

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Louise Whiting Interview Number: 72  
 Chinese Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Tapes: 1  
 Date of Interview: 3/6/80 Length: 51 Minutes  
 Interviewer: Bernice Sam  
 Others Present: none  
 Language: English  
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side <u>A</u>
1	004-016 017-023  024-032	Introduction. Louise Whiting (LW) was born in 1891 in Los Angeles, and has been living in the same house (in today's Chinatown) since. Parents came from France. Grandfather was a foreman for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Father died when LW was 5 years old. He was an artist.	
2	033-034 035-040  041-045 046-054 055-065  066-081	LW was raised by her grandparents. Speaks English at home. Went to Castelar Street School. LW was home most of the time and worked out once for a while in a millinery store. LW is a pianist. Learned to play piano instead of going to high school for six years. When LW was a young girl, there weren't many Chinese who lived around her neighborhood. Chinatown was down on Alameda Street. There were railroad workers living around her neighborhood. Years ago there was a French bakery on the corner of College and Castelar Street (today's Hill Street).	
3	082-085  086-093  094-099 101-104 105-112	The French Hospital was in the same location as LW could remember. It was started by the French people. LW is not much of a mixer. Chinese people don't mix very much either. So after Chinese moved into New Chinatown, LW did not have Chinese friends. LW took vitamins and medicine the doctor prescribed. For recreation LW watched television. Used to write to relatives in France, but not anymore since they all passed away.	
4	113-124	Most people lived around her house did not understand English. LW did not associate with them.	

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	125-136	LW has property in Chinatown. She is interested in finding out what is going on with the redevelopment plan.
	137-140	LW didn't know what kind of job most Chinese do in Chinatown.
	141-144	LW thought most Chinese lived among themselves.
5	145-158	There were not many Chinese around New Chinatown during the depression.
	159-165	When the Pasadena Freeway was built, Bernard Street cut off.
	166-169	Does not have any close friend living in Chinatown.
	170-174	Chinese are friendly to LW.
	175-181	LW wasn't aware of what Chinese did so could not talk about their progress.
182-191	LW wouldn't live in any place else. Although LW is not close with Chinese, but still likes to live with Chinese.	
6	192-208	LW liked to collect old buttons, some are back to the Revolutionary War, some are from the 18th century.
	209-217	Goes to the Buttons Club meeting once a month. Used to be a judge of the shows. There are button shows statewide as well as nationwide. LW used to enter the competitions and won prizes, but doesn't enter anymore.
	218-220	Doesn't go to church on Sunday.
	221-227	Working in the yard most of the time.
7	228-249	LW has one dog and two cats. They were strays. She could not refuse to take them from Chinese. She has dogs and cats ever since she was a child.
	250-270	A wood stove was installed before there was gas. Now LW uses it for heating. They used to bring in gas from an oil well in the back yard of the house.
	271-280	The oil company bought the oil well when LW was around the age of 20.
8	281-306	The house was surrounded by oil wells at one time. Later those wells were not successful enough and were given up.
	307-311	There was the ice house to make ice to refrigerate the railroad cars.
	312-316	The railroad yard was right over the bluff. The Mandarin Plaza is right on the bluff, which was filled in for a building.

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	317-323	The ice house was on Broadway where the Mandarin Plaza was. There was a Baker's Iron Works across the street of North Broadway.
	324-335	Originally, Broadway was called Buena Vista Street. The Red Car ran from downtown to Pasadena along Buena Vista.
9	336-351	LW remembered to watch President McKinley in a parade on Broadway, when President visited Los Angeles. She also remembered seeing the soldiers who went off on the train for the Spanish American War at the train station.
	352-368	When the Wright brothers had a show at Dominguz Hills, LW went to see the show when she was young.
	369-387	LW took some pictures when the Times Building blew up.
10	388-408	There was a pigeon farm around the neighborhood. The flood destroyed the pigeon farm.
	409-455	The Catholic Cemetary was near the St. Peter's Church. It was the playground for LW when she was a child. There was a Chinese church there right with the Cathedral High School.
11	456-461	LW still drives a car.
END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A		
1	014-022	LW eats in Chinese restaurants sometimes. Now she goes to the Chinese Nutrition Center for the Elderly, not necessary for food. It gave her a chance to get out of the house and to meet people.
	023-028	The Center at Hong Kong Low is about a half of a block from her house. She goes there five days a week.
	029-032	LW likes Chinese food but doesn't cook a great deal any more.
2	033-038	Saturdays and Sundays she cooks some steak or meat, because Chinese don't serve much meat and LW is quite a meat eater.
	039-043	LW likes all kinds of meat.
	044-045	LW has a second cousin nearby. They visited each other sometimes.
	056-093	LW would not move as long as she can take care of herself. She watches closely what is happening with the redevelopment plan. Before she gives up she will go to court. Under the public domain, the government can force her to give up her house.

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	094-108	Bernard Street area property used to belong to the Spanish Bernard family.
4	109-123	LW's lot was bought when they subdivided the Bernard land. LW's grandparents purchased it. Her grandfather was a carpenter. He might have helped to build the house.
	124-133	LW will have a birthday party in Chinatown Nutrition Center for the Elderly the next day.
	134-141	The visitors and tourists dirty the Bernard Street area.
	142-144	There are more people and sightseers today than before.
5	145-156	Chinese don't pick up the waste. There are Chinese who are very very clean but they won't pick up the waste in front of their house on the street.
	157-161	LW used to travel a lot, but doesn't do it anymore.
	162-174	LW's grandparents both had relatives in France, so LW's grandparents went to visit them. They also toured Europe. It furthered LW's education.
	175-178	LW wouldn't care about any traveling anymore.
	179-192	LW saw an original painting of her father in the Museum (in Europe).
6	193-201	LW has been to different places in the United States but never went to any Oriental countries.
	202-211	LW has arthritis and could not hold a needle any more but still works in the yard.
	212-222	LW does not pay attention to the things like newcomers in town any more.
	223-229	Thank you statement made by Bernice Sam.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW

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