

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Wong Young Louis
 Chinese Name: 黃長慶
 Dates of Interview: 4/22/82, 4/23/82
 and 4/24/82
 Interviewers: John Yee & Suellen Cheng
 Others Present: _____
 Language: English
 Summarizer: Suellen Cheng

Interview Number: 158
 Number of Tapes: 6
 Length: 6 Hours & 18 Minutes

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1 Side A</u>
1	012-018 019-031	Wong Young Louis (WYL) prefers to be called Cholly. WYL's father came from Canton, China. Mother was born in San Francisco.	
2	032-038 039-042 043-053 054-063 064-066	Father came when he was sixteen years old in 1866. He first went to Corvallis, Oregon, for two or three years. Father started working in the store at first, then he looked for gold. It took WYL's father about a week to travel from Gilroy to San Luis Obispo. Father struck a gold mine --- which got him \$400 per ton of gold in Le Panza. Father cooked for a mission. Father was at San Miguel.	
3	067-077 078-094	Father traveled by mule. Father cooked for the mission for about a year or so. Then he went down to San Luis Obispo because of his asthma.	
4	095-112 113-125 126-132	Father went down south as far as San Diego but he remembered the weather in San Luis Obispo was best for him, so he settled in San Luis Obispo. Father landed in San Luis Obispo in 1868. He found a job in Port San Luis (it was called Port Hartford then). Father worked for Captain John Hartford as a cook. Father's name was Wong Oan.	
5	133-155 156-181	John Hartford gave WYL's father the name Ah Luis or Ah Louis. Family used Louis as surname, but always keep "Wong" in the name.	

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	182-187	Captain John Hartford wanted to build a railroad from San Luis to Avila and asked Ah Luis to recruit some Chinese railroad workers to help him.
	188-198	Santa Maria Railway Company later built a railroad from San Luis to Arroyo Grande, Santa Maria, later ended at Los Olivos.
	199-208	Father had 150 to 160 Chinese laborers working for the railroad in Port Hartford.
	209-225	Father had over 300 to 400 laborers who worked for the building of the railroad from San Luis to Los Olivos. It was a narrow gauge.
7	226-231	From 1884 to 1894, the Chinese cut through eight tunnels.
	232-238	Ah Luis made ten cents per head each day from these railroad workers.
	239-242	The railroad workers got paid \$1.35 a day.
	243-262	Chinatown did not come in until the narrow gauge was built. There was not many Chinese families, mostly bachelors.
	263-269	Chinese were hired by ranchers as cooks.
8	270-277	A cook in the 19th Century washed clothes, babysat, beside cooking.
	278-289	Father built houses to house the Chinese who were out of work or the ones who worked in town and needed a place to stay.
	290-298	Father had a wooden store on the corner of Palm and Chorro. He provided room and board in the store.
	299-310	Father worked as an employment agency.
9	311-327	Father hired a cook to cook in the store in order to provide meals to the Chinese boarders.
	328-341	Ah Luis' store sold general merchandise and Chinese herbs. There was also a storage space for the herbs.
	342-358	Father acted as a herbalist.
	359-375	Father had a Chinese clerk who did all the Chinese writing (prescriptions).
10	376-388	Father's assistant helped to prepare the Chinese drug.
	389-398	Father had a person who took care of the horse, and he sometimes took the family to the beach on the horse buggy.
	399-405	Father had a Chinese working for him in the brick yard.
	406-420	In 1920, father had eight seed farms and hired Chinese to farm the land.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
10	421-440	After the completion of Southern Pacific Railroad, a lot of the Chinese laborers were idle and stayed in San Luis. They later worked in the brick yards and the seed farms.
11	441-446	Ah Luis Store was built in 1874.
	447-457	In 1884, the construction of the railroad from Crystal Bay to San Luis was completed.
	458-466	The original Ah Luis Store was built in wood.
	467-479	In order to protect the family, father moved the old wooden store from where Mee Hing Low (美香樓) stands today to across the street.
	480-485	Father used the bricks from his own brick yard a built the new Ah Luis Store.

