaurants.
	072-073	MLH married in 1950 and has a daughter named Elize Hee.
	074-080	Her daughter is 22 years old now.
	081-085	Her daughter lives at home and works at the Huntington Memorial Hospital in the dispensary department.
	086-089	MLH is living with her husband, daughter, and mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law is 91 years old now.
	090-092	MLH has been living with her mother-in-law since 1964.
	093-101	MLH is very pleased to live with her mother-in-law.
4	102-115	MLH has been living with her mother-in-law for more than seventeen years.
	116-118	Her mother-in-law needs 24-hour caring now.
	119-122	MLH always has one person taking care of her mother-in-law.
	123-130	MLH does not want to send her mother-in-law to a nursing home.
5	131-164	MLH used to take more American medicine than Chinese herbs.
	165-166	She still likes to cook and eat Chinese herbs.
	167-168	She cooks 人參 with chicken and 佛手.
6	169-186	MLH loves music. She loves to play to organ.
	187-190	She does not have enough time to go outside for entertainment anymore, because of the baby-sitting.
	191-196	MLH's family does like to watch television very much.
	197-204	MLH belongs to the Chinese Women New Movement Club (婦女新運會).
	205-207	MLH's mother and several other women started the Chinese Women Club during World War II to help the refugees from China.
	208-215	The Chinese Women Club is a fellowship group.
7	216-238	MLH thinks that in the old days, the most important person in Chinatown was 陳久成. He is the father of Tom Chen.
	239-242	陳久成 was a court interpreter.
	243-252	陳久成 was a leader in the Chinese community and in American politics and in the Chinese society.
	253-257	陳久成 did a lot of specific work. He was not only well known in Los Angeles, but also in the California coast as well as in the whole country.

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	258-259	陳文成 did a lot of work to help the Chinese people with matters such as immigration or court cases.
	260-266	Another important person was 王强, he owned the East-West grocery (東方).
	267-273	王强 established 中華會館 and did a lot of charity work.
8	274-277	王强 was a very generous person, he made a lot of donations to the Chinese charity.
	278-280	MLH's father had connections with 中華會館.
	281-289	Peter SooHoo built Chinatown up.
	290-291	Y. C. Hong owned a lot of property and made a lot of contacts with the Chinese people.
	292-300	After the Second World War, Thomas Wong (王强) was the important person in Chinatown.
	301-313	Right now, MLH does not feel there is any discrimination against Chinese in Los Angeles.
9&10	314-389	Discrimination did occur often in Old Chinatown.
	390-394	Chinese people's jobs were restricted to laundry, restaurant, domestic work, and the railroad.

END OF TAPE 1

TAPE 2 SIDE A

1	000-006	MLH used to go to Chinatown four times a month by herself. She used to buy groceries in Chinatown.
	007-008	MLH thought it is wonderful to find new stores and new people in Chinatown.
	009-010	If she goes to Chinatown with her husband, she brings her mother-in-law together with them.
	011-016	She is glad to see that Chinatown is expanding and growing, and that the people there are getting along very well.
2	017-033	MLH did not go to Chinatown very often and did not have much of a chance to contact new people coming from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Burma, and Vietnam.
	034-050	In mid-1930, when their family wanted to buy a house, there were problems.
	051-053	Her family was the first Chinese family to buy property on Mount Washington.
	054-058	After they moved in the house, some of the neighbors did not care about the Chinese.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	059-071	Some of the neighbors did not like the Chinese people to buy property in their area.
	072-097	The minister of the Church helped them to meet the neighbors and let them make friends with the neighbors.
4	098-116	MLH's younger brother still lives in that house.

END OF TAPE 2

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