

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Billy W. Lew Interview Number: 20
 Chinese Name: 劉華德 Number of Tapes: 7
 Date of Interview: 10/19/79, 11/1/79, 3/5/83 Length: 5 Hours & 55 Min.
 Interviewer: Beverly Chan & Suellen Cheng
 Others Present: none
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side: <u>A</u>
1	001-006	Introduction.	
	007-016	Parents were born in Toishan, Canton. Father came to U.S. in 1890. Mother came in 1912.	
	117-024	Father was 30 when he came to the U.S. Father was born in 1872. Mother was born in 1894.	
	025-044	Father arrived in San Diego, then he came to Los Angeles. Things were rough in China, so grandfather came first. Grandfather started a business in 1891 called Sun Wing Wo Company in Old Los Angeles on 419-421 North Los Angeles Street. It was an import and export company.	
2	045-055	Father helped grandfather in business until 1930. Father went into chair caning business.	
	056-063	Uncle liked to run the business himself, so Billy Lew's (BL) father had to find a new business.	
	064-078	BL was born in 1912 in Los Angeles. His half-brother was 17 years old and came with BL's mother.	
3	079-093	BL was born on Apablaza Street. Later on moved to 427 N. Los Angeles Street and lived in the back of the store. The whole family was involved in caning work. They did not hire anybody.	
	094-102	In 1941 BL graduated from the University of Southern California (USC) and majored in foreign trade.	
	103-113	Spoke Toishan with parents and English with siblings at home.	
4	113-122	BL went to California Street School and Central Junior High School.	
	123-134	Went into the import business, so took up foreign trade in college. The war broke out so there was no foreign trade. BL went to the produce market and did parttime bookkeeping for a Chinese owner.	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	135-153	BL was in the produce market business until 1957. After six months of parttime bookkeeping, BL became the executive secretary of the Chinese Produce Merchants Association for four and a half years. During the war there were a lot of regulations, the Association needed someone who could understand English well.
5	154-158 159-199	There were about 30 Chinese produce houses. BL took an auditing job in Guam. The Chinese Nationalist Government was taking surplus from Guam to China. They hired American contractors to take inventory and shipping. They needed a Chinese to help in auditing. BL got along with the Chinese officers there, although they spoke Shanghainess, etc.
6	200-215 216-230	BL was in Guam for one and a half months. After that he was in Shanghai, the receiving port, for a month. BL studied accounting at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Extension in the evenings. At the same time he worked parttime in the produce market. BL passed his exams to become a CPA in 1957.
7	231-237 238-251 252-258 259-276	BL started looking for a job in CPA firms. After his interview, the firms never called back. BL went back and worked for a former employer and got his two years requirement for a CPA certificate in 1958. BL had his first office at the produce market. He moved to the present location about one and a half years ago. BL's job as an executive secretary was to inform the produce market owner about price controls on certain items, such as potatoes, etc.
8	277-289 290-298 299-309	There was competition among the owners. But the prices changed from time to time and depended on the supply and demand. Customers were from the Los Angeles area. There was about 25% of the owners who were Chinese. As long as the Chinese owners could get supplies, Americans would buy produce from them. There was no discrimination.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	310-336	Owners got supplies from both Chinese and American farmers. There were many Chinese asparagus farmers in the San Fernando Valley. The Chinese farmers also grew other vegetables and whatever the market demanded.
9	337-341	Chinese shopped mostly in Old Chinatown.
	342-252	BL lived in Old Chinatown until the war ended. They moved to 25th Street. It was a white neighborhood.
	253-263	When BL got married, he moved to the area west of the Coliseum. Now BL lives in the Silverlake area.
	364-274	Before the war, working hours were quite long. There were two shifts. After the war, the union made it into one shift.
	375-378	BL followed union rules and worked eight hours a day.
	379-396	Typically, each house paid BL 15-20 dollars a month. BL worked for about five houses. The secretary jobs gave BL \$200 a month.
10	397-404	The produce workers made about \$40-50 a week.
	405-416	The profits from the produce market was about the same as other businesses. In the produce market there were better clientele. They could sell produce to both Chinese and Americans.
	417-427	There were quite a few Chinese who lived around 9th Place and 10th Street.
	428-441	BL never gambled in Chinatown. He went to movies, bowling, and dancing for recreation.
	442-477	There was the Mei Wah girls group, Kuan Ying girls group, and Low Wah boys group. There were high school groups. BL participated in the Chinese Club in high school. The club had meetings, dance parties, and sometimes went out for a midnight snack.
	478-487	He went to ball games but didn't mingle with Caucasians. They didn't let Chinese in.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

