

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Alice Young Joe Interview Number: 139
 Chinese Name: _____ Number of Tapes: 2
 Date of Interview: 12/7/80 Length: 1 Hour & 33 Minutes
 Interviewer: Jean Wong
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Tom Moy

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1 Side A</u>
1	008-010 011-014 015-019 020-031	Alice Joe (AJ) was born in San Francisco on April 6, 1923. Father was from Sung Ling Ton in Wong Tong and mother was from Sak Kay also in Wong Tong. AJ's father was the first to come to America. He arrived in the 1920's. He came by himself. He sent for his wife a few years later. AJ's father worked in the United States as a Chinese herbalist in San Francisco. He put herbs together for the rich and studied their pulses. There was no fee for his services. He received only what they could offer, that is, a nominal fee. He worked for and with different herbalists. Compiled a lot of Chinese remedies for different ailments.	
2	032-035 036-043 044-046 047-054 055-063	After he was established in San Francisco, he sent for his wife in 1923. AJ's father had an older sister who was born in China. She came over later on -- not with AJ's father's wife. AJ has two brothers and six sisters. They were all born here in the United States except for the oldest sister. Father was a herbalist in San Francisco for his complete stay in the United States. Father had a little store. Children did not help in the store because they were too young to understand. As kids got older, they went to Chinese school and American school. AJ helped to establish a packaging store. AJ's mother stayed at home and took care of the kids. She had a few sewing jobs. When AJ's father retired, her mother operated the grocery store business with the help of the kids since they had grown up by then.	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	064-066	Father was ten years older than her mother.
3	067-073	AJ's father sent his children to Jung Wa Hoh How (中法學校) a Chinese school in San Francisco. Father was young and was able to work. AJ's brother went to the Chinese school too.
	074-087	Started Chinese school when AJ was nine or ten years old and continued even after her family moved to Los Angeles when she was thirteen or fourteen (1934) and continued up to sixth grade. She stopped going to Chinese school after the sixth grade because of other activities such as a job after school.
4	088-106	The children were forced to go to Chinese school by AJ's father. When they were in San Francisco, he even hired private tutors, disciplinarians, for his children. They all studied hard. AJ's father was academic minded. They studied the Classics, the Say She, Goo Man. They stressed memorization (dim see).
	107-114	They had no private tutors in Los Angeles. AJ went to Junior Hoh How (學校).
5	115-143	AJ's mother sewed clothes at home for other people. It was not a commonplace business. Mother was not well educated. She was active in the community -- Presbyterian Church, women's club -- she had an outgoing personality. She opened a family grocery store -- bought property.
	144-153	Father bought the home in Los Angeles Alley. Act prevented AJ's father from buying the house in his own name so he bought the house through a trusted friend who deeded the house back to his brother.
	154-169	Family moved to Los Angeles because the "friend" of AJ's father, Dr. Chan, asked AJ's father to work for him. Dr. Chan had several offices in Los Angeles and Long Beach.
	170-173	AJ's father's name is Dr. S. W. Young. He worked in Los Angeles with the G. S. Chan Herb Company.
	174-176	
6	177-195	AJ did not know what her father's education in China consisted of but "he was really a scholar." He tried to teach his children the names of the herbs.
	196-220	Father spoke English. He spoke Chinese, Toishan, at home. At home the children communicated in Chinese and English. Outside, AJ spoke mostly English. With the friends that she grew up with, she spoke half English and half Chinese. She associated with Chinese mostly.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	221-251	In Los Angeles, family lived on Parker Street down at Ninth Street in San Pedro. It was a mixed neighborhood -- Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiians, Mexicans, Caucasians. They rented a house on Crocker Street for years before they bought a house on 21st Street and San Pedro. It was another Chinese ghetto from 1937 to 1948 or 1949.
	252-262	AJ got married and lived a block away from her parents until the end of World War II. Her husband served as First Lieutenant in the Army.
8	263-289	Rented houses elsewhere discriminated against the Chinese so they bought a house in the ghetto near their parents in San Pedro. Discrimination was subtle -- just could not find a place. Scraped up money to buy a triplex -- up-stairs, downstairs, and a place in the back. It cost \$200 for down payment. Rented the other two rooms. After the War, they sold the house to another Chinese family who had a business in the neighborhood, for their daughter.
	290-298	After the War, AJ's husband was from Sacramento, so they moved to Sacramento. Husband got a job offer in a friend's market, and lodging too. They stayed in Sacramento for a year.
	299-320	After they sold the house, they purchased a grocery store in the southeast area in San Pedro. Her mother told them which store was selling out. They called it Joe's Market. It was located at Vernon and Winelock. They owned the store for four years.
9	321-327	They bought a bigger commercial building with a market and sold Joe's Market to another Chinese friend.
	328-335	This bigger building had four units above and two stores below -- one was a market and the other was a grocery business which they had for five years (1948).
	336-352	They sold the business to close friends who were also Chinese.
	353-362	Her husband and his brother started a business in Artesia.
10	363-396	The business in Artesia was a supermarket. In 1960 her husband who was tired of the market business, started a real estate business. He worked under Wallen Quan. He earned a broker license and eventually owned his own business, the Cathay Realty, in Chinatown. It is still an active business place -- 610 New High, across the street from the Chinese Service Center.
	397-415	AJ attended school at the Commodore Stockton in San Francisco for English and attended Chinese school at

