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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTS

INTRODUCTION

The oral histories gathered for this project played an important part in understanding the viewpoints of individuals directly related to the historic properties. They also provided important personal information accentuating the broader historic context. While primary investigators Scott Solliday and Vince Murray conducted a few of the interviews, the majority were performed and transcribed by students in the Asian and Pacific American Studies program at Arizona State University. These students include: Aurelia Bradley, Adrienne Dudley, Nikki Harra, Dan Killoren, Ian Lynch, Isaac Manley, Brandon Ong, Michael Pang, Macy Phung, Krystin Yee, and Christina Wong.

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Due to size constraints, the interviews were edited and formatted for the published version of this report. Both the original, unedited transcripts and interview tapes are housed at Arizona State University to be utilized for future research.

FELIX CARBAJAL, JR. AND REFUGIO ESTRIL

Interviewed by Adrienne Dudley with Isaac Manley
28 October 2006

Adrienne: Um we are going to start by getting you to say your name, and oh do I have permission to tape this interview.

Both: Yep.

Adrienne: And if you could state your name and the spelling of it.

Felix: Felix Carbajal. F-E-L-I-X C-A-R-B-A-J-A-L.

Refugio: Refugio Estril. R-E-F-U-G-I-O Last name, E-S-T-R-I-L.

Adrienne: And Felix when were you born?

Felix: January 9, 1939.

Adrienne: Refugio?

Refugio: February 6, 1936.

Adrienne: And do you remember when you're family first came to Phoenix Arizona?

Felix: No, I don't because I was not born yet, but all I remember is that house. I grew up in that house (1721 North 7th Avenue) and I wasn't born there. I was born someplace else ... some maternity home, but, all I can remember is that house growing up in that house. I mean, that was our world. That neighborhood was our world. There, at one time when we were growing up, then later on in years, the families, our families ... well, like Refugio's family and our family, we were like one family, you know. And we started moving away from each other. But we stayed there, but most of the time my brother and my two sisters were already born. My younger brother was born afterwards, but it was a long time. It's hard to remember all that details.

Adrienne: Do you remember when you all first came to Phoenix?

Refugio: Nope. My Dad was only nineteen, I think he said, when he came over here to the United States. All I know is I remember him telling me I was born in Globe, Globe Arizona. And like my *compadre*¹ Felix, that's all I remember of my childhood is just living in that house. And, I think it was 'cause I went in the military 1954 a year before that is when they moved, into ... we moved away from the house to the Marcos De Niza project and then '54 is when I went into the military. But, we were, we could actually say, we were born and raised in that house because it is all we remember. I remember my brother's and sister's being born in the house that's when the doctor's used to come to the house. The doctor, Felch.

Felix: Doctor Felch. Yeah, I remember him because he always used to give us candy.

Refugio: Yeah, he used to have some in his little black bag and we loved to see him come 'cause he always had candy for us. And then he would go in the house and shoo us all out, and I don't even remember which of my brothers and sisters were born in that house, but that's [expletive] that's a long time ago.

¹ This use of *compadre*, or *compa*, is to denote friend or companion. However, in Pinoy culture, the term is also used for godfather.

Adrienne: From what country did your family immigrate to the US?

Felix: My father came from the Philippines. Luna La Union was, La Luna was the town, La Union was the place he came from, like a province. And he was twenty-one years old, but he was detained through the military. He was in World War I. And my mother was from El Paso, Texas and that's about all I know. I don't know what year they came here from El Paso. My grandmother was married two times. Yeah, two times, 'cause ... no, three times, 'cause the first one she was married to be a Carbajal, and then the other one and then the last one was Principe. Of course he was the only grandfather we did know on my mother's side, I never did meet my father's parents 'cause ... well, they were in the, I tried. I went to the Philippines in 1958, when I was in the military, but at that time there was a real turmoil going on over there with the Huks². So, we couldn't, they wouldn't, let us go out. We had to stay in the base. That's as close as I got to seeing them.

Adrienne: Refugio?

Refugio: I forgot the question.

Adrienne: About the first ... what country did your dad immigrate from?

Refugio: Oh. My dad's from the Philippines. He was from Luzon and he used to always mention a Barrio Victoria that's where he was from but I don't know what province or what all that noise was?

Adrienne: And then your mother?

