

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Marie L. Louie
 Chinese Name: _____
 Date of Interview: 3/24/80
 Interviewer: Bernice Sam
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Stella Ling

Interview Number: 75
 Number of Tapes: 1
 Length: 45 Minutes

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1 Side A</u>
1	003-014	Introduction.	
	015-017	Mrs. Marie L. Louie (MLL) lives at 5416 Valley Ridge Avenue, in Los Angeles, California.	
	018-026	MLL's father was born in Canton, China, and her mother was born in Ventura, California. MLL's father was from Hoiping. He was about forty years old when he first came to the United States. MLL's father was a herbalist in China and continued his practice when he came here.	
	027-029	MLL's father probably came to the United States to seek his fortune.	
	030-038	After MLL's father arrived in the United States, he opened up a shop selling Chinese herbs, along with a Caucasian person. The shop was located near downtown, at Ninth and Hill Street. MLL did not recall how long her father worked at the shop since it all took place before she was born. MLL's father did have that shop for quite a number of years before he opened one of his own.	
2	039-043	MLL's parents were married in 1910. MLL was born in Los Angeles, California. She is 52 years old at the time of the interview.	
	044-047	At home, MLL's family speaks Chinese and English. When she was young, they spoke Chinese so that the children would not forget their Chinese background. MLL never regretted it and is glad that she learned Chinese at home. MLL's mother speaks Chinese too.	
	048-052	MLL never went to a Chinese school until she attended Chinese classes at the University of Southern California (USC). As a child, MLL lived far from Chinatown so it was not convenient for them to go to Chinese school. Therefore MLL did not study Chinese after school as many Chinese children did.	
	053-058	When MLL was born, her family lived near Pico and Hill Street, near the downtown area. Then they moved to	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	053-058	48th and Broadway, and again, to a house near Main Street. MLL only moved about four times in her life.
	059-069	MLL attended John Adams Junior High School and the Manual Arts High School. After high school, she proceeded to USC for college. MLL majored in sociology and graduated in 1949. After graduation, MLL worked at the USC library for about fifteen years. After they bought a house, she found that there was a lot to do at home so she stayed at home.
3	070-080	At the time MLL graduated, the GI's were just returning from World War II so job hunting was extremely difficult. Without a masters, it was very hard for MLL to find anything in her field. Thus MLL worked in the library -- she enjoyed her work. MLL was quite happy at her job and would not have changed it if she was given the opportunity.
	081-088	MLL did not encounter any racial problems while attending elementary school although she was one of the very few Chinese at the school. None of the teachers were Chinese -- most of them were elderly Caucasian ladies.
	089-093	MLL did not encounter problems with other students or with her teachers while she was at Manual Arts High School. It was wartime then and there was a lot of activity -- raising money for war bonds and the like. MLL had a lot of fun while attending high school.
	094-106	When MLL was in college, she had many Chinese friends as well as Caucasian friends. MLL decided to take Chinese in college because she wanted to learn to read and write. She had very good teachers -- Mr. Wang and Dr. Cheng. MLL also took a class in calligraphy.
4	107-119	MLL associated with both Chinese and non-Chinese people. In school, most of MLL's classmates were non-Chinese. MLL has many Black friends. Right now, her neighbors are Black. MLL did not have the opportunity to associate with many Chicanos. She met some Chicanos in school and still keeps up the friendships through Christmas cards.
	120-127	MLL feels both Chinese and American. She has never regretted being Chinese.
	128-137	When MLL was young, she did agree with her parents about Chinese customs. MLL enjoys eating American food sometimes while her father was very traditional and