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	397-415	Young Wa. In the fourth grade, she attended school in Los Angeles. She attended the Ninth Street School in Los Angeles. She attended Loc Viet Junior High. Later she went to Polytech High. After she finished there, she went to stenographic school.
	416-428	She began working with the United States Treasury Department until she got married. Then she transferred to San Francisco to be near her husband who was stationed there.
	429-431	She worked as a cashier in the United States Treasury Department.
11	432-452	She got married in October, 1943.
	453-486	She had all kinds of Chinese friends. When she was young, there was the Chinese Congregational Church Chinese school. She was always among Chinese.
	487-END	She never felt sorry for being Chinese. In fact she felt proud.

END OF SIDE A

TAPE 1 SIDE B

1	001-016	AJ felt that she was a typical example of the Chinese Americans living in Chinatown. She did not disagree with her parents. She obeyed and respected them. If other families or individuals had disagreements, she never knew about them.
	017-019	Whenever she had an ailment, she was treated by Chinese medicine first.
	020-027	But even while her father practiced as an herbalist, she did see Western doctors. It wasn't on a regular basis. She saw Western doctors for things such as tonsils, or minor operations which she went to the White Memorial Hospital for when she was twelve.
2	028-035	Her father believed in Western medicine too.
	036-043	Her father treated the family members with Chinese medicine. When she was pregnant, her father prepared her a chicken, Chinese herbs and made a pot of soup.
	044-046	AJ's siblings believed in Chinese medicine and obediently took the medicine.
	047-050	That is, however, not the case today. The medicine tasted bitter -- terrible. There was always a little white raisin or prune afterwards.
	051-052	Herbs were used in cooking.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	053-054	She uses Chinese medicine about 20-25% of the time in her life today.
	055-060	She does not see a Chinese doctor today except once for acupuncture.
3	061-069	Chinese medicine that she would use today includes oxtail and beef brain with Ching Kong Boc Chee, or she makes Boc Kay, Cong Quoy, Kay Chee with chicken in a pot. She made these medicines during the winter.
	070-079	For recreation the kids played American games. Family does play mahjong, jock kay, Chinese chess.
	080-093	In the movies, she would see Chinese actors and actresses in the back of the Chinese theatre.
	094-096	Parents attended meetings with different groups.
	097-102	AJ's father enjoyed visiting, cooking mostly Chinese food although her mother cooked American food.
4	103-111	AJ's mother sent candy to relatives.
	112-116	AJ sends money to relatives.
	117-129	Family joined a Chinese family association.
	130-132	AJ does not recall the activities the family association sponsored.
	133-142	AJ surmised that the association visited Chinese cemeteries, Chinese Easter, and played mahjong.
5	143-145	AJ does not recall any association dues.
	146-179	AJ does not recall any important Chinese families.
	180-184	AJ does not know anyone who was an important Chinese individual.
6	185-199	The kinds of jobs the Chinese in Los Angeles engaged in before World War II included restaurant, laundry, and grocery store businesses.
	200-217	Chinese got into the real estate business in the 1960's, such as her father did.
7	218-231	When asked about the average income before World War II, that is, in the 1930's and 1940's, AJ recalled that her father made \$100 a month.
	232-240	AJ's average income before the War was \$150 a month for working for the Federal government. That was the average for other people too in those days.
	241-259	AJ guessed that the high salary before the War was about \$200 to \$300.
8	260-283	In 1940's Alice made \$150 to \$200. Her husband made \$200 plus. They were able to save one check [no amount specified].