Refugio: My mother is from Guadalajara Mexico, and since I was born in Globe I take it that's where they met because my dad used to work the fields back then. Heck, I don't remember what year he started working in the kitchen and he was a cook, he used to be the chef at the San Carlos Hotel for I don't know how many years. A lot. And then when a lady bought the restaurant, I mean the hotel, the again the restaurant part I don't know he said he would never work for a woman so he quit. And he went to the Westward Ho and he worked there at the Westward Ho for another jillion years 'cause I went in the military and I came out and he had already been working there 'cause I remember I used to go borrow the (inaudible) and I would have to go pick him up and that was after I got out of the service it's 1957 and he was already working there a long time before I went into the service.

Felix: So did my dad.

Adrienne: Yeah.

Refugio: But he used to be, he wound up being a cook, but on his days off, we, I remember, we would go to the field and he would take me and my brother and, uh, we would work with him.

Adrienne: So your parents were the first in your family to move to Phoenix?

Both: Yeah.

Adrienne: And do you remember when they arrived here?

Felix: Well it had to be in the 1930s. Well because my sister was born in what 1934. My oldest sister, Tita. Yeah.

² Huk was a term for members of the *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon*, "People's Anti-Japanese Army." They were communist-led peasants who rebelled against unsuccessfully against the Filipino government after World War II.

Refugio: Yeah because we were mostly saying that ...

Refugio: (muffled) Lita the same time.

Felix: Then my other sister was born in '37. And I was born in '39, my brother was born in '42, but they had to come in the thirties here.

Refugio: Yeah 'cause I was born in Globe but I wasn't even a year old when they moved to Phoenix and I was born in February so must have been late '36 or early '37, and like I say it was right to that house because ...

Adrienne: Do you remember or do you know when your parents first came to the US?

Felix: Well my father came in the twenties, right after World War I then I think he was working out in the farms. After that when he met my mother I guess he started working in town, and he worked at the Westward Ho. For so many years he worked there because I remember even on like on the weekends like days off he would he used to go work in the fields you know we'd work in the carrots, we'd work in the onions, the potatoes and stuff like that. It was for us it was a lot of work but I know I look back and it was like a fun thing because a lot of Filipinos would take their families out there and we'd all see each other out there.

Refugio: I remember for lunch, we would break for lunch and it would be like a picnic.

Refugio: It used to be fun then, not anymore.

Felix: Well everything was fun then you know. We used to think of it as fun, you know when we'd have lunch a lot of times uh we'd all get together, we'd all eat from everybody's plates you know the thing like what do they call it when you go right through and just pick what you want?

Adrienne: Buffet.

Felix: Yeah like a buffet out there. Every day it was real neat. I even remember when we used to go at night and work.

Refugio: In the summer time.

Felix: Well, yeah, the flood the big lamps ...lights ...the flood lights, and we'd be out there working.

Adrienne: ... and your father Refugio came around the 1920s, too.

Refugio: 'Cause he said he was nineteen when he first got here so I think that makes him what born in 1903 or something like that. So, I really don't, he was nineteen or so.

Adrienne: Do you remember did they ever say why they came to Arizona?

Felix: Well it was a place, it was a migration, and you know um they worked you know from state to state. Even all the way up to the 60s a lot of the old guys, when I got out the service I even got into that part of traveling you know from here, we'd go to Las Cruces, New Mexico and then we'd go to Colorado, Alamosa, Colorado. We'd go to over there by Colorado Springs and then sometimes, well most of the time we'd go up to Wisconsin and then we'd go to Michigan, New York. One time we even got to go to Florida.

Adrienne: I know you said Refugio that you were born in Globe. I'm guessing that your parents must have lived there for a little while, why do you think they came to Phoenix.

Refugio: Well, like I said, my dad used to work the fields too just like *compa's* dad here. He used to work the fields and follow the crops. I don't even remember what year it was that he started working in the kitchen. The actual year I don't know, but like I said when we did come we moved into the house. We were raised there, and that was in, it had to be in the early forties I guess.

Felix: Yeah, that was the early forties.

Adrienne: Oh when you guys moved into the house (1421 North 7th Avenue)?

Felix: Pardon?

Adrienne: When you moved into the house, early forties?

Felix: 1940, I think.

Refugio: Yeah.