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	128-137	liked Chinese food only. MLL's family only had American food during Christmas and Thanksgiving so she did look forward to American dinners. Now, MLL's family eats American food half of the time -- or they eat whatever suits their moods at the time.
	138-148	MLL has one brother and two sisters. Whenever anyone got sick, they would take Chinese herbal medicine. MLL especially remembers the dark, black tea that was extremely bitter but did wonders in getting rid of colds.
5	149-156	Now, MLL takes American medicine. She recently heard from a friend that there is a very good pill called da mao pien () for remedying colds, which is available at Chinatown. MLL is anxious to try these pills.
	157-165	MLL still uses herbs to cook soup -- she mainly uses louk mai ().
	166-176	MLL's father enjoyed American movies such as Charlie Chaplin and Harol Lloyd. When MLL's parents were newly married, they lived near the Orpheum Theater in downtown. Their main recreation was to go to the movies on Sundays. They would take all the children with them to the movies.
	177-186	Now for recreation, MLL still goes to the movies sometimes. Otherwise she goes to travel logs, to the park, to the beach, or to family gatherings.
6	187-192	When MLL was nineteen months old she returned to China with her parents. They stayed for about a year -- naturally she does not remember much of the trip since she was so young at the time. MLL does not have many friends or relatives in China that she corresponds with.
	193-211	MLL's mother did not correspond with people in China since her relatives were all in the United States. On the other hand, MLL's father often wrote letters home. MLL's father did join the Four Family Association (龍崗親義會) as well as a Chinese Herbalist Association called Chou Young Uye (). MLL's father did give donations but MLL does not know whether there were regular membership dues.
	212-235	MLL thinks that the Lee family that owns Man Jen Low (萬珍樓) is one of prominent families in Los Angeles Chinatown. MLL's parents knew the Lee family.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	212-235	MLL thinks that the Lee family is well-known because they have been established for so long at the restaurant. There are also other families that have lived in Los Angeles for a long time, the SooHoo family, for example.
7	236-244	MLL could not really say who the important Chinese figures were after the second World War.
	245-259	Before World War II, many Chinese were in the restaurant, laundry, and gift shop businesses. After the war, many Chinese went into defense work. In some of the restaurants and laundries, the staff were entirely Chinese.
	260-267	MLL could not quote the wages the Chinese received before World War II. She did remember her father saying that a man was making one hundred dollars a month, and that was considered quite good.
	268-283	At that time, most of the Chinese lived close together in Chinatown. Later, they moved outwards to other areas. MLL feels that the Chinese lived together because of language.
8	284-296	MLL thinks that most of the Chinese saved the money that they earned in order to provide education for their children, or to send back to China to their relatives, or to buy a house.
	297-303	MLL accompanied her family to Chinatown every Sunday in order to buy groceries. MLL's father would also pick up herbs for his store.
	304-325	In those days, there was a railroad train that ran through Old Chinatown on Alameda Street. MLL also remembers the restaurants and stores in Old Chinatown. When the Union Station was built, the Chinese moved to North Spring Street which turned into New Chinatown. New Chinatown was started around 1938 or 1939.
9	326-341	MLL does not remember any of the political figures in China at that time. Many Chinese did feel that they had obligations in China. They would send money back to the village and to relatives. The village people probably depended on people in America to support them.
	342-354	MLL believes that the Chinese were affected by the Depression. She does not really know for sure since she was quite young at the time.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
	355-370	MLL did feel that there was hostility towards Chinese in Los Angeles, especially when Chinese moved into all-white neighborhoods. MLL felt that the discrimination was due to ignorance and fear. MLL's family lived in a house on 48th Street and when they first moved in, their neighbors were surprised that Chinese were allowed to buy homes.
	371-387	MLL's neighbors were not very friendly although her family would try to make friends with them. One day, their neighbors got locked out of the house and MLL's family lent them tools in order to get in. After that incident, their neighbors became very friendly. That was around 1933 or 1934.
10	388-400	In response to the discrimination, MLL and the other Chinese would keep to themselves. Later on, after the Caucasians became more acquainted with MLL's family, they became good friends.
	401-411	MLL feels that in general, the Chinese have done better than the general population in Los Angeles. The Chinese have always tried to educate their children so that they would have better lives.
	412-421	MLL has never thought of comparing the Chinese with the Jewish people.
	422-459	Most of the older Chinese men were matched with their wives while they were in China. The younger Chinese probably met their wives in school or at social activities. Some Chinese did return to China to get married. The Chinese from China probably preferred someone with a similar culture. During World War II, a lot of Chinese men were in the service and met girls in China which they brought back with them. These girls were called "GI brides."