END OF SIDE A

TAPE 1 SIDE B

1	014-016	Ah Luis Store carried canned goods, Chinese black beans, salted fish, salted eggs, han dan (鹹蛋), rice shipped in from San Francisco.
	017-022	The customers to Ah Luis Store were mainly Chinese.
2	023-033	There were some American patients who came for the Chinese herbs.
	034-048	WYL was amazed that the Chinese herbalists were never real doctors but still had such knowledge of Chinese herb medicines.
3	049-073	Ah Luis caterd mainly to the Chinese. Chinese in San Luis were tightly knitted together. Father sold silk handkerchiefs, Chinese shoes with embroidery, not only to the Chinese families but also to the Caucasians as gifts.
	074-099	That is why the Ah Luis Store later became the gift shop. WYL did not know why his father started the brick yards, but he did know that the San Luis courthouse, Round House, Andrew Hotel, and other buildings, were all built by the bricks from his father's brick yard.
4	100-107	Some of these brick buildings are still standing and in use today.
	108-121	WYL's house, 0350 Lincoln Avenue, is the location where Ah Luis' brick yard used to be.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	122-129	Later, because of the exhaustion of the clay, WYL's father moved the brick yard to a new location in between San Luis Mountain and Bishop Peak.
	130-133	Ah Luis probably had the first brick yard for about eighteen to twenty years.
5	134-143	WYL described his visit to the brick yard.
	144-155	WYL was born in 1893. When he was eight or nine years old he would walk to the brick yard to watch Chinese work.
	156-159	There was not more than ten or fifteen workers in the brick yard at one time.
	160-170	The Chinese brick yard workers had a bunk house with a kitchen, dining hall, and they hired a Chinese cook.
	171-176	The bunk house was right on the brick yard.
	177-182	WYL thought the Chinese brick yard workers made not more than \$1.00 or \$1.25 a day.
6	183-193	WYL's father would charge a little over a penny for each brick.
	194-208	Father ran the brickyard for over twenty years.
	209-222	Father's seed farms were in full bloom during the Depression, in 1933.
7	223-235	During World War I, WYL's father grew long white bean in eight seed farms for the United States Navy.
	236-248	WYL spent about seven years in the farm as the time keeper.
	249-256	In 1913, WYL worked in the theatre while he went to Cal Poly.
	257-266	Father had 200 to 250 workers during harvest time.
	267-274	WYL recruited the workers from the saloon or the pool room in town.
8	275-280	The workers were of different nationalities -- Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese, etc.
	281-316	There were eight seed farms: Camp San Luis Obispo, 4½ miles north of town; Chinese Garden, near the heart of town; Sun My Load (三哩路), Three Miles South; two in Edna, Six Miles, Lou My Load (六哩路) which were about 120 acres.
9	317-331	There were two more seed farms in Santa Maria, in the Oso Flaco Valley, and the last one in Guadalupe.
	332-336	Seed farms grew vegetable seeds and flower seeds.
	337-338	WYL worked mostly in the Edna farm.

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	339-355	At one time, the Edna farm had over two hundred varieties of sweet pea.
	356-366	Father had different foremen -- Mexican, Japanese, Irish, managing the different farms.
	367-377	Father was called the Mayor of Chinatown.
10	378-394	Father was the arbiter in Chinatown.
	395-421	There were no tong disputes in San Luis.
	422-427	When the official of the Chinese Freemason arrived in town, the whole town became quiet.
	428-432	The Chinese name of Chinese Freemason is Gee Kung Tong (致公堂).
11	433-449	WYL belonged to the local mason, King David Lodge.
	450-468	WYL joined the Chinese Freemason in Taiwan through his brother-in-law's introduction. His brother-in-law is the secretary of the Pacific Area Mason.
	469-473	WYL is also a member of the San Luis Chinese Freemason Lodge, the third degree.

END OF TAPE 1

TAPE 2 SIDE A

1	012-020	WYL is a member of two lodges of Gee Kung Tong (致公堂).
2	021-041	Chinese provisions came to San Luis by ship. They arrived at Port Hartford, then transferred to the narrow gauge rail to San Luis, then transferred to the freight wagon before the turn of the century.
	042-053	Most Chinese laborers came from San Francisco to work in San Luis.
	054-059	Father never mentioned Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, but he did talk about San Diego.
	060-067	Father was a cook in San Diego.
3	068-073	Father was considered the founder of San Luis Chinatown.
	074-083	Father was highly respected by both the Chinese and the Caucasians.
	084-092	WYL thought that his father was remarkable since he was able to participate in so many projects.
4	093-108	Father was not fluent in English, but knew how to swear very well. Maybe that is how he was able to get along with the workmen.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	109-126	About the turn of the century, the Chinese population grew to 800 in San Luis. San Luis Chinatown was a busy Chinatown.
	127-129	WYL does not remember any group trying to run the Chinese out of business, except in one instance.
	130-135	There were three Chinese laundries in town, there was a Caucasian steam laundry that tried to run the Chinese one out, but it did not work.
	136-137	People still used the Chinese laundry and the steam laundry went out of business in the end.
5	138-149	Chinese laundries were in different locations in town.
	150-155	The last Chinese laundry WYL recalled was operating around 1909.
	156-170	There were five to ten men working in the Chinese laundry.
	171-181	There has been no Chinese laundries in San Luis since 1909.
6	182-191	There were only two Chinese families with children in San Luis at the turn of the century.
	192-205	Aside from the Louis family, there was a Gin family across the street.
	206-213	There were two Wong families without children. One was a priest and his wife who managed the Chinese Joss house.
	214-225	The Joss house building was occupied by the Joss house and the Chinese Freemason.
7	226-232	WYL was afraid to inquire his father about the secret society, thus he does not know whether his father was a member or not.
	233-240	Most of them were men, working hard.
	241-247	WYL heard so much about these Chinese men talking about going back to China to get married, but did not know how many actually did go back.
	248-260	Chinese men repeatedly talked about making enough money and then returning to China to live like a king and queen with their own people (Chinese).
	261-264	Father managed the store until he died.
265-272	During the Depression of the 1930's, father lost everything in terms of ranching.	
8	273-276	Chinese could not purchase property, so WYL's father leased the farmland.
	277-283	Father managed to purchase the property of Ah Luis Store before the law (Alien Land Act?) was passed.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	284-305	Father also owned the property across the street from Ah Luis Store.
	306-321	Father sold the brick yard to Ogioli (?) family to use as a slaughter house.
9	322-328	Father monopolized the brick business since his was the only one around.
	329-355	Later, after WYL's father sold the brick yard, there was only one brick yard named San Luis Brick Company which was sold three years ago (in 1979).
	356-359	Chinese population gradually dropped around 1912, 1914, and 1916.
	360-380	The younger Chinese generation moved to the big cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento.
10	381-404	Father's brick yard closed down in 1913.
	405-410	There were not many new businesses in Chinatown for the Chinese workers from the brick yard. The old establishment, like the store, the gambling houses, and others, ran for years and years without change.
	411-443	One Chinese restaurant is owned by the Gin family.
11	444-452	The restaurant owner did not speak Chinese, the business catered to Chinese people only.
	453-465	One of the grandsons of the Gin family ran the candy store.
	466-470	WYL's definition of a family is a husband, a wife and children.
	471-474	There were two Chinese families, plus four or five couples, and the rest of the Chinese population were all men.
	475-481	Only when they were invited would WYL and his family go to the Chinese restaurant.
END OF SIDE A		