Felix: 1940. When they moved in there and then my brother was born in '42. My sister's were already there and me, because I remember when my, remember when Sammy fell in that cesspool that my uncle was digging at the time.

Refugio: Yeah.

Felix: He was in the walker.

Refugio: Yeah.

Adrienne: He fell in.

Felix: Yeah.

Adrienne: If you can recall if your parents ever talked about it, what were their first impressions of Phoenix did they like it?

Felix: Well my father talked about impressions; mostly about supporting you know a way to support the family. Do this and do that, but he always talked a lot about going to school. He said go to school; go to school that way you won't have to work hard. Of course we all wound up working hard. Nobody listens to parents until when you're too old already and you look back at how hard your life was, you know. You know when you get your family and you start your family and you don't have that education or think you are going to get the job you are qualified for and what you do, what you did in your lifetime. At a younger age, I never really thought farm work was really that hard; it was fun for me.

Refugio: Yeah it was a place to get out.

Felix: Yeah, but I never stopped to realize how hard it was for my family, because I wasn't there. You know, I got to a point where my kids, I would walk into the house and they would say who are you? It's just a joke. The last time I worked in the farms, I was angry with what was happening, it was the biggest reason for me leaving the farm and coming to work here and just get a steady job, but it was the best thing I could have done. Because my wife was ready to divorce me, she would just tell me that, but it was a thing the kids were growing and they were already going to school and she was taking that whole thing on herself. So I decided, well we decided that it would be best for me to stay. So I stayed and I got a job here, you know. At first it was hard for me because I wasn't used to working by the hour; I was used to working by piecework. Always doing things fast, and the first job I had was driving for a produce, Ziti Produce Company. They were

paying me \$2.20 an hour. Are we going to make it? Yes we're going to make it. I worked there two weeks and then I got a job at Lightning Moving. It's delivering also but it just paid more it was paying \$3.20 an hour. I worked there for four years and then I worked went to Bestway, and I started at \$5.90 an hour. Then they shut down, so I went to work for Yellow Freight, and I stayed there for the duration until I retired. I started there for about \$6.00 an hour but I stayed twenty-seven years with Yellow. Well I had seven years in California. Worked for them for about thirty-two years. Then when I was fifty-nine I decided I wanted to retire.

Adrienne: All right, if I could have you guys describe the house you lived in when you grew up.

Felix: It was a white house with a shingled roof and it was old then.

Refugio: The back of it was where the Filipinos, all of them that were like seasonal, that's where they used to stay. That's when they had, none of these crazy laws anymore. The whole backyard was rows and rows of cages of roosters, fighting roosters. He even had some. My mom used to wash for them, iron for them and that was part of the income. My dad like I said that was when he started to work the kitchen. I think that was eleven, twelve maybe a little older. That was when he had moved over to the, he was working at the San Carlo before he went to the Westward Ho. Me and him used to clean the kitchen you know after they closed up. Me and my brother would wash dishes, wash the pots, meanwhile until they close and then after they close we had to clean the kitchen. We would hurry up and finish and say what are we going to have today bro'? Apple or cherry?

Refugio: We would get a whole pie and cut it in half and get another plate and put his half over there and fill the other half with ice cream and we'd sit there and eat it, and then we would go home. I never worked, the only times I ever worked in the field was like on weekends when my dad used to take us. Like I said in 19 ... it had to be 1953 when we moved to Marcos De Niza.

Adrienne: What memories do you have of your mother?

Felix: Me, I have very little memories of my mother, because she divorced my father when I was twelve. Real young.

Refugio: My mom never worked either she just, she was too busy having babies. Its like me and my brother, we're only nine months apart. He was born in the 25th of July, I was born in February, and he was born in July, so at one point in that year we were both the same age. (inaudible) Same thing with me. I've got my son and my daughter. He was born the 26th of December and she was born on the November 5th of November. So here next month she'll be thirty-five. So they're both thirty-five until December 26th when my son will be thirty-six. But anyway I was the first of thirteen so my mom never worked, just raising us kids. Being the oldest I used to help her. She showed me how to make tortillas; she's the one that showed me how to cook.

Felix: (to Refugio) You remember that old wood stove?