1	002-006	There was some hostility between Mexican groups and Chinese groups.
	007-011	On the whole there was prejudice, but there were individuals who made good friends with Chinese.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	012-022	BL was excluded from a Caucasian club. Parents preferred children going Chinese way.
	023-034	BL went to a Presbyterian Chinese school. The Chinese school was sponsored by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. He went to Chinese school after regular school, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Saturday.
2	035-042	Children all fighting against going to Chinese school.
	043-050	Father was a scholar, so he made the children practice calligraphy.
	051-066	BL had eight brothers and sisters. All lived in one big room in the back of the store. All went to Chinese school.
	067-069	Mother helped in the store and managed the housework.
3	070-079	Father dealt with the outside world.
	080-091	Mother didn't tell much about her family.
	092-101	Father talked about Chinese history.
	102-104	There were three or four Chinese newspapers from San Francisco.
4	105-112	Most of BL's Chinese was self-taught. He had to correspond with Chinese in Hong Kong when doing business.
	113-134	Mother used Chinese medicine. Only much later on, BL used some western medicine. Herb tea was bitter. When BL was a teenager, his parents started taking him to American doctors.
	135-139	Father also was interested in Chinese herbs.
	140-167	Used to visit Chinese herbs store. There were all Chinese patients. There were Chinese herbalists catering to Caucasian patients in the downtown area and outskirts. American doctors were fighting them for practicing medicine without a license. The Chinese American Citizen Alliance (CACA) fought the legislature and declared the herbs as being not practice medicine. So the herbalist could still exist.
5	168-182	BL played with Chinese in Chinatown. They played American games but also played some Chinese games.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	001-004	Introduction.
	005-014	BL did play with Caucasian friends. Only in high school did he find segregation between Asians and Caucasians.
	015-018 019-041	BL thought of himself as more Chinese. Chinese New Year was observed by the Chinese. The store was closed for 14 days. New Year's customs and celebrations were explained. His family had a New Year picture take in 1902.
2	042-056	Later days, when BL started going to junior high school, his family gradually became more Americanized and celebrated Christmas. The children initiated the celebration.
	057-066	Parades, lion dances, and firecrackers were the things for New Year.
	067-081	BL didn't wear Chinese clothes, except when in drama performances.
3	082-100	BL's uncle used to take BL to see Chinese opera in the theatre in Chinatown. Opera groups were from China or San Francisco.
	101-115	BL sang more American songs and learned Chinese songs in Chinese school. There were three Chinese schools run by the church. There were also private Chinese schools.
4	116-129	Mother was very involved in the church after she came to the U.S. BL was baptized in the Presbyterian Church.
	130-144	Mother never worshipped ancestors. Father believed in Confucianism.
5	145-157	Belonged to Lung Kong Tin Yee Association. Uncle was most active in civic activities and was the president of the CCBA. He was always the arbitrator.
	158-174	BL heard about tong fights but never witnessed one. When there were negotiations going on, sometimes involving money, BL's uncle sometimes would get money out of his own pocket to settle the dispute.
	175-199	BL joined the Chinese American Citizen Alliance in 1939. BL was asked to join. The CACA was asked to help in the poll and to explain to Chinese how to vote.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	200-215	CACA was involved in American politics. BL was president of CACA.
	216-232	During BL's administration, CACA was asked to look after the Chinese grocery stores in Watts during the riots.
7	233-242	There were about 125 members during BL's administration. There are over 200 members now. The constitution changed to accept female members.
	243-260	CACA urged Chinese to vote. Some Chinese became naturalized citizens through the help of an interpreter.
	261-286	BL was a secretary for CCBA for several months. The organization didn't have individual members. Each family association and district association sent delegates to the CCBA.
8	287-291	BL belonged to the Lions Club six or seven years ago.
	292-300	BL was CCBA's secretary in 1948.
	301-327	CCBA's function was mainly helping Chinese, settle disputes among Chinese, and helping Chinese in American society. Members paid one or two dollars for membership.
9	328-367	Uncle was very prominent in the Chinese community. Uncle's name was Sing Kai Lew (劉榮漢). Mr. Mu (苗品三), the vice president of CCBA; Thomas Wong, a produce businessman; Peter SooHoo, Sr., who helped develop Chinatown and the first Chinese as a civil servant for the Department of Water and Power in Los Angeles; were also prominent in the Chinese community in the 1930's.
	368-372	Chinese women didn't vote until probably the 1930's or 1940's.
	373-400	Mr. Y.C. Hong, an immigration attorney, was also prominent. He also helped in developing New Chinatown.
10	401-432	Lily L. Chan started the Chinese Women New Life Movement Association. BL's sister did not join any women's clubs.
	433-440	The older generation didn't like the women's club because it was an Americanized type of organization. The young people didn't mind the women's club.
	441-449	BL socialized with girls from the women's club.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
11	450-467	Wife was from the produce market area. BL met her through her sister who worked parttime for BL.
	468-479	Chinese made around \$70-80 a month.
	480-489	Chinese were thrifty and worked long hours. When they retired they had an apartment and other access.