TAPE 2 SIDE B

1	005-010	The capacity of the Chinese restaurant was twenty to thirty.
	011-013	The back of the restaurant was the living quarters of the Gin family -- it was quite crowded.
	014-020	The restaurant served Cantonese food, such as Hom Yu Gin Jue. Yok Bian (鹹魚蒸猪肉餅).

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	021-033	The restaurant served simple family cooking, there were no banquet dinners in the early days.
	034-048	During the Chinese New Year, WYL's father invited all his Chinese friends to eat at the Ah Luis Store and at gin's place. He made it a community affair.
	049-059	For special occasions, the kitchen was in the wooden building next door. For family cooking, there was a small kitchen upstairs in the store.
	060-064	Chinese liquor and tofu (豆腐) were shipped in from San Francisco.
3	065-095	Bean sprouts and tofu (豆腐) were made locally by Chinese. Underneath the Joss House there were two stores that sold general foods, some of which were made locally. WYL counted two other stores.
4	096-105	WYL described the Joss House.
	106-111	Chinese worship several gods.
	112-125	WYL's family had a Shin Hian (神龕), an altar where the family members could go and pray.
5	126-144	Brother had his own god, dark face with three eyes, in another Joss house.
6	145-187	Mother was kind, soft-spoken person who devoted herself to all her eight children and never went out. First and only time WYL's mother went out was when she dressed in American clothes and went to visit her American lady friend, Mrs. Casroll, just a half block away from her house in 1910.
	188-199	
	200-212	WYL never knew his mother's relatives in San Francisco.
7	213-247	The only relative WYL knew was his mother's brother, Lee Fong Nam.
	248-253	WYL's parents got married in 1888 or 1889.
	254-255	Mother passed away at the age of 54.
	256-275	Mother's name is 銀鶯 (Silver Dove).
8	276-291	Mother had a Spanish nurse maid.
	292-298	Father came from Lung On, Oak Gong.
	299-317	Father was very well-to-do and built a school for the younger children in China.
9	318-341	Father went back to China in 1933 and was disappointed to see that the school was not well kept.

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	342-347 348-357 358-375	The school was probably built after World War I. Father might have returned to China three or four times. Father always visited China alone, except the last time when he went back to China with his two youngest sons, Howard and Fred.
10	376-397 398-403 404-405	Father put up a big banquet for the relatives and friends in the village -- there were about two thousand people. The bandits heard that this wealthy man was returning from Gold Mountain and planned to rob him Father and brothers heard the news and escaped to Hong Kong the night of the banquet.

