

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Noemi Crews Interview Number: 10
 Chinese Name: _____ Number of Tapes: 1
 Date of Interview: 12/6/79 Length: 1 Hour
 Interviewer: B. Chan & S. Cheng
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape No.:	Side:
			<u>1</u>	<u>A</u>
1	000-013 014-016 017-022 023-025 026-031	Noemi Crews (NC) came to Los Angeles Chinatown in 1942. Father Cowhig was the pastor at Saint Bridget and came to the Sisterhood of Immaculate Heart in 1941. Two sisters came in the summer of 1941 to teach Chinese. 1942, NC graduated from University, was sent to teach at the Plaza. After school NC was able to teach conversion. NC taught Chinese children language on Saturday.		
2	032-035 036-038 039-044 045-049 050-059 060-067	Father told NC that she would be as strange to the children as the children would be to her. Therefore asked her to sit on the porch to let the children get familiar with her. There were few Catholics in Chinatown at the time. At the end of the summer, NC went ot a picnic at the beach with the children and the children told her, "Sister, you burn like we do." There were two non-Chinese sisters taught the Chinese children in 1941. NC taught several nights a week and Saturdays. After touring the Chinatown with one student, the elders told her not to wander in Chinatown because some Chinese were anti-Catholic.		
3	068-073 074-083 084-093	Some Chinese were afraid of her. When she went and visited the Chinese homes, the door was opened only about two inches and NC was asked to go away. At the beginning there were only seven students. Later more parents sent the children to her. Chinese were afraid of Catholic sisters because of their habits and they were even identified as witches.		

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	094-099 100-101	The school was founded in 1924. Saturday's school was mainly recreational.
4	102-120 121-141	There were about twelve students in the language school, age from six to twelve. NC did not take the job as a personal choice, and just took the church order.
5	142-153 154-164	NC did not know much about Chinatown or Chinese. NC was even afraid of Chinese while she was young in Walawala, Washington. NC never felt that the Chinese were in the ghetto. Thought that the Chinese never had the ghetto mentality.
6	165-185 186-197 198-207 208-217	Father Cowhig was in charge of the language school and secured the service of Dr. Chan [Stanley]. The school taught students Chinese. NC took care of all the children with different age. She cooked for forty children and taught them. Eventually, there was one English teacher and a couple of Chinese teachers who taught the other subjects and some Chinese songs and dances. The school was located at the Saint Bridget Catholic School and adjoint the Cathedral High School ground on Bishop Road and Cottage Home.
7	218-227 228-243 244-251 252-262 263-269	Chinese Catholic Academy was the name of the school. There were Hall, Fong, Chan, Hom families sending their children to school. NC prepared dinner in the morning, then taught all day, baby sitting, and walked the students home. The parents took the children to school on their way to work. NC learned how to drive at the Cathedral High School foot-ball field, so later she was able to drive the students home.
8	270-286 287-294 295-302	The student paid \$10 a month for tuition. The children could read before six years old. The children also went out for performances.
9	303-336 337-344	The children's family were not Catholic. The parents sent the children because NC taught the children. It was through the words of the mouth that the children were learning.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	345-354	The parents were mostly from middle class. But the school could never have a parents club because so many languages were spoken by these parents.
	355-381	The children spoke English to each other, and were very much part of American society. One day one of the children told her, "Next door there was a new baby and it was a CHINESE!!"
10	382-418	The school schedule was one half of an hour of religion, generally ethic, nothing specifically Catholic. After that, mathematics, reading, writing, and Latin Mass.
	419-420	NC was very proud of the children for their reading ability.
	421-432	The first year NC had eleven children, the second year increased to 22, third year, 44, the fourth year, 48, the the seventh year NC left, the students numbered to up over 100.
11	433-461	The school building described as part of the church.
	462-END	When the government needed all nations celebrations, NC took the children to participate in the city activities.

END OF SIDE A

TAPE 1 SIDE B

1	003-008	The school students did not participate in too much of the Chinese community affairs, but participated in public school activities.
	009-019	The other school children were fascinated by the Chinese students singing, Chinese dance; as well as Spanish dances, taught by NC's friend.
	020-022	Children often performed for the parents.
	023-025	NC taught Chinese children from 1942 to 1948.
2	026-034	The school continued only one more year, because the Church could not provide sisters for the school.
	035-038	The students later went to Castelar and Queen of Angels.
	039-045	NC loved the children very much and had closer relations with the Saturday students than with the regular school students.
	046-064	Not too many of the parents could speak English. Lily and Stanley Chan would interpret for the other parents in the meeting.
3	065-073	NC was also a discipliner in the school.
	074-088	NC described the new Chinatown as a clean town.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	089-096	The United Meat Market was run by Hall family and were nice to give NC coupons during the wartime.
4	097-116	The parents stayed in the store all day and night, therefore were grateful for school providing the full dinner for lunch.
	117-123	The parents ran the gift shops and some restaurants which were not good places to bring up the children.
	124-125	Children loved school, even played school during recess.
	126-139	About a half an hour a day of Chinese lesson. Got the Chinese textbook from San Francisco.
5	140-149	Chinese teachers were introduced by Dr. Stanley Chan.
	150-163	When the students number increased, there were four teachers, one cook, and one bus driver.
	164-167	The Chinese cook was an American-born Chinese and was sent back as a young woman to marry an old man who had lost his wife.
	168-174	The cook was also a mother of the children.
	175-179	The bus driver was a non-Chinese high school student.
	180-183	NC did not think there was a Chinese boy in the Cathedral High School.
6	184-189	NC wrote to friends to raise money for the school playground and equipment.
	190-197	Bing Crosby sent \$500 for the equipment.
	198-206	The girls brought their own Chinese costume for the performance.
7	207-241	[NC described the photo albums she donated to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California].
	242-263	Chinese children dressed in Chinese costumes just for the photos.
8	264-276	Chinese boys all learned the Latin Mass.
	277-299	The children shown on the picture were crying, usually they did not like the school at the beginning.
9	300-328	[NC continued talking about the photos].
	329-344	Evelyn Chung was the girl who wanted to become Catholic. That was the reason why NC was sent to teach in Chinatown.
	345-363	NC did not really know most of the parents who just came and gave the children to NC.

END OF TAPE 1

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