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1	001-006	Only a minority of the Chinese gambled just like a small percentage of Caucasians gambled.
	007-015	Chinese gambling houses in Chinatown usually were patronized by Japanese. Games were either Pai Gao (牌九) or Fan Tan (番攤).
	016-020	The gamblers did not save money. The thrifty Chinese saved money and invested in property.
	021-023	Father's generation did not believe in investing. The prime purpose for them was to make money and return to China.
	024-031	Father brought mother over and planned to stay.
	032-035	Many Chinese sent money back to China. Some invested in housing in China.
	036-055	Bank of Canton in San Francisco was the vehicle for Chinese sending money back to China. Sun Wing Wo handled some of the transaction for some Chinese by writing drafts for them and got approximately 10 percent commission.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE B

1	001-007	Introduction.
	008-023	BL got about \$350 a month after he graduated from college in 1940. It was considered to be an above average income.
	024-029	Father did come with his mother. Mother was sick during the journey to the U.S.
	030-037	Most Chinese earned their living and returned to China. Father had different idea and brought his wife over.
2	038-050	Father taught himself English. Mother wasn't able to go to school. Some missionary tried to come home and taught her English.
	051-062	There wasn't an opportunity for Chinese adults to go to school in the early days. So father self-taught himself.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	063-084	In the 1920's, cousin came from China was able to go to foreign opportunity class to learn English in a junior high school.
3	085-102	Around World War I, Chinese adults were allowed to go to school. Father was too old to go to school then.
	103-115	Chinese who had relatives and families usually sent money back to China, especially for New Year or for family affairs.
4	116-140	Grandfather brought BL's father over. Later grandfather returned to China and died there. Parents did communicate with family in China in the early days.
	141-149	Chinese followed Confucius teaching, they helped out the family members.
5	150-156	In the early days, Chinese were in Chinatown and didn't have much opportunity. The produce market was the best opportunity for them to deal with Caucasians.
	157-176	To have a produce market did not necessarily guarantee a success. There were a few Chinese producers who went broke. Later years, some Chinese sold out their market space to a larger firm in the 1960's and 1970's.
	177-190	Secondary jobbers took a full container of the produce and broke them up, then sold them to smaller grocers. Later the decrease of the mom and pop grocery stores, the secondary jobbers decreased also.
6	191-207	Produce markets opened up an opportunity for Chinese. The younger people started looking into civil service more than anything else. Because it did not have prejudice in the 1930's.
	208-223	After World War II, the big firms, such as aircraft firms began hiring Asians. Chinese had more opportunity.
	224-231	Now foreign trade is probably a good opportunity.
7	232-254	Father's generation liked to see their children become professionals, like doctors and lawyers. They all liked their children to go to college.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	255-264	One of BL's went to commercial art and did not go to college. Sister got married and didn't go to college. The rest of them all went to college.
	265-273	Sister graduated from high school and worked in a grocery store for two or three years then got married.
	274-290	In the 1940's and 1950's Chinese had more opportunity with private industry and opening their own business. Because the lack of capital, some couldn't handle the business. The newer immigrants today often are able to bring in capital.
8	291-313	Chinese as a race are more industrial than other races. In the U.S., due to racial prejudice, Chinese could not move up too far.
	314-322	In general, in the old days, Chinese were poorer. Now a days, percentage-wise Chinese have more wealthy people.
	323-354	Chinese and Jewish are very similar in nature. Both liked to go into business for themselves.
9	355-377	All the businessmen, Jewish or Chinese, or the others always liked to cut their prices down.
	378-412	BL felt that Japanese were more united. For example, they were able to obtain money from the government to build senior citizen housing and for redevelopment. Chinese often had infighting on the redevelopment issue, as well as politics.
10	413-455	There were also so many Chinese churches. It could be the leaders needed their territories.
11	456-472	There was hostility toward Chinese in the old days. There were certain places Chinese were not allowed to go.
	473-483	Some people associated Chinese with tong wars and didn't know what Chinese really were.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	001-011	BL didn't like the way Chinese were portrayed in the movies. But in the old days, Chinese didn't think much about it. Even if there was an opportunity to protest, Chinese were not together. One couldn't protest alone.
	012-022	BL encountered some discrimination, but just ignored it since one couldn't do anything about it.
	023-037	After World War II, China was an ally during the war, the prejudice became less obvious. The prejudice was based on the wrong idea.
2	038-050	Socially, BL encountered discrimination. White Americans treated Chinese not at the same level as they treated Caucasian friends,
	051-056	BL had more Chinese American friends.
	057-062	BL's generation met their wives at social events, such as dancing.
	063-068	Mei Wah Club and Kuan Ying Club were formed because they were not able to go to other places. Most members were American born.
3	069-079	The older generations were mostly matched in marriage. In 1956 when BL went back to Hong Kong, BL's cousin tried to match him up with some Chinese girls. BL didn't like the matching idea.
	080-087	Chinese men mostly married American born girls because they had similar ideas.
	088-090	It was popular in the old days that Chinese men went back to China for marriage.
	091-107	Father liked to see children get enough Chinese education. BL didn't make his children learn Chinese because he knew that his children would not respond to it well. Although one son went to Chinese school but later he gave up.
4	108-121	BL did not have a preference of a son over a daughter. BL's contemporaries had similar ideas that they didn't having a daughter or son.
	122-154	Bl was against inter-racial marriages, but didn't think that he could impose the idea on his sons. There were few Chinese men of his father's generation who were married to Caucasian women. People couldn't say much about it.

