

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Howard Louis Interview Number: 160  
 Chinese Name: 黃銓藻 Number of Tapes: 2  
 Date of Interview: 4/24/82 Length: 2 Hours & 3 Minutes  
 Interviewers: John Yee & Eugene Moy  
 Others Present: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Language: English  
 Summarizer: Helen W. Morrison

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1 Side A</u>
1	018-022	Howard Louis' (HL) nickname is Toby. HL is the youngest of eight children in Ah Louis' family. There are five boys and three girls in the family. Seven are still living.	
	023-030	HL's Chinese name is <u>黃銓藻</u> .	
2	031-033	HL spoke Chinese with his father only.	
	034-041	Choy suey English was used at home.	
	042-048	There were only two Chinese families in the community.	
	049-058	Ah Louis is not a real family name. Wong is the real family name.	
3	059-069	HL and his brothers were excellent in both athletics and in scholastics. Family did not have much problem with the people in San Luis Obispo.	
	070-080	HL graduated from high school in 1947.	
	081-091	He attended UC Berkeley. His brother graduated from the University of Chicago.	
	092-096	There were football games between the Chinese and the Japanese at the Union field.	
4	097-107	Every year there would be a Chinese New Year game.	
	108-123	As a youth, HL was rather reticent about going to social activities.	
	124-130	HL's father gave free reign to all activities.	
	131-137	HL's father was quite an active man.	
	138-139	Father, HL and HL's brother, Fred, returned to China in 1932. The Chinese wanted to return to China to live their last remaining years and to die there. They knew they were discriminated against in the United States.	
5	140-149		
	150-154	HL and Fred saw a lot of poverty in China during their visit.	

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	155-161	HL was able to talk to some of his former classmates from the University of California while he was visiting Canton. HL's classmates were in various fields of work and did very well.
	162-166	One was an architect and the other was an engineer. One of the architect's first jobs was to design a new theatre in Canton. The engineer got into Water and Power. The architect was making a lot of money at first but then had heavy taxes imposed on his income.
	167-171	HL did not have travel restrictions because he and his brother, Fred, were United States citizens. They had to obtain certificates of identification, that is, passports, which turned out to be a long drawn process.
	172-178	HL's father had to sign his name 64 times before HL and Fred could get their papers.
	179-182	HL's father's intentions were to return to China permanently.
6	183-188	HL and Fred were too Americanized then to follow the Chinese traditions of returning to China to marry.
	189-199	Before his 1932 trip to China, HL's father had been back in 1886.
	200-209	Comparing life in China with life in the United States, HL's father felt that China should follow the United States' pattern of progress.
	210-220	HL's father wanted to build a school house for his village since it would give him social status.
7	221-239	It was quite an ordeal to get HL's father back to his village. They had to carry his father in a sedan chair through rice paddies in order to get him to the village.
	240-258	Father brought gifts to the villagers. Father brought all his personal belongings with him. Since father was a cigar smoker, they brought back 25 boxes of cigars with them, for father to smoke and give away.
	259-269	Out of all the people that came to visit him, HL's father only recognized one person. All his old friends were gone by then since he was already 92 years old himself.
	270-274	HL's brother, Walter, took care of the store in San Luis Obispo while they were in China.
8	275-280	During their stay in China, they gave a banquet and a reception. A two-story building was quickly built for

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	275-280 281-284  285-286  286-296  297-301 302-307 308-317	the occasion. People from surrounding villages were also invited. There were about twelve hundred people. They had to dig up chopsticks, rice bowls, soup bowls, to give away. The food for the banquet included chickens, ducks, twelve pigs, and six goats. There was a blessing of the food. The banquet lasted for three to four days. A Chinese orchestra played day and night. They had to pay the musicians. They also had to have posted road guards since it was the time of the warlords and a lot of kidnapping was occurring. The bandits realized that someone who could give such a big banquet must be of the wealthy class.
9	318-328  329-339    340-344  345-366	Just after the feast ended, the post guards warned them that bandits were moving in. They were told to return to Canton for their own safety. At that time, they were all staying in one house. But because of the bandits, they split up and stayed in different homes. They were able to return to Canton safely. The bandits were caught. They made reservations to return on a boat and bade farewell to the villagers. They left many of their personal belongings behind. They returned to Canton safely and stayed in China for about ten months. HL and Fred had their American passports and their certificates. Their father did not have any papers so they wrote home for assistance. Father did not like China and wanted to return to the United States. He was disappointed with his birthplace and said his home was in San Luis Obispo.
10	367-400    401-409	Upon leaving the United States, father did not obtain re-entry papers. Father was pretty well-to-do and had a lot of friends in Sacramento including the mayor and the Senator. They cabled the consulate in Hong Kong and said that they had to prove that HL's father was the real Ah Louis. Since Ah Louis was in the general merchandise business, they asked him various questions like how much was a can of coffee, how much was a can of sugar, how much was a bar of Ivory Soap, how much was a can of tomatoes, or a bag of potatoes. Father gave all the correct answers.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	410-420	The consul acknowledged that he was the real Ah Louis and he was allowed to return home.
	421-431	Father was happy to be home with his family. He would sit on his chair in the store smoking his Chinese pipe and greeting all his friends.
	432-458	The store was a general store which also sold gifts, groceries, tobacco.
11	459-468	The ranchers depended on their store. The ranchers bought on credit. They had to wait after the harvest, six to eight months, to get paid. If the ranchers obtained the payments for their crops, then they could meet their responsibilities to Ah Louis.
	469-END	After the railroads were built, the Chinese population that consisted of laborers declined.