END OF TAPE 2

TAPE 3 SIDE A

1&2	021-052	WYL's father did not prepare to return to the United States after his last visit to China, so he did not have a passport to come back.
3	052-076 077-090 091-092 093-100	WYL described father's last visit to China. WYL's father decided to leave China for Hong Kong. Father was well-known in San Luis, so when he needed some papers to prove that he was a resident in San Luis, WYL obtained a letter from the Superior Judge and the Governor Warren to help his father. WYL and his brothers gathered 1600 affidavits for his father. His father waited in Hong Kong for a month or so.
4	101-111 112-125 126-133	Father came back to the United States -- with a beard. Father dreamed that WYL's mother told him that all the great people grew beards, so his father decided to grow his beard. Father still stayed in the store, with the help of WYL and his brothers. WYL's brother, Fred, retired as a colonel after serving for twenty years.
5	134-146 147-153 154-176	WYL helped his father during the day time and worked in the theatre in the evening. Father passed away while WYL and his wife were in Chicago visiting their sister. Father passed away in 1936.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
6	177-189	Father started thinking about farming to place his workmen who got out of the railroad work and other construction.
	190-194	Father started growing potatoes and onions, etc. in hundreds of acres.
	195-201	Chinese were not supposed to buy land, so WYL's father leased the land.
	202-203	Also, since the Chinese hoped to make a fortune in the United States and then return to China, the Chinese did not buy land.
	204-222	An acre of land cost about \$7 in the old days. Father did not have much money so what he did was go to the bank to borrow the money.
7	223-242	Father also went to the butcher and bought the meat without paying for it until harvest time. The butcher trusted WYL's father.
	243-258	Everybody in town trusted each other. Everybody knew Ah Louis.
8	259-277	Father expanded his seed farms to eight farms and had connections with some seed companies, such as Northrop, King, Minneapolis, and seed companies from Los Angeles and San Francisco.
	278-296	Father sold the seeds by the hundred of pounds to the seed companies for them to package.
9	297-327	WYL was amazed by his father's ability to contact these various companies. By word of mouth, people came to Ah Luis for seeds.
10	328-386	Ah Luis also grew seeds for the company from West Germany and Australia.
	387-400	If the crops were not good and therefore not enough to fulfill the orders, father would go to other farms -- sometimes as far as Los Angeles and Santa Monica.
	401-430	WYL would go with his father to the different farms to look for extra seeds, around the turn of the century.
	431-434	WYL and his father visited Apablaza Street in Los Angeles Chinatown. There were many Wongs in Los Angeles Chinatown.
11	435-449	WYL visited Elysian Park, West Lake Park, and Baldwin Park.
	450-451	Los Angeles Chinatown's central street was Los Angeles Street.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
11	452-475	WYL drove his father from farm to farm and served as an interpreter for his father.
	476-483	WYL drove either the horse buggy or the Ford Model T around Los Angeles.
END OF SIDE A		
<u>TAPE 3 SIDE B</u>		
1	009-015	When the Union Station was built, Chinese had to move out of Old Chinatown and New Chinatown was built.
	016-030	Chinatown was not concentrated in one area. There was a market area on Central and Third Street.
2	031-051	Eastman Kodak Company proposed to put out \$11.5 million to build a Chinatown with a wall around it. Chinese refused the offer.
	052-053	WYL remembered that at least three or four gambling places existed in San Luis Chinatown.
	054-062	Gamblers moved from place to place for different games.
3	063-073	Gambling houses were situated in the northwest & the south-east sides of Palm Street. People would also play cards at Ah Luis Store. Father would buy the food to feed the gamblers in the morning.
	074-079	
	080-093	Gamblers played even in the front room of the store.
	094-099	Gamblers played pai gao (牌九) and fan tan (翻攤).
4	100-112	Only men gambled. The idle working people or the farmers came for a night to gamble.
	113-123	When the gamblers played, they mostly drank tea. Some drank Chinese liquor, but they seldom got drunk.
	124-133	WYL felt that Chinese knew when to stop when they had enough to drink.
5	134-144	Father had someone cook for the gamblers sometimes.
	145-149	Few of the stores set a room aside especially for gambling.
	150-172	There was an opium den that WYL remembers.
	173-181	WYL described the activities in the opium den, the preparation procedures of the opium den operators.
6	182-205	Opium smokers laid on a mat with a block as a pillow.
	206-213	WYL described the way they smoked.
	214-226	There were four to six beds in an opium den.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	227-242	There were Caucasian prostitutes operating their business in Chinatown.
	243-258	There were very few Chinese women in town.
8	259-277	Once for a great while, there were non-Chinese gambling with the Chinese.
	278-295	There were not many other Asians in town. Only Chinese, Mexicans, Spanish, and Portuguese.
	296-300	WYL was born in 1893.
9	301-339	WYL and his seven brothers and sisters were all born in the upstairs of Ah Luis Store.
	340-342	There were six rooms upstairs: the kitchen, parent's bedroom, altar, two sets of bedrooms (large room for the youngest children and the small room for the older children).
	343-349	American doctor took care of WYL's mother when she gave birth to WYL's brothers and sisters.
	350-362	When WYL was born, there was a midwife.
	363-371	WYL was amazed by his mother's ability to communicate with her Spanish speaking maid.
	372-380	WYL also was amazed by his father's ability to manage the business with his limited English.
10	381-392	WYL attended grammar school up to the sixth grade.
	393-395	The principal would not let WYL go to the seventh grade.
	396-416	There were two grammar schools: Mission School and Court School. WYL attended the latter.
	417-439	Court School is a combination of grammar school and high school, all in a two-story building.
11	440-460	WYL got mad at his principal because he did not want to attend the summer school the principal ran. Because of WYL's refusal, the principal did not promote WYL to high school.
	461-467	WYL worked for his father in the farm and never got any pay.
	468-480	He quit farming and went to work as a dishwasher for eight months at the Andrew's Hotel in the heart of the town.