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	155-171	There were Chinese men of his father's generation who were married to black and Mexican women. People cared, but couldn't say anything about it.
	172-188	In the early days, all Chinese wanted to go back to China to live. A small percentage of Chinese actually went back and bought property in China. BL never thought of going back to China to live.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE B

1	001-003	Introduction.
	004-023	BL's family was not affected by the Depression as much as other Chinese families. Cousin couldn't support his family, finally sent them back to China. Some Chinese lost a lot of money in the stock market.
	024-035	Cousin was in the laundry business before the Depression. The income was low during the Depression. Father had less income but was able to make a living.
2	036-041	BL was supporting himself by working in Sun Wing Wo while going to college.
	042-055	Sun Wing Wo was formed in 1891 at the Garnier Building. BL showed a picture of the store in 1902.
	056-093	Chinese did not wear Chinese costume every day. Sun Wing Wo sold Chinese goods, wine, books for bookkeeping, preserved ginger, and firecrackers.
3	094-100	There was a Chinese temple in Los Angeles.
	101-125	The business was dissolved in 1956. During and after the war days, cousin ran the business. He moved to North Broadway after 425 North Los Angeles.
4	126-143	Chinese were proud of their race. BL was fortunate enough to be in Chinatown and was able to write and read Chinese. Some Chinese of his contemporaries were not able to do that and had to study Chinese in college.
5	144-157	BL thought the younger generation would go back to learn Chinese. They should be proud of their race and Chinese culture.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	158-169	BL was the first Chinese CPA in the Los Angeles area. There were probably two Chinese CPAs in San Francisco. Edward Eng was right after BL. BL's license number was 5002. Today there are more than 25,000 CPAs in California.
	170-173	BL was the only Chinese CPA in Los Angeles for about 10 years.
	174-189	BL was puzzled whether he could get two years of working experience in order to get his CPA license while in college so he changed his major to foreign trade.
6	190-215	BL also was interested in taking art. BL tried to find an artist job and wasn't able to get the job. Then he went to college at the same time and worked for Sun Wing Wo. So he decided to take foreign trade.
	216-227	Sun Wing Wo had a pretty good profit. BL did everything in the store and did get paid.
7	228-238	There were other import stores: Yee Sing Chong, Wing Chung Long. Sun Wing Wo specialized in raw materials such as rattan and bamboo.
	239-254	The key to BL's success was to be able to get along with his clients.
	255-257	There was about 75% of BL's clientele who were Chinese.
	258-267	There was no difference between dealing with Chinese clients and American clients. Americans were more sophisticated in accounting.
	268-279	BL became a CPA just because he had an opportunity.
8	280-307	BL belonged to the California Society of CPAs and the American Institute of CPAs. BL could get along with other CPAs.
	308-320	BL has about 10 Caucasian CPA friends, 20 Chinese CPA friends.
	321-349	BL felt left out of the CPA Convention in 1954 in New York, especially in a social function. Since then BL did not attend any other convention.
9	350-361	BL didn't think the work made BL more westernized.
	362-394	First when BL started his business, there were not many clients. Later through friends and clients' referrals, the business built up pretty well.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	395-405	BL would like to have a bigger white clientele, build a bigger firm. But being a Chinese, BL feels more comfortable with a smaller firm.
	406-407	BL thought he was restricted to a small firm because being Chiense.
	408-429	Non-Chinese clients came from referrals from clients and attorneys.
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1	001-014	Introduction.
	015-020	The Garnier Building was built in 1890. Grandfather occupied 421 N. Los Angeles.
	021-036	Grandfather started Sun Wing Wo in 1891. Picture of 1902 showed the store's decorations.
2	037-043	Later on the store expanded to 419 N. Los Angeles and imported rattan furniture.
	044-052	The center part of the building was a stairway to CACA and CCBA.
	053-055	423 N. Los Angeles upstairs was occupied by the Wong family (黃家公所).
	056-063	417 N. Los Angeles was occupied by Young Wo Tong (養和堂) herb store.
3	064-070	The southern four stores didn't have permanent tenants. The southeast part of the Garnier Building used to be a gambling house in the back of the store.
	071-081	There were eight stores. The center stairway went up to the CACA and CCBA.
	082-088	423 N. Los Angeles was occupied by the Quan family. The Quan family also occupied 415 N. Los Angeles for one time. 409 N. Los Angeles was occupied by the Wong family as a gambling house. The front store sold candies and cigars.
	089-096	The gambling house used to have a Japanese big city name. was one of them. They catered to Japanese as well as Chinese clients.
	097-104	When there were lottery games, Caucasians did come to the gambling house. When Mayor Shaw was in office there were many gambling houses. During Mayor Porter's period, the lottery was totally gotten rid of.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4&5	105-126	Wong Gong Ha (黃江夏) was not like Wong Win San (黃雲山). Wong Gong Ha was for bachelors. Probably around 1930 both merged as one family association.