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	260-283 284-323	In three months, they were able to save one thousand dollars. AJ's paycheck was extra income. There were fewer expenses in those days. Food was reasonably priced and there were government subsidies. Merchants gave some food items such as green onions which have a charge today.
9	324-343 344-349 350-365 366-371 372-374	Los Angeles Chinese lived within the borders which you did not cross -- probably due to color. Chinese families moved to other areas when other Chinese families were already living. It was very unusual for Chinese families to move into an all white area. AJ attended Polytech High School which was located outside the Chinese area. AJ moved to her present house in 1960.
10	375-385 386-400 401-411 412-415 416-444	Before 1960, she lived in different areas. They bought their first place, then moved to Sacramento, then back to another house in Los Angeles. Then AJ and her husband bought a place on 25th and 10th Avenue where they stayed for fifteen years. People saved money -- invested and accumulated it. People saved their money -- older Chinese saved it at home and Chinese Americans saved it at banks, AJ presumed. AJ's father saved at a bank. One of AJ's friends was involved in politics -- ran for school board but did not make it.
11	445-467 468-473 474-479 480-489	Chinese had an obligation toward relatives in China -- that is, the older generation did. The new generation was not as obligated. Some of the relatives who came over to the United States were not happy while others were happy. Most of AJ's close relatives are here in the United States. Most of AJ's brothers and sisters are in Los Angeles.
END OF TAPE 1		

TAPE 2 SIDE A

1-3	006-074	There was hostility towards Chinese in Los Angeles. The Chinese could not find employment in banks. There were discriminating treatments towards Chinese on the buses and in restaurants during the war years (1942).
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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1-3	075-092	Chinese reaction toward hostility was passivity.
4	093-104 105-121 122-127 128-134	Discrimination subsided after World War II. Discrimination is still in existence but in subtle ways. For example, a teacher could not believe that a student could get an 'A,' so the student was asked to repeat the test. Chinese are more successful than the general population of Los Angeles because they had to work and worry more. Compared to other ethnic groups in the 1930's to the present, the Chinese success is probably the same as the others and probably similar to the Japanese.
5	135-150 151-156 157-159 160-167 168-176	According to AJ, the Chinese are smarter and more successful than the Jews. 50% of American born Chinese married China born Chinese. AJ had no particular reason for marrying a China born Chinese. American born Chinese were not more eager to have sons rather than daughters compared to their China born Chinese counterparts, nor compared to the older generation. AJ's parents wanted sons. AJ's husband did not care whether they had sons or daughters.
6	177-190 191-206 207-225	Interracial marriage in Los Angeles in the 1930's and 1940's was almost unheard of. It was a taboo. Interracial couples were not well treated by the Chinese because of prejudice. AJ sent her children to Chinese school for a few years. Her children were forced to go because she felt it was important to know Chinese. Other American born Chinese sent their children to Chinese school also, unless the parents' work location or residence location made it too difficult. AJ's children remember very little of what they learned in Chinese school but she thought they should go anyway since it was good to know some Chinese since they were Chinese. English was the language spoken at home, even when the children were attending Chinese school. AJ wanted her children to learn enough Chinese, for example, to be able to order food in a restaurant or to converse with some Chinese who could not speak English.
7	226-233	AJ thinks that her parents did not intend to return to China. Her mother went back for a visit. However, they would not go back because of the children.

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7	234-240	AJ thinks a small percentage of the Chinese returned to China.
	241-261	The Chinese reaction to the portrayal of Chinese in the movies was anger, but there was no real protest.
8	262-287	AJ's parents wanted the children to get an education. AJ's older brother and one of her sisters received a college education. The sons were expected to get a job as well.
	288-299	AJ's father wanted the children to get a professional job and a college education.
	300-302	AJ also feels that an education is important.
9	303-346	AJ's mother used to work at home shelling walnuts and sorting strawberries. It was seasonal work (1935). Many Chinese did this kind of work. The walnuts were shelled at home but the strawberries were sorted at someone's backyard. AJ and her siblings helped their mother after school. AJ's mother received a penny for a box of strawberries and so much per bag of walnuts.

END OF TAPE 2

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