END OF TAPE 3

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	014-016	WYL was promoted as a second cook in the hotel.
2	017-038	He did not like the new cook, plus the fact that it was a long hour job as a cook. WYL quit the job from the hotel. Hotel work is no different from farm work in terms of the number of hours involved.
	039-041	WYL then became a janitor in the theatre.
	042-052	He did not have "Chinaman's chance" to become a projectionist in Elms Theatre which was a very nice theatre.
	053-063	San Luis Obispo was the middle point between San Francisco and Los Angeles, therefore, they were fortunate to have road shows stop and perform on the theatre stage for a whole week.
	064-066	Theatre also showed the silent movies.
3	067-070	In 1913 WYL started working in the theatre. He worked in the hotel for eight months.
	071-077	WYL worked in the farm for seven years.
	078-087	During World War II, Mary Island Navy Base had a lot of job openings. The old theatre projectionist left the job for a new position in the shipyard which paid \$11 an hour. So WYL got a chance to become a projectionist after three days of training.
	088-099	It was an ideal job for WYL because he knew it would enable him to do the work when he got old. WYL, at the age of 89, is still working in the theatre today.
4	100-133	WYL's curiosity about the projector room was described. He stood on a chair and peeked in. He accidentally turned on the machine. It was a scary experience.
5	134-149	In order to understand more about electrical equipment, WYL attended Poly Technique College.
	150-169	WYL was drafted but did not serve in the army because he worked in the farm at that time.
6	170-189	The vice president of Cal Poly admitted WYL to Cal Poly's G.I. class.
	190-195	In the morning, WYL attended the class while in the afternoon he worked in the theatre.
	196-203	He walked to school from home everyday. WYL graduated in 1923 and got a degree in Electrical Engineering.
	204-218	There was no one else that could take the projectionist job except WYL in San Luis at that time. Therefore he was hired.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
7	219-234	WYL's friend remarked that WYL "had a white man's job," which might have implied that the projectionist job was a good position and WYL took the good position from the white man.
	235-244	WYL got \$12 a week as a janitor in the theatre, and \$15 a week as a projectionist.
	245-250	For seven years, WYL never had a day off.
	251-264	WYL was married in 1912. His father was not paying WYL a cent for working in the farm but he was paying all the bills for WYL and his wife. WYL decided to find a job and stand on his own feet.
	265-271	The theatre had 925 seats and quite often it was full.
	272-274	It cost 25 to 35 cents to go to the movies.
8&9	275-330	WYL had a title as a stage manager who had hiring power. He hired only enough help to help put on the different shows. Help included electricians, stage hands, and propmen.
	331-364	WYL did not get much money for being a manager. Sometimes he would put up the whole show for fifty cents. WYL would get free help to build up the show. The help got the thrill of putting up the show in the first place. Then the free beer WYL offered them after putting up the show became a treat to them.
10	365-389	WYL was a janitor and a stage manager at the same time in the early years. After he graduated from college, he gave up the janitorial job and concentrated on the projectionist job as well as being a stage manager, for 22 years.
	390-416	Gradually the theatre paid the stage help a dollar, a dollar and a half, or two dollars. Later the stage help got \$8.50 to \$10.00 (for each show). At the time, WYL's salary would increase to \$85 a week as a projectionist during the mid 1930's.
	417-430	During the 1930's, WYL also made posters for the theatre.
11	431-450	WYL had the privilege to give tickets to the stores which gave WYL window space for advertising the new shows.
	451-474	By making posters, WYL made an extra \$25 to \$30 a week. WYL got about four times what an ordinary grocery clerk was making.
	475-479	WYL's father always bragged about WYL's ability to work in the theatre.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
11	480-486	WYL's father loved the shows and got into the theatre for free. Father would give out Chinese candies.
END OF SIDE A		
<u>TAPE 4 SIDE B</u>		
1&2	001-052	WYL also played with the radio. He used a six wire antenna on the top of the store. The engineer thought WYL was smart and understood the international code -- WYL was actually just faking. The engineer from New Jersey offered WYL a job working in a television factory.
	053-061	As an electrical engineer, WYL did not accept the job because he was getting very good pay in the theatre. He would not like to give up the projectionist and poster maker jobs and go to New Jersey for something he was not familiar with.
3	062-078	WYL was not aware of any other Oriental students at Poly Technique, except for his sister, Helen, and his brother, Fred. The three of them were all later selected as the Alumnus of the Year.
	079-089	WYL's instructor, Dr. Wilder, was very nice to him. When he passed away, WYL set up a memorial fund and collected several thousand dollars.
	090-098	Dr. Wilder was the one who taught WYL how to rewind a motor from a fractional horse power to a ten horse power motor.
	099-102	Sometimes it took WYL four days to get the equation for rewinding the motors.
4	103-108	Dr. Wilder advised him that it was not necessary to do the dirty work himself because he felt that WYL was capable of directing other people to do the job.
	109-129	WYL loved the school very much. He graduated from the Electrical Engineering Department. There were only seventeen of them in the graduating class. Now there are 3500 graduates every year.
	130-137	WYL loved to decorate the hall and other places for special occasions such as the ball.
5	138-148	A professor from the Engineering Department came out with the idea having the Poly Royal in 1932, fifty years ago. It entails an open house for everybody.
	149-164	At the beginning there was no budget. Everyone chipped in a few dollars. WYL decorated the hall. They decided to select a queen. WYL used a cake box to make a crown for the queen.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	165-176	They did not have girls in Poly Technique, so they selected a girl from high school and crowned her. From then on WYL took pictures of the queens every year and enlarged them and hand colored them.
6	177-184	The first queen's name was Jean Hordon. Her father was a professor of a university in Sacramento.
	185-204	Whenever an event came up at the school, WYL would help the school by decorating and taking pictures.
	205-211	Today there are about 100 thousand visitors to the Poly Royal week.
7	212-227	In the later years, there were Chinese students attending Polytechnic from Taiwan and Hong Kong, starting about thirty years ago.
	228-234	The Chinese Students Club celebrated the events for about thirty years.
	235-265	Chinese students never asked for help. WYL and his wife thought that they wanted to help the students to break their fear of coming to this new country and be among strangers. WYL and his wife wanted to be friendly to them and make them feel at ease. Therefore, WYL and his wife joined them in their meetings and gave them advice, and helped them in different areas.
8	266-319	On Chinese New Year, the Chinese students put up the banquet as public relations. From that they thought of the Lion Dance for the festivities. The complete outfit of the Lion including the head and gongs, etc. was ordered. WYL gave \$250 to match the funds they had and obtained the Lion Dance outfit. It was the first outfit. Since then it was always a hit.
9	320-329	The Chinese students from Fresno, Santa Barbara, Phoenix, and Colorado, would invite the Poly Chinese students to perform there.
	330-335	Today the Chinese students are the owners of three Lion Dance outfits.
	336-344	Chinese Students Club is one of the largest student organizations on campus. Last year they made about \$4000 in the affair.
	345-358	WYL is on the Board of Directors of the Poly Alumni Association. WYL has been on the Board for about fifteen years.