	127-183	Paris Cafe was on Jeanette Block. 411½ was Bing Kong Tong. Cousin Lew Yee Fong operated Sun Wing Wo until the state took over the Garnier Building. Santa Ana was constructed in 1952. One third of the building was torn down. Sun Wing Wo was the last one moved out.
6	184-203	Only bachelors lived in Wong Gong Ha.
	204-221	Eastern Grocery was owned by the Wong family. BL was looking at the directory Suellen showed him.
	222-236	One Wong family who lived in the Garnier Building moved to Paramount and farmed there.
7	237-249	409 N. Los Angeles was a store. In the back was a gambling house. There were bachelors who lived in the rear of the building.
	250-263	BL was born on Apablaza Street. Moved to 427 N. Los Angeles Street and lived there through high school until 1931.
	264-275	There was a family who lived in behind of Lew's residence on 427. After they moved, the Lew family occupied these two buildings, connected from Los Angeles Street to Sanchez Street.
8	276-280	A bordello used to be at 427 N. Los Angeles Street area in the early 1880's.
	281-316	Quan family lived on Sanchez Street. Lew Ten (劉進) family used to live next to 427 N. Los Angeles Street. Some family members are still living.
	317-352	425 N. Los Angeles was Lung Kong Tin Yee Family Association. Downstairs was once a gambling house. Some even had slot machines. 429 N. Los Angeles used to be Sam Ward Store. There was a court yard in between 427 N. Los Angeles Street and the house in back of it.
9	353-358	427 was a single story house.
	359-379	Lung Kong Tin Yee moved to 425½ when the old Chinatown was town down after 1933.
	380-387	People moved in and out of the Garnier Building because the business wasn't good.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	388-400	In the old days, Chinese were sojourners who wanted to return to China. When BL's father brought BL's mother over everyone scolded his father. There were not many Chinese families in Chinatown.
	401-413	Lew family was a big family and used Sun Wing Wo as a communication point. Cousins and uncles who worked in laundries, farms, worked as houseboys and cooks would come to Sun Wing Wo to spend the weekend.
	414-417	The older people would use Sun Wing Wo as a bank.
	418-420	Relatives who came to the stores were from the same village.
	421-431	BL had two uncles. Number one uncle never came to the U.S.
	432-450	80% of the Lews were in the laundry business, such as Mandarin Laundry on Ceres Avenue is owned by a Lew.
11	451-472	BL's half brother worked as a houseboy in Hollywood. The last job was for a movie star.
	473-491	When they came to Sun Wing Wo they ate and conversed. That's where BL learned about his village.
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1	002-013	BL's son visited BL's wife's village, Toishan in 1981. Some relatives are still there. BL still has a cousin in Canton.
	014-025	For holidays there were three tables full of people eating dinner in the store. Usually there was one table every night for the store help, etc.
	026-044	The store had a male cook. The cook used two wood burning brick stoves and woks. The stoves were about three feet wide.
2	045-059	BL described the interior set up of the store. Sun Wing Wo was the only store which had display windows in the early 1920's.
	060-070	There was a roll-type awning in front of the store.
3	071-072	There were two Moon festivals in 1938 and 1939 for China Relief.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	073-111	BL continued describing the interior set up of both 1902 and 1920's. The kitchen was in the rear side of the store.
4	112-128	One of BL's cousins lived upstairs of the Sun Wing Wo. The cousin is now the owner of Chong Hing. William Lou was born in China and came over when he was one year old.
	129-137	BL's uncle brought quite a few Lew cousins over to the U.S.
	138-163	In the early days, merchants were the only ones who could bring families to the U.S. For one time Sun Wing Wo had twenty partners on paper in the 1920's. So every partner could bring family members. BL didn't know how many cousins he had.
5	164-178	Lew Yee Fon was the president of Lung Kong Tim Yee Family Association.
	179-184	BL's uncle Sing Kai Lew was the president of CCBA for many years.
6	185-216	Tou Pew Lew (劉道表) was grandfather's name. Father's name was (劉觀揚). Cousin's name was Yee Fon Lew (劉儒範).
	217-239	BL didn't know much about his mother. Mother came from Gou Gong (九江). Father wanted to stay in the U.S. so he went to China, married BL's mother, brought her over, and left the first wife in China.
7	240-245	BL's uncle didn't bring his wife over.
	246-252	CCBA occupied 415½ upstairs and CACA occupied 417½ upstairs.
	253-273	Upstairs of Sun Wing Wo was living quarters for workers. 421 had several rooms. In 419 there were just beds in an open room. The upstairs also was used as a storage place.
8	274-293	BL lived upstairs of Sun Wing Wo, because it was too crowded at home at 427 N. Los Angeles, where there was only one big room with a mezzanine for a sleeping area.
	294-302	The workers in Sun Wing Wo were all cousins who were looking for jobs when they first came to Los Angeles. They left the store after they found the job in the laundry, etc.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	303-324	Usually there were five or six people working in the store who did packing, unpacking, shelving, and shipping. His uncle did the banking and collecting money.