END OF SIDE A

TAPE 1 SIDE B

1	005-008	The Chinese population in San Luis Obispo declined in 1933. There were twenty Chinese left.
	009-010	The Chong family ran a candy store. Their grandchildren live in the Los Angeles area.
	011-018	HL's father died in 1936. Father had an injury caused by falling on the floor.
	019-021	Due to the accident, he got pneumonia which caused his death.
	022-030 031-032	One of HL's brothers went with Ford Motors, in Detroit. Ford Motors was going to manufacture rubber tires and had plans to put up a plant in Shanghai before World War II.
2	032-033	George was on the Orpheum Vaudeville Circuit, he was a theatrical man after he left San Luis Obispo.
	034-037	One of his brothers was a jeweler in San Francisco. In 1933 he returned to San Luis to help out in the store.
	038-039	HL's sister, Helen, was in the theatrical business with their brother, George. She stayed back east and worked in Chicago.
	040-042	Oldest sister was still alive at the time. Her husband had two big restaurants in Chicago. The Bamboo Terrace and another one. They were huge restaurants seating twelve hundred people.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	043-046	That was during the Al Capone days, during the Depression, It was a real bad, rough area.
	047-048	That had to close the restaurants,
	049-050	Husband went to a smaller business.
	050-053	During the Depression, HL's father lost quite a bit of his holdings although he tried to hold on.
	054-058	He bought a large harvester machine and went from ranch to ranch to harvest each farmer's crops. He would charge a fee for this service.
	059-062	Father paid cash for everything. Expenses got to be too much and he did not want to give up.
	063-064	He was finally convinced that it was a losing proposition.
3	065-071	Father dealt with large companies in his business. HL has an invoice that shows that his father was shipping out 15,000 pounds of potatoes to San Francisco for seed.
	072-075	San Francisco was a big seed firm.
	076-078	HL's father was the first flower seed grower on the west coast. He had to know how.
	079-080	He hired Mexican laborers beside the Chinese who were employed as cooks on the ranches.
	081-082	People would call up for cooks or roustabouts, they knew the Chinese would stay.
	082-083	If they hired Caucasians, they would go to town on Saturday and not return until Monday because they would get so drunk.
	084-086	Chinese did not socialize with others. The Chinese laborers would always be on hand. They would work 24 hours a day.
	087-089	Employers appreciated their Chinese employees.
	090-094	Concerning the social life of the Chinese laborers, there were very few dances because there were not many Chinese around.
	095-096	Chinese New Year was a big celebration to look forward to for the year.
	097-098	They always saved enough money for the event. It was a festive occasion.
	099-102	The kids would look forward to receiving money wrapped up in red paper.
4	103-105	The kids would get gold pieces -- \$1.00, \$2½, \$5, and \$20.
	106-112	There were two large associations at the time.
	113-116	Tongs and family associations acted as banks. They were called benevolent associations, and they were contacted when someone was in dire straits.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	117-121	The Chinese would never ask the Caucasians for help. The Chinese always helped their own.
	122-123	The Chinese did put their money in the banks.
	124-125	HL's father was a banker in the sense that Chinese workers would not trust the Caucasians.
	126-129	Workers would be out in the field and their money would go into their account, which was held by HL's father.
	130-134	Workers would tell HL's father to send money back to their families in China.
	135-139	The Chinese workers trusted HL's father in all financial transactions.
5	140-144	One had to be American born in order to own property.
	145-146	The Japanese could own property in 1946.
	146-147	Aliens could not own property.
	148-149	HL's father could hold out his property.
	150-152	HL's father did not help others acquire property.
	153-155	He did not go for such underhanded tactics.
	156-158	HL's father leased a lot of land from people.
	159-161	During World War I, they could not get sugar cane or sugar.
	162-166	In the early days, the Chinese did a lot of fishing and gathering kelp in this area.
	167-168	The Chinese gathered seaweed and dry abalone to ship back to China.
	169-172	They gathered it every three to six months.
	173-174	HL's father would ship it to San Francisco and then to China.
	174-176	They packed the seaweed in bales and place them in 24 inch by 24 inch crates which were about 4 inches deep.
	177-178	That would dry down.
	178-179	They would bale it, bind it up in gunny sacks and ship it to China.
	180-181	Gathering kelp is a real science.
	182-183	Must clean off the rock at low tide.
6	183-185	To gather kelp, one has to use a blow torch to get rid of all the sea life on the rocks.
	186-187	The sea water would roll onto the rocks and thus clean them.
	188-189	In time the seaweed grew up until it is ready to be harvest.
	189-190	It is all slick and do not have to pick up the sea shells or clams.
	191-192	This would be an all year round process.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	192-194	At real low tide, they would gather abalone along with the kelp.
	195-199	While waiting for the kelp to grow, they would grab abalone, take them out of their shells, and hang them up to dry.
	200-202	Kelp would adhere to itself like so many pillows. The people who did this work with kelp and abalone would build their own little shacks to stay in.
	203-204	They were abalone shacks. They were called seaweed gatherers' houses.
	205-207	Seaweed gatherers were not allowed to bring in women.
	208-209	When they were allowed to bring back a wife to help them out, the wives went stir crazy.
	210-214	They had no communication with the outside world. Some of the wives ended up in the insane asylums. The seaweed business lasted for quite a few years. The last one probably went out about twenty years ago.
	215-226	A man named Harding Wong was born as the son to a seaweed gatherer. He was born during President Harding's time.
7	227-229	After the war with Japan, they could not ship seaweed any longer and the seaweed gatherers could no longer live without employment. Therefore they were forced to leave.
	230-233	95% of the seaweed gatherers were Hian San, and they could not converse with the average Chinese because their dialect was too different.
	234-238	They were probably the people who settled in Locke.
	239-241	They stayed in clusters -- ten guys here, ten guys there.
	242-245	During the winter months, there would be the lowest tides of the year -- the minus tides.
	246-250	When the tides are the lowest, they could go out a long distance. On the average, the lowest tides would occur once a year.
	251-252	They worked on the rocks until the tide got way out there.
	253-254	Some men have gotten caught in the seaweed.
	254-261	The tides were not too low in some areas because of the steep beaches. Cambria was one of the big seaweed gathering areas.
	262-263	The shacks are still visible. They used to go down in the canyons in order to be protected from the elements.
	264-269	The shacks were more than just one room. They had to have warehouse space for the seaweed. The warehouse would be adjacent to the shack.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	270-274	They used the rocks to lay the seaweed out for drying. They used the heat from the rocks.
8	275-276	It was a very interesting procedure. They would go out each week and were given a sack of seaweed.
	277-280	They were given abalone and crab and they had them waiting for the visitors and at low tide they would gather the abalone and the crab.
	281-285	There were no shrimp, no salmon, at that time.
	286-287	They men had row boats only and therefore they could not go out for deep sea fishing.
	287-290	They did catch rock cod off the rocks.
	291-296	There were no real fishermen at that time since fish and crab were very perishable and they had no means of transportation. They could not ship the seafood out.
	297-298	They traveled by horse and buggy in those days.
	299-301	In the latter years there were the fish canneries in Monterey.
	302-304	They sold rock cod at ten cents a pound and delivered it to your front door. Smelts were ten cents a pound too.
	305-310	The largest fishing industry was in Monterey. It disappeared due to the pollution.
	311-315	The Chinese in San Luis Obispo were primarily involved in agriculture since it is an agricultural area.
	316-320	They were not into the dairy industry.
9	321-328	The coastline was owned by Swiss people who are into the dairy business.
	329-337	The Chinese, once in a great while, would travel to Los Angeles. They had a 24 hours a day occupation and they had no one to fill in for them if they were absent.
	338-339	When they found someone who was free, HL's father would request to have them sent to his farm so his employees could take a few days off.
	340-347	Transportation was a slow process. Going to San Francisco was a one day trip, going and coming by car.
	348-349	If they went by horse and buggy, it took one week each way.
	350-351	The easiest way was to go by ship. That took a day.
	352-357	The route by boat was San Francisco, Port San Luis, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Diego.
	358-368	Chinese did not use the boat too often.
	369-377	They had a round house where the Los Angeles train met. They were serviced and then went back on route again.
	378-379	The Chinese were cooks on the trains.
	379-382	HL's father supplied the cooks for the trains.



Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	383-384	The Chinese cooks would stop off in San Luis at the end of the run from San Francisco and Los Angeles.
	385-391	Next door to the store, they had a two-story building with rooms for the men who stopped off.
	392-393	They had a community kitchen for the men. The Chinese did their own cooking.
	394-402	San Luis was a stop off point where they changed crews. The trip was an ordeal in those days. It was a twelve hour trip from Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo.
	403-409	They used firewood for the boilers on the locomotives.
	410-425	The only recreation for the Chinese was to go to the movies and to gamble.
	426-427	They were there when there was the transition from the silent movies to the talkies.
	428-431	There were three theatres -- the Obispo Theatre, the Monterey Theater, and the Fremont came later.
	432-441	HL's brother, Young, taught him how to run the movies when he was in high school.
11	442-447	The life expectancy of a projectionist was 55. They were locked in this airtight booth and were forced to breathe all this carbon dust in the air. The men died of black lung.
	448-458	HL decided to quit as a projectionist after he found out about the black lung and got extreme strain from the lights on his eye sight.
	459-460	HL quit 55 years ago, but his brother, Young, is still running it.
	461-471	HL's brother, Freddy, worked in a restaurant in Chicago at the same time as he attended the University of Chicago.
	472-474	The health and sanitation authorities got after the movie industry to take care of the people who worked in the booths.
	475-END	They forced the industry to have air vents installed in the booths to protect the health of the projectionists. HL's father never let his children play any games such as mahjong or fan tan.