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	359-368	WYL goes to the board meetings about twice a year. He is the only board member that is Chinese.
	369-380	In the early days WYL was the secretary of the Alumni Association. He held that position for seven years.
10	381-444	WYL is trying to organize the Chinese Chapter in the Alumni Association. Three years ago WYL set up a meeting for thirty Chinese alumni but only nineteen showed up.
11	445-452	WYL is still working on the Chinese Chapter.
	453-478	There were about fifteen to twenty Chinese students that graduate from Polytechnic every year.
	479-486	Before World War II, there were no Oriental students on campus. If there were, WYL would not know because he mingled mostly with the Caucasians.

END OF TAPE 4

TAPE 5 SIDE A

1	004-010	Introduction.
	011-020	WYL's bought the property where the Ah Louis is up to Palm Street toward City Hall and the courthouse before the law restricted Chinese from purchasing any property under his own name.
2	021-034	Father was never declared as an American citizen. The sentiment against the Chinese was great at that time. Otherwise, WYL's father would have become a citizen. Father was accustomed to the American way.
	035-039	Father was highly respected.
	040-052	Father did not engage in any Caucasian gatherings. Although Caucasians were friendly to WYL's father, he was never invited to their events. But father was never molested.
	053-065	WYL heard that in Arroyo Grande, Chinese wanted to open a laundry but was scared away. So there was no Chinese in Arroyo Grande.
3&4	066-107	WYL remembers only one instance where Caucasian children and an old Chinese man had unpleasant exchanges. The children often teased this old Chinese man who did nothing but sit around in Chinatown. They would call him "Wey Lei, Wey Lei," because when the old Chinese man was angry he would chase the children away and say, "Wey Lei, Wey Lei, Dai Sei Nei" (回來回來, 打死你) which means "If you come back I will kill you."

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3&4	108-118	When WYL quit the job in the farm, he handed over the job to another foreman.
	119-128	None of WYL's brothers liked the farm work. Actually, WYL was the only one who took part in the farm work. His brothers Walter and George helped out in the farm once in a while for a couple of days during their break from school.
5	129-152	WYL described farm life. He got up at 2:30 or 3:00 a.m. to feed the stocks, the horses, have breakfast. Then he worked in the field. WYL could plant the beans or other crops in very straight long lines. The field was twelve to fifteen acres.
	153-180	WYL used the thresher to separate the bean seeds, wheat, barley, etc. WYL was very good at threshing.
6	181-187	The family farms mainly flower seeds.
	188-191	WYL also worked along with the other workers. When WYL was overseeing a group of laborers, he did not work that much but watched them work and kept track of their work.
	192-200	The farmers got paid by the day. Sometimes they worked eight hours, sometimes ten hours.
	201-216	In the old days, the farmers did not complain about the long hours because they knew it was hard work. They worked according to the necessity. Sometimes they worked in the dark.
217-225	Usually there were only three workers in the farm. When it was harvest season, they would hire more help.	
7	226-235	In the lower part of the season the workers would do odd jobs such as repainting the tools, rewiring the fences, etc.
	236-244	It was possible that a common laborer would sit around town waiting for a job when there was no need for farm help.
	245-256	Father left WYL to make his own decisions. Maybe because he was the oldest son -- although he was scolded sometimes.
	257-265	Father scolded WYL's brothers and sisters quite a bit. Some of the children were quite radical and did things that they should not do.
266-273	WYL did not mean they were radical in the sense that they would harm other people. They just did things wrong.	
8	274-278	Father let each child choose his or her own vocation.
	279-294	WYL left the farm and worked in the hotel as his first paying job. Although father was quite well-to-do, WYL

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
8	279-294	was too proud to even ask for a nickle. WYL never asked his father for any money. What WYL earned was what he worked for.
	295-324	When WYL worked for the hotel and became a second cook, he always thought the work hours were just as bad a working in the farm. So he dreamed that he could do something not heavy periodically when he gets old. So he left the hotel job.
9	325-348	WYL worked in 1913. Afterwards he worked in the theatre as a janitor for a few months. Then he became a projectionist.
	349-376	WYL also went into the candy and soda fountain business next to the theatre. He went into the Gold Dragon Restaurant. It was a candy and soda fountain combined with Chinese and American food.
	377-382	After the show, the Gold Dragon would be packed with young people. That was around 1923.
10	383-422	In 1928, WYL's Gold Dragon was very successful. They opened a new Gold Dragon next to the Obispo Theatre. They broadened up their ventures. The entire interior was Oriental. The music came from different places mysteriously. WYL designed them all.
	423-430	WYL also designed a special candy tree to handle the different kinds of candies.
	431-444	In the Gold Dragon, they served six course dinners for 65 cents and a light lunch for 35 cents.
11	445-465	Stella, WYL's wife, and her brother managed the restaurant.
	466-469	The new Gold Dragon lasted from 1928 to 1964.
	470-476	They turned over the restaurant to WYL's brother-in-law who later sold it out.
	477-484	WYL also designed a special Dragon Moon gate for the restaurant.
END OF SIDE A		