9	325-349	CCBA and CACA moved to New Chinatown after the New Chinatown was built in 1938.
	350-366	CACA was in old Chinatown for a couple of years at the beginning since 1912. Later moved to the Garnier Building. As far as BL could remember, both organizations were in the Garnier Building since he moved to the block.
	367-405	BL used to be the executive secretary of CACA for a long while. BL kept the records and sent out the bills.
10	406-446	CACA used to have national conventions held in the Garnier Building office. Dances were also held there. A band and parades were sponsored by CACA. Band was led by Peter SooHoo, Sr.
11	447-456	The original objective was fighting for civil rights for Chinese.
	457-490	At one time CACA was giving death benefits. Everytime there was a death, the members were asked to give the assessment of five dollars a piece and gave the family of the deceased \$1000. Later the amount was reduced to \$500 and then to zero due to the lack of funds. Because of the cancelling of the death benefits, the membership dropped. At one time there were about 400 to 500 members.
END OF TAPE 5 SIDE B		
1	001-008	Introduction.
	009-019	When BL was the secretary of CACA there was about 200 members. Dues were \$15. Today's dues are \$25.
	020-033	The convention was held for all members from different lodges. BL named several lodge names.
2	034-040	As a secretary, BL had to communicate with the Grand Lodge, but not with
	041-044	There was about two or three CACA conventions held in the Garnier.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	045-072	BL was asked to help the Chinese voters at the poll in Macy School. He was paid about \$9 a day for a 14 hour work day. After the election, BL was asked to join the CACA after World War II.
3	073-078 079-084 085-088 089-097 098-110	The members had to be American born male citizens. Father and mother later became naturalized citizens. Most of the CACA members had families and a wife in the U.S. so they brought their wives to the dancing parties. BL helped in the China Relief Association during the war. It was housed in CCBA. Uncle was president for CCBA for many years. CCBA usually acted as an arbitrator. Uncle often took money from his pocket to pay settlement money.
4	111-116 117-120 121-142	The dispute usually was about the gambling lost, fighting over a woman, business competition. CCBA also acted as an escrow agency whenever the Chinese needed help during the buying and selling of a business. When BL was the secretary of CCBA, there was no more dispute of that sort. Young people used court to settle their cases. CCBA then became an anti-communist organization. They had China Relief activities, sponsored the Moon Festival. CCBA also gave receptions for dignitaries from China, such as General Tsai Tim Kai (蔡运锴), etc.
5	143-155 156-178 179-197	BL was in charge of preparing the list of donors during the China Relief effort. The interior set up of CCBA and CACA were alike. There was a stage, conference table, chairs, and kitchen in the back. CCBA had a sleeping quarters for its secretary. There was a fire in the 1930's which started from the secretary's kitchen. The damage was about a couple thousand dollars.
6	198-210 211-233	There was a restroom in the CCBA and CACA office. BL's family did occupy 413 N. Los Angeles for a while after BL's sister died. Chinese superstition was to move the family every time there was a death in the family. Later they moved back to 427 N. Los Angeles.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	234-269	Peter Garnier's father built the Garnier Building. Peter used to collect the rent. Narcesse Garnier, Peter's wife, also came to collect the rent in the later days. Peter owned the north half of the Garnier Building. The older brother owned the south part. When BL's cousin finally moved, the government owned the building.
	270-281	Peter probably passed away around the 1920's. The rent for a store was less than \$100 per month.
8	282-295	Garniers were Frenchmen they associated a lot with French people in the New Chinatown area. They appeared to BL as being a rich family. They dressed well and drove a good car, etc.
	296-319	BL remembered Peter had a son and daughter. They treated the Lews very nice and were not like an absentee landlord.
	320-336	BL didn't think there was subleasing at the time. The only subleasing building was on Napier Street. Wei Sun (衛生公所) leased the building and sublet to bachelors as a rooming house.
9	337-405	The only building owned by Chinese was on 510 and 512 N. Los Angeles Street. The building was owned by a Chinese corporation, Hop Hing Company. Dr. E. Lee, the dentist, rented an office upstairs. BL's uncle had some share in the corporation. Lee T. Ling was a major share holder, and used to be an agent for the American President Steamship Line.
10	406-410	The rest of the Chinese leased and rented in the early days. The idea was not to set root in the U.S.
	411-431	Father purchased a couple of lots down in Long Beach, when the story was spread about the oil of Signal Hill around late 1918 and 1919.
	432-474	BL didn't remember Chan Kui Sing's office. He heard about Chan Kui Sing was an interpreter.
11	475-491	There were verandas upstairs. The Lew family used to plant flowers there.