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

1	016-023	The American-born Chinese were not necessarily more eager to have sons than daughters. The older generations were eager to have sons in order to carry on the family name.
	024-037	Chinese did not approve of interracial marriages about twenty or thirty years ago. Interracial marriage was a subject of gossip--and was not very common at all. Now, it seems as if it is very well accepted. MLL personally knows of people who have interracial marriages and they seem to be getting along very well.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	038-047	Many parents did feel that it was important for their children to attend Chinese school so that they would learn the language. Children on the other hand did not really care for it. They probably just played around school for a few hours. MLL did not attend Chinese school. Since children today have so many other social activities, it is quite difficult for them to attend Chinese school as well.
	048-056	MLL did not know of many people who would have liked to return to China ultimately to live. Although many people would like to go back to visit, they are not enthusiastic about living under communist rule. MLL is not planning to go to China in the immediate future but would like to go there someday.
	057-070	MLL does not like Chinese roles in movies such as Charlie Chan and Fu Manchu. She feels that these kinds of stereotypes are not good for the image. MLL does feel that the situation is improving and that Chinese are getting better roles. Although the Chinese at the time disapproved of such roles, they did not do anything about it.
3	071-077	MLL feels that many Chinese consider the professional fields as "ideal" occupations. These fields include medicine, dentistry, and architecture.
4	078-120	While MLL was working as a librarian, there were other Chinese librarians. Some were professionals, others were clerical workers. Some were from China, and others were American born. MLL enjoyed her job--it was a very congenial group. MLL worked in different departments. MLL's family did not have any objections to having MLL work at the library. MLL did not experience any discrimination at work. MLL enjoyed meeting many of the foreign students and finding out about their backgrounds. Although the pay at the university was not very much, MLL was very satisfied with her work. MLL's success at work was due mainly to her desire to do her best.
	121-151	MLL would sometimes get together with her co-workers after work. The group was made up of a mixture of Chinese and non-Chinese people. MLL belongs to a Women's Club. Originally, the club did charitable work such as rolling bandages during the war for the Red Cross. Nowadays, the club members do not meet very often since many of them have moved away from the Los Angeles area. MLL joined the club because she knew many of the members.

Interviewee: Marie L. Louie

Page: 7

Tape: 1 Side B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	152-160	MLL still goes to Chinatown regularly, but not often, to buy groceries or to have a meal.
	161-177	MLL felt that her work experience has taught her a lot and has helped her grow up. The kind of work MLL was involved in did not make her a more aggressive person.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW

- Arranged marriages, 1A:10
- Calligraphy, 1A:3
- Canton, China, 1A:1
- Children
preference for sons, 1B:1
- China
Communist takeover of, 1B:2
continuing ties to, 1A:6
money sent to, 1A:9
returns to, 1A:6; 1B:2
- Chinatown (Los Angeles)
attraction of, 1A:8
businesses in, 1A:8
location of, 1A:8
- Chinese Herbalist Association,
1A:6
- Chinese schools
importance of, 1B:2
- Correspondence, 1A:6
- Depression (1929-1939), 1A:9
- Discrimination
in housing, 1A:9
reaction to, 1A:10
- Education
ethnic ratios in, 1A:3
importance of, 1A:9
- Ethnic identity
persistence of, 1A:2
- Food, 1A:4,5
- Four Family Association, 1A:6
- Friendships
with other ethnic groups, 1A:4
- Herbal medicine, 1A:1,4,5
- Hoiping, China, 1A:1
- Housing patterns
Chinese American clustering,
1A:6
and discrimination, 1A:9
integration in, 1A:9
residential areas, 1A:2
- Immigrants and immigration
reasons for, 1A:1
- Interracial marriages, 1B:1
- John Adams Junior High School,
1A:2
- Lee family, 1A:6
- Librarians, 1A:3; 1B:4
- Louie, Marie L.
birth of, 1A:2
education of, 1A:2-3
employment of, 1A:2,3; 1B:4
father of, 1A:1-2,4,5
friendships of, 1A:4
language spoken by, 1A:2
mother of, 1A:1-2
residences of, 1A:2
siblings of, 1A:4
- Manual Arts High School, 1A:3
- Marriages
mate selection patterns, 1A:10
- Medical practices
Chinese vs. Western, 1A:4-5
- Money
savings of, 1A:8
sent to China, 1A:9
- Movies, 1A:5; 1B:2
- Occupation patterns
and ideal job, 1B:3
and World War II, 1A:7
- Orpheum Theater, 1A:5
- Politics, 1A:9
- Prominent families and individuals,
1A:6-7
- Recreation, 1A:5
- Savings, 1A:8
- Stereotypes, 1B:2
- Teachers and teaching, 1A:3
- University of Southern California, 1A:2
- Ventura, Calif., 1A:1
- World War II, 1A:7