TAPE 5 SIDE B

1	002-009	WYL used the name "Gold Dragon Confectaurant" because the shop was a combination of a confectionary store and a restaurant.
	010-017	The decorations were contemporary -- modern, with mirrors. The room holds about 75 people.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
1	018-024	They used a chandelier with the bamboo pool, and a gong hung in the middle of the room.
	025-029	The restaurant had pretty good business. They served as a meeting place for social clubs like the 20-30 Club.
2	030-036	The restaurant had an average gross income of \$14,000 to \$23,000 a year.
	037-043	The Depression really hit the restaurant hard. WYL had to cut the price down in order to carry through. WYL had the income from the theatre job to help with the restaurant business although the theatre cut WYL's salary during the Depression.
	044-046	WYL did not have to support his brothers. Everyone is independent.
	047-060	WYL quit the restaurant in 1946 and acquired an old photo studio. He hired a receptionist to take care of the business.
3	061-083	The photo business expanded and contracted to make highway maps with the Highway Commission. They made 4' by 6' maps. WYL hired a plane to take aerial pictures to make the aerial maps. WYL described the process of making an aerial map.
	084-096	During the years from 1946 to 1949, WYL made these maps for the State Highway Commission.
4	097-118	WYL was also running a photo finishing plant which processed all the film collected from the pharmacy or other photo finishing station. WYL hired one person to collect the film in the evening and hired another person to deliver the prints the next morning. WYL was the only one to provide that service at the time (1946 to 1955).
	119-128	The Louis Photo Studio was located on Monterey Street and Chorro Street in the old mission.
	129-133	WYL rented the studio for not more than \$90 a month.
	134-138	He wasted a lot of profits because of his unfamiliarity with the business.
5	139-148	The experience from running the restaurant was similar to running the photo studio.
	149-164	When WYL gave up the studio in downtown it was because of the failure of rebuilding the old building. WYL moved the studio to 350 Lincoln Street.
	165-177	WYL shot hundreds and hundreds of graduating pictures with Stella's help. They ran the photo business until four or five years ago.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	178-182	It is easier to run the business at home than to fix hours in the studio.
6	183-197	In the theatre WYL worked one shift, six hours, each night. Sometimes he would work two or three shifts during the weekends.
	198-217	The same company owned the three theatres: Almo, Fremont, and Obispo. WYL was the chief projectionist so he could choose the theatre he wanted to work in. The theatres were owned by the first Far West, then changed to the National Theatre, General Theatre Corporation, now it is part of the Mann Theatre chain.
7	218-232	The operation of the projector was always the same except for some adjustments to the new technology.
	233-243	WYL ran the pictures for non-profit organizations too.
8	244-284	WYL got acquainted with a taxi driver who knew Mr. Hearst. William Randolph Hearst, the son of Mr. Hearst, used to camp in San Simeon. In 1919 there was only one taxi in town. So William R. Hearst would take the taxi to the ranch. Sometimes the taxi driver had to pick up the provisions and supplies and deliver them to the ranch.
	285-307	Sometimes WYL would go with the taxi driver. Once he even held the tape measure for William Randolph Hearst without knowing who he was.
	308-321	In 1920 William Randolph Hearst started hiring people to build the castle. Julian Morgon was the designer of the castle.
9	322-330	A year later, WYL got to be friendly with Mr. Hearst. Mr. Hearst liked WYL very much.
	331-357	In 1925, Mr. Hearst added a theatre with the capacity of 50 people along with large orchestra seats in the castle. WYL was asked to run the pictures for him.
10	358-385	Mr. Hearst had a mistress, Marion Davis who was a star of the silent movies. Once in a while, either Mr. Hearst or Marion would call WYL to show her pictures. Sometimes it would be two o'clock in the morning.
	386-400	The taxi driver would take WYL up and get \$30 per trip. WYL would get \$30 per showing. He did the showing job from 1925 to 1933.
	401-415	Big parties were often held in the castle. The guests would include President Coolidge, Harding, Roosevelt, and Hollywood stars.

Interviewee: Wong Young Louis

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Contents (cont'd)

5 Side B
Tape: 6 Side A

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
11	416-448	By 1933, WYL was very busy. Mr. Hearst hired a regular projectionist who stayed in the castle. He was confined in the castle for 24 hours -- he had no freedom.
	449-473	Sometimes WYL would stay in the castle for two or three days or even for a whole week. He would live like a king during these stays. Marion Davis, Arthur Brisbane, a famous writer of Hearst paper, Adela Rogers Saint Johns, a famous writer, were all there.
	474-482	WYL stayed in the guest room with the French bay window in the castle.