END OF TAPE 6 SIDE A

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6 Side B

Tape: 7 Side A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	002-022	Canton Bazaar was under Hop Sing Tong (合勝堂). Gee Ning Tong (芝寧堂) herb store was in Hop Hing's building. There were four stores rented from Hop Hing: Gee Ning Tong, Eastern Grocery, F. Sui On, and others.
	023-036	Mu Pin Sun (蔣品三) was the vice president of CCBA, who used to work with BL's uncle in the settlement of disputes in the early days.
2	037-056	Since CCBA and CACA was in the Garnier Building, the Building became the center of Chinatown. BL's uncle was the president of CCBA, BL heard a lot about the events in Chinatown. Many dignitaries would visit Sun Wing Wo.
	057-066	Chinese weren't interested in American politics. Uncle had contact with President W. McKinley about the anti-Chinese issue.
	067-075	BL's uncle didn't speak good English. He socialized with American politicians who liked to have Chinese dinners. They called BL's uncle to arrange it for them.
3	076-091	CACA would advise the members which candidate they should support, also they helped in the poll.

END OF TAPE 6 SIDE B

1	002-006	Introduction.
	007-023	BL remembered the Hotel de Paris upstairs of the Jeanette Building. Paris Cafe occupied the downstairs of the building. BL attended many wedding banquets there.
	024-034	In the old days, for a big banquet, one restaurant could not accommodate all the guests. Two or three big restaurants would be used at the same time such as Tue Far Low or Man Jen Low.
2	035-037	Upstairs of the Jeanette Building were boarding rooms.
	038-073	In the basement of the Garnier Building was storage. There was an open entrance to the street from the basement. The entrance usually was covered. The basement was divided by thick brick walls. Sun Wing Wo opened a door between the basements of 419 and 421 N. Los Angeles Street.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	074-076	Some other store might use the basement for living. BL didn't know.
	077-089	BL was told that the Garnier Building was built as a warehouse.
	090-115	BL didn't know of any gambling houses in the basement. The only basements used for stores were on Marchassault Street.
4	116-128	BL went to the theatres in Japanese town while in his 20's. Chinese rented the theatre for Chinese opera.
	129-135	BL didn't remember a skylight.
	136-153	The veranda was there. Chinese put a sign on it. The Wong Gong Ha put some decorations upstairs of 423 N. Los Angeles and cut through the window to make a doorway. Sun Wing Wo's upstairs did not have doors to the veranda. They had to climb the window to water the plants.
5	154-163	There was not much in Chinese exterior decoration except for Chinese signs.
	164-171	BL didn't participate in Lung Kong Tin Yee Family Association's activities. Cousin was involved in the association more.
	172-178	The 20 partners of the Sun Wing Wo were in paper only.
	179-194	Some Lew relatives worked in vegetable farming. During World War II, BL and his brother went into chicken ranching, but gave it up a year later.
6	195-207	BL was drafted, but the doctor found that there was an infection in BL's eardrum. So BL was classified as 4F.
	208-227	Sun Wing Wo was acting as an agent for the Bank of Canton in San Francisco. Sun Wing Wo collected money and wrote a draft either in Hong Kong dollars or Chinese silver dollar drafts. After deducting the commission, they sent the money to San Francisco, later transferred it to Hong Kong and China.
7	228-234	Some Chinese who weren't able to write would ask the Lew's help in writing letters back to China.
	235-246	Probably right before the Sino-Japanese War, the Sun Wing Wo stopped acting as a bank. People started going to the bank.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	247-266	Father went into the chair caning business after the uncle came back from China.
	267-300	Father's store was a repairing store in the mid-1920's. All family members helped including brothers, sisters, and mother.
8	301-316	Father's clients were Caucasians. Cousin had a chair caning store right next door to Sun Wing Wo.
	317-335	Sun Wing Wo sold a lot of rattan furniture and raw materials.
9	336-370	In the early days, Sun Wing Wo sold mostly Chinese grocery drygoods. Later in the 1920's, the store added some art goods. The store also sold Chinese textbooks and Chinese brushes for the Chinese students across the street.
	371-389	Most of the Chinese grocery stores had their own clientele. Sun Wing Wo later sold a lot of Chinese art goods wholesale. F. Sui On, Paul King from China City, Tom Gubbins all purchased from Sun Wing Wo.
10	390-416	Uncle did most of the buying. Later BL was in charge of buying through mail order. Dealt mostly with merchants in Hong Kong and Shanghai. They also bought a lot of monosodium glutamate from Shanghai. They also imported squid, dry mushrooms from Japan.
	417-432	Right before World War II, BL exported some lead pencils and toys to Hong Kong, but it didn't last too long.
	433-443	World War II came and shut off trading.
	444-452	During the war, BL started working in the produce market. His younger brother, who used to work in Sun Wing Wo, also left the store to work in the war industry.
11	453-479	Uncle died in Los Angeles during the war. His son Lew Yee Fon started managing the store.

