

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Alice Hum Interview Number: 104
 Chinese Name: 譚李双瑛 Number of Tapes: 3
 Date of Interview: 5/27/80, 7/28/80 Length: 1 Hour & 36 Minutes
 Interviewer: Beverly Chan
 Others Present: None
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side <u>A</u>
1	001-015 016-034	Introduction. Parents came from Toishan, China. Father didn't have much education and came to America about 1909. He had 10 children, nine of them were born in America. Mother came with Alice Hum's (AH) father.	
2	035-037 038-039 040-055 056-059 060-071	Parents came to San Francisco first. AH was born in San Francisco Chinatown. Father sold Chinese herbs. AH was the seventh child. Mother had bound feet and was unbound when she came to America. Father would have been 99 if he were still living. AH was born in 1917. AH spoke Toishanese at home but spoke English with her brothers and sisters.	
3	072-081 082-092 093-095 096-108	AH left San Francisco when she was 6 years old and moved to Long Beach. Father started a Chinese herb store in Long Beach and imported herbs from China. The family lived around two miles away from her father's store in Long Beach downtown. The competition in San Francisco was too much so AH's father moved to Long Beach where there were only five Chinese families there in 1925.	
4	109-119 120-146	AH went to Long Beach public schools. Later she went to Los Angeles City College. AH also lived a very simple life. The family had many children. AH had an opportunity to study Chinese at home with a private tutor at age of 17. She studied for 8 years.	
5	147-151	Father didn't have much education but learned to read and write Chinese by himself.	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	152-174	It was not a pleasant atmosphere to study at home with all the interference. but there was no Chinese school in Long Beach.
	175-197	When AH was young, the church used more English. Now AH's church used more Chinese because there are more immigrants from China. AH used Chinese language in Chinatown.
6	198-206	AH didn't talk much when she was young. She was always reading.
	207-226	AH went to Long Beach Technical High School. All through elementary school, AH had only one Japanese classmate. In the junior high school she had five Japanese classmates. She didn't have any Chinese classmates. AH always studied and never said much at school.
	227-238	AH didn't have too many close friends. Going to both American and Chinese schools, AH didn't have much time to play.
7	239-248	AH got along all right with Caucasian friends.
	249-259	In Long Beach there was only one Black Street. There were very few Spanish speaking people in Long Beach.
	260-270	AH's major was social science and business. After graduation she worked for her father.
	271-319	AH worked for her father for about 8 years. The next job was working for a Chinese funeral parlor on Sunset Boulevard, called Wah Wing Sun, which was founded in 1972 and opened in 1973. It was the first Chinese funeral parlor in Los Angeles.
8	320-342	Father had three offices in Los Angeles. AH spent two days at each office. AH did the cleaning and taking the herbs to the different offices. She also gathered the herbs.
9	343-354	Brother also helped father in the herb store.
	355-367	After the patients didn't get sufficient help from American doctors, they came to AH's father.
	368-384	There were more Chinese herb stores in Chinatown serving Chinese mostly. Chinese herbs had no side effect.
	385-399	Mother insisted that AH work for her father. AH got \$16 a week in 1937 by working for her father. She got \$29 a week in 1945.

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1 Side A

Tape: 1 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	400-408	AH got married in 1946 and stopped working for her father.
	409-433	AH felt more Chinese because she always spoke Chinese before she came to Long Beach. As soon as all the brothers and sisters came to Long Beach, they all spoke English.
	434-443	AH's family never visited American doctors.
	444-454	AH played cards, flied kites, played with models and baseball with her brothers and sisters.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

Tape 1 Side B

1	001-012	Blank.
	013-023	AH always helped her mother to buy groceries. Mother seldom went outside of the house except when going to banquets.
	024-029	Father usually went to Chinatown to buy herbs on Sundays.
	030-039	The family came down to Los Angeles from San Francisco with the family car.
2	040-052	Parents were not very strict. The older sister was a physical education teacher. AH stayed home and helped.
	053-066	AH wrote back to China a few times. Husband came to America when he was 17. Two years later he was drafted. His father worked for the President Line.
	067-080	AH met her husband through a friend's introduction. There was no arranged marriages in AH's family.
3	081-089	AH recently joined the Tom Family Association. When she was young, AH joined the Chinese Presbyterian Church on Adams Boulevard.
	090-100	The family lived on Figueroa which was not a Chinese neighborhood.
	101-113	Mother sometimes did express her preference for Chinese in-laws. She was happy that AH married a Chinese.
4	114-130	There was one Korean in-law in AH's family. It was not very popular to have an interracial marriage before 1945. The youngest sister married a Korean.