END OF TAPE 1

TAPE 2 SIDE A

1	005-007	HL and his brother, Fred, returned from China with their father in 1933 or 1934, right after the Depression. Things were very tight then.
	008-009	His brother returned to Chicago and became affiliated with the Ford Motor Company.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	009-012	The company had plans to build a rubber tire factory in Shanghai. His brother worked in the Detroit plant for Ford Motor Company.
	013-014	HL's field was economics and that was at a low ebb at that time as far as the economy was concerned.
	014-015	HL just bided his time and took care of his father and the store.
	015-016	His father passed away in 1936 and HL took over the store.
	016-018	The family no longer owned any holdings or ranches. They sold some due to the Depression.
	019-020	They were not engaged in the flower seed business anymore.
	021-022	Supermarkets such as Purity, Safeway, Piggly Wiggly, all took away quite a volume of their store and neighborhood business.
	023-024	They had to change the store and they had to dispose of all the herbs.
	025-026	An army camp was being built in 1939 to 1941 in their area.
	026-027	The war was imminent. HL related the event of Pearl Harbor Day.
	028-029	HL had just gotten married.
2	030-035	HL's brother from Detroit enlisted and went in as a personal trainer for part of the air corps ordinance.
	036-037	HL's wife was visiting with HL's brother, George, and George's wife. This was how HL met his wife.
	038-042	George and his wife would visit his father and family and give his itinirery for the year. He was booked on the orpheum circuit. He was book solid for a year.
	043-044	HL's wife was a good friend of George's wife and they extended an invitation to her to visit California.
	045-048	HL was a bachelor at that time and George introduced them and they hit it off very well.
	049-050	HL's wife's family was from Sun Wei.
	051-052	HL's wife came from a very large family. There were fifteen brothers and sisters. They were from Vancouver and HL met them when he visited her family.
	053-054	His wife's family treated him royally when ever he visited them -- very English in their hospitality.
	054-056	They corresponded with each other when she returned to her town. She liked a little town.
	057-058	She suggested a 50-50 deal. Live here a few years and then live in the big city a few years.
	059-061	HL got married in 1941.
	062-065	HL had a deferement at the time of the war.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	066-067	HL had a business which was a physical imparity during that time.
3	068-070	There were 60 thousand soldiers in Camp San Luis.
	070-071	Camp San Luis was their last stopping off place before they were shipped overseas.
	071-072	A lot of army divisions left from Camp San Luis at the time of World War II.
	073-078	Richard Chong and HL were both inducted along with Richard Chong's nephews. They were probably the only Chinese inducted from this area.
	079-080	HL was inducted at Monterey.
	081-082	The personnel were placed in bases wherever they were needed.
	083-085	The language school in Monterey came in afterwards.
	086-092	HL was able to enter Camp Veel which was making a nucleus for the Thirteenth Armor Division. HL went in for special training because he had a knowledge of languages.
	093-094	HL's qualifications gave him this opportunity to work at this camp. He was qualified language wise and travel wise.
	095-096	HL had travelled in China for one year.
	096-097	HL travelled with Jimmy Wong. Jimmy Wong left USC the same time HL left Berkeley.
	097-098	HL travelled with Jimmy Wong through China while his brother, Fred, stayed back in Canton to take care of their father.
	099-102	HL and his brother would go down to Hong Kong, which is a 110 miles trip from Canton.
4	103-105	Because of HL's background and qualifications, he was placed in the China/Burma/India theatre war.
	106-107	HL can speak Chinese, Spanish, French, and English.
	107-109	He learned these languages because his father had all these ranches and all HL's friends were mostly Spanish speaking.
	110-113	Therefore HL took thirty units of Spanish in college.
	114-116	HL learned just a little French. He had just a couple of years of French.
	117-118	The Chinese was of course natural for him although their family spoke an offshoot dialect.
	119-120	An officer took a liking to HL after six months in basic training.
	120-121	The officer said that HL should have had a better position than he actually held.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	121-123	The officer advised HL to take a test to enter a course at Stanford for a Specialized Training Program.
	124-125	The officer told HL that there would be thirty out of 300 thousand men chosen to take this course and that the officer thought that HL could make it.
	125-129	So HL went before a board of six generals and colonels and they said that they could use HL very handily.
	130-134	HL was placed in a crash program and was told to take a language of his choice. So HL took Chinese since he knew that if he survived the war, he could still make use of the language.