END OF TAPE 7 SIDE A

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	008-017	BL remembered in the late 1910's and early 1920's was the hey day of Sun Wing Wo. BL remembered the happy time of New Year. He could get a lot of Lai See (利是) (Lucky Money) from the elder people during the New Year.
	018-025	Depression time didn't affect the store too much. William Lou's family had a difficult time so the family was shipped back except for William. They came back right before World War II started.
	026-042	Most Chinese were poor but were able to survive. They were not affected as bad as the people who were in the stock market.
2	043-056	When the old Chinatown was there, the Garnier Building was pretty congestive because it housed CCBA and CACA. The main street of Chinatown was Alameda Street. The parade was held on Los Angeles Street because the street was wide.
	057-062	Sun Wing Wo did a lot of American trade. They sold raw materials to American rattan manufacturers.
3	063-077	Los Angeles Street had more American trade than Alameda Street. More gift shops on Los Angeles Street.
	078-096	There was a lot of work to prepare the Moon Festival. Peter SooHoo, Sr. and Thomas Wong did a lot of publicity to get American's attention, especially movie stars.
	097-113	There was a Federation of Chinese Clubs organized by Chinese Poly Alumni Club, Kuan Ying Club, Mei Wah Club, Low Wah Club, Low Wah Women Auxiliary, and Guardsman Club, groups from Congregational church and others.
4	114-123	Most clubs were mostly social clubs and sports clubs.
	124-131	Low Wah were more Chinatown people. Kuan Ying were more outside Chinatown.
	132-139	The Presbyterian Church was on Los Angeles Street. Mother was very active in the church until she died.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	140-173	The missionary came to the house and taught BL's mother English. Mrs. Findley from the Congregational church visited his mother quite often. Mrs. Findley used to take the family to the Congregational Church. Rev. Lee Jai Yen (李者仁) from the Presbyterian Church had more influence so the family went to the Presbyterian Church. Thomas Wong's family was active in the church.
	174-192	BL used to go to Sunday school, attended picnics.
6	193-214	Father didn't participate in church activities. He believed in good teaching, so he didn't mind the family going to church.
	215-252	The Presbyterian Church was on Los Angeles Street. The whole road was set back. In front there was a hay store. BL drew a layout of Los Angeles Street.
7	253-259	There was another small church: Baptist church. Mrs. Early was active there.
	260-270	Sun Wing Wo used to have a storage room across the street from Sun Wing Wo on Los Angeles Street. There was also a Chinese laundry there.
	271-297	BL explained all the stores across the street.
8	298-303	Mother washed the family's laundry.
	304-322	There was a bathhouse next to the Pico House. Chinese bachelors would go there for 5 or 10 cents. The Lew family had their own bath tub.
	323-334	There was an American plumbing shop next to the old fire house.
9	335-348	There was a Japanese barber next to the fire house facing the Plaza. A Japanese grocery store was next to it. On Sanchez Street there was a gambling house.
	349-365	There was a Chinese store next to the Japanese barber shop owned by the Quon family (Quon Tsue Lung).
	366-398	BL used to play with the neighborhood children on Sanchez Street and sometimes flied kites there.

Interviewee: Billy W. Lew

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Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	399-419 420-427 428-443 444-473	There was a Japanese barber shop in Pico House. BL seldom played in the old Chinatown. Later Sanchez Street was used for truck parking. There were watchmen in front of the gambling houses. Actually most of the time the police were paid off, so there were not many raids on the gambling parlors, especially during Mayor Shaw's era.
11	474-482 483-491	Prostitution was near Alameda Street. During BL's time there wasn't any opium smoking.

END OF TAPE 7 SIDE B

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BILLY LEW

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