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1 Side B

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	131-163	The Lee family, the dentist family, was the only dentist in Chinatown. The other Lee family was in the market business. They were friends of the family. The important family in the church was Thomas Wong. He was active in the church. His daughter, Barbara Jean Wong was good at dancing.
5	164-178	AH also belonged to the China Society. AH met Caroline Chan in the China Society. AH had heard and seen Lily L. Chan and all the Chinese pioneer women the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California honored (Louise L. Larson, Grace Chow, and Bessie Loo).
	179-180	T.B. Chew, Sr. was a well known herbalist.
	181-188	Chinese were engaged mostly in the restaurants, market business and grocery business.
6	189-198	In the old days, the Chinese girls stayed at home until they got married. AH felt that she didn't have enough ability to find another job.
	199-208	It was hard to find a job. A capable girl still can find a job. In the old days girls were not well educated so could not do too much.
	209-217	Most Chinese women worked for the family business.
	218-236	Chinese lived around old Chinatown and the City Market area. People lived upstairs of their stores.
7	237-243	Family owned a house on Figueroa Street. The house cost about six thousand dollars.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

Tape 2 Side A

1	000-013	Introduction.
	014-034	The family house was on 26th Street and Figueroa Street. Figueroa Street was a business street, so AH's father had no difficult time purchasing the house.
2	035-072	At school some children would not play with AH. Sometimes when AH played with Caucasian friends, their parents sometimes gave her strange looks. In the Los Angeles City College AH didn't get much chance to learn in some classes.

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2 Side A

Tape: 3 Side A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	073-086	There was always a certain percentage of people who didn't like Orientals. But most people were nice.
	087-099	A lot of people weren't aware of whether one was Japanese, Korean or Chinese. They judged you by whether you spoke English or not.
	100-106	American actors or actresses who played Chinese roles didn't play them as well as a Chinese would.
4	107-123	Besides "Good Earth" AH didn't see any other movies.
	124-137	Usually, AH only picked up the house she liked. Her sons's wife and her two brothers all lived closed to each other in Cerritos.
	138-146	Parents never sent money back to China because both of them were the youngest in the family.
5	147-154	Father made one trip back to China in 1929. He said that being poor in America was better off than being poor in China.
	155-160	Chinese invested their savings to buy houses or gave their savings to their children.
	161-187	Chinese didn't get involved in politics. AH felt that people should take care of themselves and mind their own business.
6	188-193	Chinese were doing better than the general population but not much.
	194-230	AH owned the present house lot for 17 years. It was a neighborhood for elders. There were some young people around.
7	231-253	If the parents-in-law lived by themselves, the Chinese children usually lived with them, because they were not capable of moving around and didn't speak English well enough in those days.
	254-277	It was difficult for AH's mother-in-law to learn English after 60 years of age so AH lived with her. After father passed away, AH's mother lived with her children.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

Tape 3 Side A

1 001-017 Introduction.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	018-033	AH felt that Chinese were similar to Jewish people. The Jews were more thrifty. AH knew Jews at school but didn't socialize with them outside of school.
2	034-045 046-074	Chinese met their wives at school or church. Mostly through a friend's introduction. People usually married ones with similar backgrounds. If an American born could not find an American born girl, they married a China born girl.
3	075-080 081-090 091-107	AH just accepted the fact, being a woman she didn't have any preference for sons. AH's parents expected the girls to help at home rather than keep the boys at home. AH felt that an interracial marriage was better than not getting married so long as their family was happy.
4	108-127 128-142	In AH's family, there was only one interracial marriage. Since the brother-in-law was a dentist, the family didn't have any objections. AH thought that the Chinese education was important. AH had 9 brothers and sisters and all of them had some kind of Chinese education.
5	143-149 150-152 153-176 177-218	AH's children didn't think it was important to learn Chinese. AH associated mostly with Chinese. Most Chinese return to China for a visit but not for staying. Father went back to China once. when he returned he said it was better to be poor in American than to be in the upper class in China. Father's brother did return to China in his old age in 1945. He never wrote back to America. AH had two brothers who went to China for an education. One went for high school, the other went to the University in China for three years. They didn't have a difficult time in China. Brother attended Ling Nam (嶺南大學) University.
6	219-225 226-259	The "Good Earth" portrayed Chinese roles in a pretty fair manner. AH might have seen Anna May Wong's movies. She did what she was told to act.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	260-287	In the old days, the laundries, grocery stores and gift shops were the businesses ran by China born Chinese.
8	288-311 312-351	The children should do what they are capable of doing. When the children were young, AH sent them to the Chinese teacher's house for Chinese lessons for two years. Later the two younger boys went to Chinese school on Saturdays only. It wasn't very efficient. The youngest son took up Mandarin in junior college. The youngest son could write Chinese.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE A

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