	135-136	There were also other Chinese in the program. There was a man by the name of Sydney Rittenberg who was interviewed by the editors of Sixty Minutes on television a few months ago (before April, 1982). This man was also in the training program along with HL.
	137-139	HL was in a class of thirty men.
	140-141	The men were broken up into two groups. Fifteen men went to the European Theatre of War (E.T.O.) and the other fifteen went to the China Burma Theatre.
5	142-143	HL asked to be shipped out to the China Burma Theatre since he knew more about it than Europe.
	144-145	They decided to send him to Europe instead.
	145-146	HL was sent to the Infantry. The division he was in was attached to General Patton's army.
	147-149	During the summer, their division was training in Manurro at Camp Roberts in Pasa Robles.
	150-151	HL was in the 89th Infantry Division.
	151-152	The French 71st Division was another division selected out of all the divisions to be sent to the jungle.
	153-154	They were sent for jungle warfare in the South Pacific.
	154-159	South Pacific cannot use the army vehicles so their two divisions had to carry everything on their backs -- and on mules.
	160-161	Sydney Rittenburg was a Jewish boy from South Carolina.
	162-163	While they were selecting the thirty men for the course, the soldiers just sat around for two months waiting for orders and Sydney Rittenburg was anxious to get going.
	164-166	Sydney Rittenburg asked the professor what kind of books they were planning to use for the course. The professor informed him that they would be making up their own syllabus for this crash program.
	167-168	The professor was S. Y. Cheng who taught English and Chinese at Stanford.
	168-171	He told Rittenburg that they would be using a five thousand word dictionary for basic thesis, and the rest of the books he would have to make up especially for this course.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	172-173	Meanwhile, Rittenburg learned this five thousand word dictionary by reading and writing out the words. He was a marvel.
	174-175	After the War, Rittenburg stayed in China. He got married and had three children.
	176-178	Rittenburg visited Los Angeles and was interviewed. HL saw it in the newspaper.
	179-181	Rittenburg was interviewed in Peking and HL saw it on Sixty Minutes.
	182-185	Rittenburg took the cameraman and the reporter around China to interview the different people there.
6	186-192	While in the army, the soldiers all had a common goal. Though you may hate the other fellow, you still had to depend on him.
	193-194	In a tight fix in the front lines, he was your buddy.
	195-196	HL's company had a high regard for him. HL was older and more experienced in life and he had a good educational background.
	197-199	His Chinese heritage was overshadowed by his gift to converse with any of these men on a par if not on a higher level.
	200-201	HL felt that 15% of the men in the United States Army could not read or write.
	202-203	HL had to write letters home for the men, including the officers. HL had to write for the officers.
	204-205	HL was quite a stickler for correct spelling.
	205-206	He had to correct the officers' reports and make the necessary corrections before they could submit their reports.
	206-209	Only HL and his brother, Fred, were in the service. HL's other brothers were older.
	210-213	After World War II, HL got out of the service in 1945. VJ day came up while HL was in France.
	214-215	VJ day was in August so HL was in the service for three years.
	216-220	HL decided to close up the store. HL's wife ran it for a while but she could not handle it alone so she locked it up.
	221-226	HL's wife went to visit her sister in San Francisco. They had the Marco Polo Restaurant and Cafe.
7	227-228	HL got a job offer from Gumps which he turned down.
	229-233	He came back to his home town.
	234-235	Concerning possible tension between Caucasians and Chinese, HL felt that the Chinese he met in the army were very well liked.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	236-242	There was one Chinese man from Pittsburgh by the name of Low Yee who could not speak or write English.
	243-247	The officers requested HL to help them interpret when they spoke to Low Yee so that Low Yee could be placed in a position where he did not have to speak the English language.
	248-253	HL spoke to him and learned that Low Yee did not ask to be inducted into the Army or to become a soldier.
	254-258	HL explained to him that he had to take orders or become court martialled or go before a firing squad if he did not listen to orders.
	259-260	Low Yee was from the same village in Toishan as HL's family.
	260-262	Low Yee was concerned that his money was not being sent to his family in China at that time.
	263-264	Learning that he could not send his money to China, he refused to become a soldier, but HL told him that while he was in America, he had to do as his officers told him.
	265-267	Low Yee still refused to become a soldier and said he would sit down as he had been doing the last eight months.
	268-270	The officers could not do anything with him, so they just discharged him.
	271-274	HL acted as an interpreter for Low Yee for just one day.