END OF TAPE 5

TAPE 6 SIDE A

1	002-010 011-025	Introduction. WYL was treated like a king. There were seven servants around him. It was a stormy night. One servant was using the clean bath towel to plug up the cracks in the doorway where the water was coming in. One would take care of the gas furnace. One took care of the bathroom. WYL and his wife were treated like a king and a queen.
2	026-034 035-044 045-051 052-057	For breakfast, WYL and his wife got imported jams and jelly from India and South America. Beef steak from Argentina. The local meat was for the hundreds of farm hands who took care of the cattles around the ranch. WYL did not see any Orientals working in the castle. Sometimes he would import some help from Los Angeles. He would fly them in with his own plane to put on a big dinner party. In the late 1920's and 1930's, Mr. Hearst had a B-19 bomber from World War I which was converted into a passenger carrier.
3	058-076 077-087 088-101	WYL heard from Mr. Hearst once in a while. WYL also got acquainted with Mr. Hearst's son. Mr. Hearst had two swimming pools. On top of the Roman Pool he had two tennis courts. His son played tennis there very often. WYL did not care about the extra money (he made from showing movies at the castle). Working in the castle was a great experience by itself. One day Mr. Hearst decided to have a birthday party for himself. So he had a hardwood floor temporarily covered with a circus tent. He hired three orchestras to entertain over 200 guests.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
4	102-115	WYL was waiting to show the pictures to the guests. The party went on for three nights and four days. WYL did not have a chance to show the pictures but he did have a chance to mingle around with the celebrities from Hollywood.
	116-130	Three years after WYL graduated from Electrical Engineering in 1926, WYL was elected the secretary of the Alumni Association. WYL was the secretary for six years.
5	131-148	WYL was elected on the Board of Directors twelve years ago. Seven years ago, he was on the Distinguished Alumni Selection Board along with 4 other members.
	149-154	WYL's sister, Helen, his brother, Fred, were also selected as Alumni of the Year.
	155-164	In 1927 or 1928, WYL was elected as the first president of Poly Phase Club which was a society of Electrical Engineering on campus.
	165-177	Poly Phase was named because of the phase of the motor.
6	178-197	The club members consists of graduates from Poly Technique Electrical Engineering Department. The club members have social gatherings and fund raisers for Dr. Wilder's Memorial Funds Scholarship, and other scholarships.
	198-206	Now the general funds go to the State to operate.
7	207-230	WYL also helped with the Chinese Student Club to help the students feel more at ease with the American society.
8	231-285	WYL and Stella sponsored a Chinese student from Taiwan. He is now an Assistant Professor in Chemistry at the University of Missouri.
	286-289	To help the young students is what WYL and Stella were trying to do. So they helped to form the Chinese Students Association.
	290-312	The association has grown up to be the largest and most active students association on campus.
9	313-336	WYL also belonged to the Rotary Club. He has just passed his 50th year with the club. He is the oldest member in the club, both in age as well as in holding membership. WYL also holds the perfect attendance record for 47 years.
	337-350	WYL was asked to join the club and was the first Chinese in the Rotary Club.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	351-383	Rotary Club had no national distinctions except when they first originated, only white men could belong to the club. After a few years, they got away from it. Rotarians are supposed to be open hearted and understanding. Therefore there were no objections to have WYL as a member.
10	384-398 399-415 416-429 430-437	Any other Rotary Club are the same. It is international. There were 20-30 clubs which was attended by members that ranged between twenty and thirty years old. It was a night club that met at night. WYL just belonged to the Rotary Club, the day club. WYL also belongs to the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society. WYL was the founder of the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society.
11	438-472 473-487	In 1950 the County was celebrating their 100th anniversary. There was a whole week of celebration. WYL thought of putting out an exhibit of the county's progress for the last one hundred years. The display was very successful.
END OF SIDE A		

TAPE 6 SIDE B

1	003-020 021-032	WYL put out a table for people to show their interest in forming the Historical Society during the celebration week. Close to three hundred names were collected. Things came from all over the County for the exhibit. The first president was a writer of the Tribune (the local newspaper). She wrote the articles to fire up people to bring in exhibit items. The exhibit area of 150 feet by 225 feet was filled up with exhibit implements, utensils, etc.
2	033-040 041-052 053-066	The meetings for the Historical Society were organized. Temporary officers were working for about two to three years. WYL was asked to be the first president. He said, "I am no boss. I couldn't command any action," so they elected Lou Ann Garrett as the first present in 1953. Today the Society has over six hundred members. When WYL was the president about ten years ago, the membership doubled to eight hundred members.

Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	067-072 073-100	In 1911 WYL married Stella. WYL was baptized in the Church. First he was Catholic. Then he became a member of the Christian Church. After WYL was baptized, he was very much into it and wanted to be a "sky pilot." Then he realized he did not have enough education and would not be a good preacher. So he shied away from it.
4	101-135	Two years later WYL went to San Francisco and heard that the Chinese Methodist Church had a bazaar. WYL went and saw Stella standing behind a fish pond. So WYL asked Mrs. Wong, a hotel owner in San Francisco, about Stella. So Mrs. Wong got a hold of a friend of Stella's family. Through that way WYL got acquainted with Stella.
5	136-149	It was the time after WYL's mother passed away. WYL accompanied the body to San Francisco to be shipped back to China. WYL was all broken up so he decided to stay in San Francisco for two months to relax and bring himself together.
	150-155	That was the time WYL got acquainted with Stella. It was okay between both families. So they got married.
	156-160	WYL and Stella had a big church wedding for about five hundred people. It was the first Chinese church wedding in San Luis Obispo.
	161-167	There was no Chinese banquet. There was a regular dinner. The church could not take all five hundred guests. So they had two shifts.
	168-174	WYL did make a trip to Stella's house to visit the family and get acquainted with her family before the marriage.
	175-184	The wedding was strictly Americanized. As far as WYL was concerned, his father did not even care about the Chinese fashion. If there were any exchange (in the Chinese way), WYL would not know about it.
6	185-192 193-203 204-206	WYL has a newspaper clipping of the wedding. None of the brothers and sisters really went through the Chinese way of marriage and (in choosing brides). Suellen Cheng thanked WYL for being interviewed.

END OF TAPE 6

END OF INTERVIEW

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