8	275-280	HL returned to San Luis Obispo and opened the store again. He stocked the store with Chinese merchandise entirely.
	281-283	There was still anti-Japanese sentiment in the area.
	284-285	A Japanese dentist approached HL and said that he would like to open up a practice.
	286-287	The Japanese dentist asked HL if such a plan would be feasible and HL replied that there indeed was a crying need for a dentist in the area.
	288-289	Most of the Japanese and Chinese live in Arroyo Grande. They are farmers.
	290-291	The Japanese dentist opened up a practice in Pismo Beach.
	292-295	He reported to HL about a few rough edges but he was doing very well. He was an excellent doctor and his daughter became a school teacher.
	296-297	They were a very worthwhile family.
	297-300	He was a Nesei.
	301-302	The Japanese in the area were taken away to camps.
	302-305	He had lost his mother when he was one year old.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	306-308	HL and his brother, Fred, had Japanese, Spanish, Mexican, and English mothers taking care of them.
	309-310	Thus they had a very cosmopolitan background.
	311-312	HL felt that everyone should be so lucky.
	313-314	HL felt that there would be less strife in this world today if that were the case.
	315-316	HL said there were other Japanese families in the area that were very well liked.
	316-318	HL's father and the Japanese were very close since they were farmers.
	319-321	Japanese farmers came into the area around 1906.
	322-323	There was a booklet about the Japanese in this area. It was very interesting.
9	324-325	The Chinese and Japanese got along very well. There was a great rapport between the two groups.
	326-331	The children played together too. HL's daughter and the daughter of a Japanese family went to high school and Mills College together.
	332-333	There was a great closeness between the Chinese and the Japanese before the War.
	333-336	There used to be a Japanese family up the corner from the Louis' store. They had a grocery store and a pool room. He had a Japanese picture bride.
	337-338	When HL left Berkeley, their son went to Meiji.
	339-341	HL also has two Japanese friends from Berkeley. One became a doctor and the other one owned a tuna fish cannery.
	342-345	These three friends met the Louis when they took the boat to China back in 1932.
	346-347	In 1931, the Japanese took over Shanghai.
	348-349	There was a lot of anti-Japanese feeling then.
	350-351	When they arrived, the Louis were anxious to get off the boat because their three friends were at the wharf waving to them. They wanted to get off to talk to them.
	352-355	But they could not get off the boat since HL's nephew was a big shot and the secretary in the Nationalist Party. No Chinese were allowed to get off the boat.
	356-361	Nevertheless HL wanted to get off the boat to meet his friends.
	362-364	In the meantime, there was a tour on the boat by some Japanese students. There was a group of Japanese junior high school students that came on board. There were about fifty to sixty students.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	365-366	HL and his brother put on their hats and coats and walked off the boat with these Japanese students.
	367-369	They met their Japanese friends in Yohohama. They hired a taxi cab and took them to Tokyo. Their friends showed them all around Tokyo.
	370-371	They returned to the boat and got back on that night.
	371-375	HL's nephew did not like that too much since he was a big wheel in the Nationalist Party.
	376-377	HL got along very well with the Japanese.
	378-379	HL dated a lot of Japanese in his college days.
	379-381	During the War, a lot of the Japanese were taken to the camps.
10	382-384	They were sent to Manzinar, Colorado, Michigan, Utah.
	385-386	Quite a few of the families came back.
	386-389	HL has a Japanese friend from Delano who was a pharmacist.
	390-391	They imprisoned him in Manzinar.
	391-392	After World War II was over, he came back and dug up a side walk where he had buried \$25,000.
	393-394	It came out in the newspapers.
	395-398	IRS got after him.
	399-400	IRS demanded he pay taxes on the money.
	401-407	There was no Japanese settlement in San Luis Obispo although HL did mention the Japanese store down the street from their own store.
	408-409	There was a Japanese settlement in Guadalupe.
	410-411	Guadalupe is forty miles from San Luis. They were Japanese migrant workers.
	411-413	They raised lettuce, cauliflower, and celery.
	414-418	Although there are a lot of Mexicans there now, the Japanese farmers had great acreage.
	419-420	Some of the Japanese farmers got back all their property when they returned from the camps.
	421-424	HL's brother, Young, had a truck farm.
	425-426	HL was quite young at the time.
	427-429	He was about six or seven years old.
	430-433	There were a lot of workers on the truck farm at that time.
	434-435	The house now is where the truck farm used to be. The house was not built until about 1950.
	436-439	At that time there were great open spaces. There was lots of land available.
	440-441	HL's family did not have any land then to subdivide.
	442-444	An Anhome family from Denmark saw the possibilities and bought up this whole area.



## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
11	445-448	HL's family did not sell the property to them.
	449-452	The original property that belonged to the Louis family was called leased land.
	453-458	There was quite a creek running through here. The Chong family who owned the restaurant would draw it up and catch fish in it.

END OF SIDE A

TAPE 2 SIDE B

1	002-003	When HL returned to San Luis Obispo after the War, he changed some of the merchandise in the store.
	004-005	When HL came back he did not know exactly what to do. People asked for merchandise from the Orient.
	006-007	HL got rid of the groceries and he put in a line of Oriental goods.
	008-009	There was still an anti-Japanese feeling around them.
	009-010	HL put in Chinese things exclusively.
	011-012	The Chinese merchandise held him from 1940 until 1955.
	012-013	Since Chinese goods were not too readily available, HL gradually put in Japanese goods. HL could not get Chinese goods from the Mainland.
	013-014	HL mixed the Chinese and Japanese goods and some of his customers did not like it.
	015-016	His customers were all Caucasians.
	016-017	After the War, there were very few Chinese families.
	018-019	A few Chinese families started to come back but there was nothing much for them to do so they left the area.
	019-021	The Mee Ing Low family and the Ging family operated the Shanghai Low. They bought it out from the previous owner in 1932.
	022-026	The Mee Ing Low has had only one owner since 1950.
	027-028	In 1950, the Louis family owned a whole row of buildings from one side of the street to the other.
	028-029	The city gave orders that they wanted the whole block cleaned off and that the Louis family would have to move.
	030-031	HL did not know about the plans until real late. Hl never attended the council meetings but this plan was coming along.
	031-032	They were going to wipe out the whole block and make a Civic Center out of it.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	032-033	The area would be used for all city and county offices.
	034-035	They also needed the whole block for parking spaces.
	036-037	They told Young that he had to sell the property off or they would have to condemn it.
	037-038	They scared Young into selling off a portion of it.
	038-039	The rest of the property depended on the the outcome of a council meeting that night.
	040-041	HL attended the council meeting that night. No one wanted to protest.
	041-042	HL had just got back from the army fighting the Germans.
	043-044	The mayor and two of the councilmen went to high school with HL.
	044-045	The mayor asked if anyone at the meeting had any comments.
	045-046	HL said that he did have a comment.
	046-048	HL mentioned that he was in the front lines and that he got a medal for killing, including the Germans. So HL could protect his home and his property.
	049-050	HL said he never thought of coming home and having his old school mates taking his property away from him.
	051-052	They got together and asked HL if he had any complaints. HL said that he did.
	052-056	A councilman approached him at 3:32 p.m. on April 4th and said that if HL did not sell to them, they would condemn the property and give him what they thought it was worth which was \$110 a front foot. HL's building was 25 foot wide and they would have given him about \$2,800 for the whole property.
	057-058	HL felt that the price did not sound right for HL was going to give up his home, his property, his business, and his whole livelihood.
	058-059	HL said that the bargain and the threats of the Council did not sound like America to him.
	060-064	The mayor told HL that if HL would tear down the old buildings on his property, they would let him keep his property, otherwise they would condemn it.
	065-066	HL replied to the mayor that he would tear down the buildings if the mayor would tear down the Bucket of Blood which was a saloon next to the biggest hotel downtown -- they were on the same block. The place was overrun with winos.
3	067-068	HL added that that building was condemned ten years before and asked why it was still standing.
	069-070	The councilmen got in a huddle and the purchase of Ah Louis' property was soon forgotten.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	070-071 071-072	HL did not know what the reason was for the change of plans. He found out later that the property was owned by the City Attorney -- that is, the property that was condemned ten years before.
	073-075	There were no other Chinese property owners.
	076-077	The Chong family property had been sold off.
	078-079	Chinatown was a blight to them.
	079-080	They felt they could wipe it out in this manner -- "the heck with the Chinese."
	081-082	HL did not think that they could shut him off the map like that.
	082-085	A radio owner, an Italian boy, had a run in with the city. He put on a Noon News and related the story about the city approaching HL and saying that HL had to "sell or else."
	086-087	All the people that heard the new broadcast item called City Hall and gave them heck.
	088-090	The people told City Hall that they could not do this to the Louis family because they had so many friends.
	091-092	There were so many complaints to City Hall that the radio station put that same program on for three days straight.
	093-094	A week later, the district attorney sent the constable down to HL and told him that the district attorney wanted to see him.
	094-096	HL asked what the district attorney wanted and the constable said that he did not know, but that HL had better go and see him anyway. HL went to see the district attorney who happened to be the last engineer on the P. C. Railway.
	097-098	The district attorney said he hated to call HL up there for what HL said.
	099-100	He said to HL that if what HL said was not true, then HL would be sued for libel and slander by the City Council.
	101-103	District attorney asked HL to tell him his end of the story. They were going to record it and play it back to the grand jury.
4	104-105	The district attorney added that if what HL said was not true, he was "going to get it."
	105-106	HL replied, "Ok, let's go. It's my life to lose here if I don't. Let's record it."
	106-107	HL was asked if what HL claimed the City Council said was really what they said to him.
	108-109	On his way to Church, HL was accosted by the mayor one afternoon.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	110-113	A week before the meeting, HL made a picture frame that hung in the mayor's office.
	114-123	The mayor asked HL if Bill Hall actually said those things to HL that afternoon. HL confirmed the mayor's suspicions. The mayor replied, "Oh God. He is stupid for saying that." and he went on to Church.
	124-131	HL knew all the rules and regulations because he took up commercial law in the eighth grade.
	132-134	The city council wanted HL's side, not the other side, of the block.
	135-137	The city townspeople got behind HL. He had over a thousand phone calls.
	138-139	The mayor was coming up for elections four months from then, and wanted to make a big deal out of the construction project.
5	140-144	The buildings on the other side of the block are of later construction.
	145-146	There were no Chinese architects involved in their construction.
	147-148	The Louis' first store was located there.
	149-150	In 1882, HL's father felt that they were outgrowing the previous store, so they built a new building.
	151-154	HL still has the contract which was written on a calling card.
	155-157	They picked up the old store building bodily and put it on the empty lot.
	158-163	The Carpenters Union Hall on the corner directly across from the Louis store used to be a residence owned by a constable. The constable passed away and his mother sold the lot, so the owner of the Carpenter's Hall built plans for the new office building.
	164-167	In those days there was no such thing as Chinese architects.
	168-172	The rear end of the new building was three inches onto the Louis property and the planners proposed to give HL a little bit on the drawing of the plans.
	173-180	Mee Ing Low was the owner who had just bought the property at that time, in the 1950's. HL refused their offer to pay him for being on his property. HL insisted that they tear down that side of the new building.
6	181-188	At that time, the Shanghai Low was a garage. It was converted to a restaurant when the garage owner had to move from Young's property.
	189-192	The owner then rented it out to Shanghai Low's owner, George Chin. That happened around 1951. The owner has to move again now.

## Contents (cont'd)

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	193-194	The city will be building a tri-level parking arcade in the area from Shanghai Low up to Morro Street at the far corner.
	194-199	All the buildings in that area have to be removed.
	200-204	They had just bought the property four years ago. There is a parking lot next to the Shanghai Low. Then there is a building on the corner that used to be a garage and is now a pharmacy.
	205-208	HL established most of his contacts with firms in San Francisco, rather than in Los Angeles.
	209-211	There was no Chinatown in Los Angeles at that time.
	212-217	San Francisco Chinatown was always a big area. HL bought about 90% of his Chinese merchandise in San Francisco. The stores in Los Angeles bought where HL bought so HL could not buy too much from them.
	218-219	HL visited Los Angeles to see the shows. His family was pretty close to show business.
	220-223	HL worked back stage in Vaudeville days. He was a projectionist. HL appreciated the plays and productions at this time.
7	224-230	They had the only Chinese stage crew in America -- his brothers, Fred, Young, and himself, and Stella's brother, Roy Chandler.
	231-234	They were qualified to completely run their own theatre in San Luis Obispo.
	235-236	They bought most of the merchandise for their store with import firms in San Francisco.
	236-237	The only importer in Los Angeles that they dealt with was Kwan Kwan which was a China dry goods owned by T. Y. Chen.
	237-245	It was a big Shanghai firm. The Kwan Kwan carried a lot of brass ware.
	246-247	HL worked in the office with T. Y. Chen.
	248-252	T. Y. Chen asked HL to help him select merchandise from China as T. Y. Chen did not know what the American public wanted.
	253-256	HL stated that all the merchandise he brought back from China, all the townspeople wanted to buy.
	257-260	HL made trips to Los Angeles Chinatown frequently.
	261-267	There was a George Washington Market area, near the train station in Old Chinatown.
	268-269	They had no friends or relatives in the Los Angeles area.
	269-270	They knew the actress, Anna Mae Wong, and her family.

Interviewee: Howard Louis

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Contents (cont'd)

Tape: 2 Side B

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7	270-272	Los Angeles Chinese were few and far between the Louis family.
	273-274	They spell the surname "Louie" now, not like HL's surname which is "Louis." The Louis family did not deal with the Louie Produce Market which came later.
8	275-281	Louie family were in the produce business and the Louis family were in the fruit business.

END OF TAPE 2

END OF INTERVIEW

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