Refugio: Oh yes we used to have to get up every morning. Well not every morning, well, yeah, to cut the wood every morning. Outside of the kitchen right outside the fireplace, they used to have a big, big tub and we would have to go fill it up with water and start the fire. I'd cut the wood and my brother would start the fire and heat the water up then we would have to get a bucket and carry it way to the back of the house where we would have the tin shed. Almost, but not quite as wide as this [gesturing with his arms apart], but it was round like this; a tub that they use for cattle now.

Isaac: Right.

Refugio: And that's where we took our bath. And we would have to do it for our little sister.

Felix: We had water for everybody.

Refugio: It is like *compa* was saying we were one big family because I don't even remember what year it was that we all moved in there. I don't even remember if our dad's combined any kind of monies to buy the house or anything because I don't remember my dad ever saying I've got to pay the rent or nothing. So I don't know. Do you?

Felix: No, I don't know either.

Refugio: I don't know either.

Felix: I just know we were all together, we had separate rooms, but we were all together. But you know it was one big family.

Refugio: It was neat. Biologically we aren't brothers but we were almost raised like brothers. But I remember we used to have to heat up that water, carry in water being the oldest for the younger kids before we went to school and then we also had to cut the wood for the stove. I'm sure you've seen them in the movies, its flat ... I remember my mom used to wash her arms up to here to make tortillas and she would slap them and they would fit right in there, and like (inaudible) was saying we would all get one while she was making them and we would get butter on them. Oh man it was so good. And then on the weekends we would go get the wood at the dump, which was right straight down 7th Ave and, uh, we would pick up all kinds of wood. We used to pick big boxes and fill them up with wood and we'd tie ropes on them and drag them all the way home. It would take time but we would drag all that wood home. Back then it was the river bottom there where the dump used to be, the city dump. We used to pick up a lot of wood. Drag it home, pile it up and we would use it all through the week, for the heating of the water and the stove because that is all we had was a wood stove. We had a big box by the stove and we constantly had to have that full of wood.

Felix: You know I can remember when west of 19th Avenue was nothing but desert but then all of a sudden progress started going more and more and more. Now you look at up there and all the farms are gone.

Adrienne: Do your sisters and brothers still live here?

Refugio: Yeah I've got my oldest sister and uh, all of them are here. Except for the ones that ... I had ... there was thirteen of us; six boys and seven girls.

Adrienne: Do you want to name them for us? I know it's a lot.

Refugio: Well uh, four of the girls are deceased, now two brothers are. There was me, then my brother Salvatore, and then it was uh Delores, she's still alive, Irene, and Bertha deceased, Elvira she's deceased, then Anne Marie, oh and another one that is deceased too, Pauline, and then brothers was uh, how many sisters is that?

Adrienne: That's six.

Refugio: Six, I'm missing one 'cause my mom had two or three miscarriages.

Adrienne: Oh.

Refugio: That's the ones that are deceased. I can't think right now. Let's see I got Delores, Irene, oh Dora and then brothers. I had Salvatore, David, Johnny, and Leonard.

Adrienne: And, then, Felix if you could name your brothers and sisters, we didn't do that earlier.

Felix: My oldest sister was Ruth, my second oldest was Elizabeth, then myself, then my brother Sam. You guys already had an interview with him.

Adrienne: And then there was all of you guys in the house, was there any other families that lived with you guys?

Refugio: Back then there were not all of them.

Adrienne: Yeah all of them.

Refugio: I don't even remember which ones are the ones that were born at the house because when I got out of the service in '57 there was a baby laying there in the bed. I told my mom, "Whose baby is that?" She said, "That's your sister Anne Marie," and during the time that I was in the military she had lost two or three children.

Adrienne: How long did you all live in that house?

Felix: I lived there all my life. Well until I was about twenty-something, after I got married but we all grew up. That house was a central thing for us. Whenever we had parties or anything like that, on the weekend we would have a party there.

Refugio: I think the only reason we moved out was because like I said earlier I think it was 1953, because I went in the military right after we moved over to Marcos. So, uh, I had just turned eighteen because I wanted to go in before but they wouldn't sign for me because of the Korean War at that time, and I wanted to go but they wouldn't sign for me. At that time she was pregnant with one of my sisters. OK, that's when I turned eighteen she was pregnant with one of my sisters, they said wait until your mama has the baby then you can go but before then we moved out of there, I think it was in '53 and it was simply because of our family getting to big for the house anymore, so we moved out I think it was '53 and they still stayed there. Because I remember we used to still go back, back over there; it wasn't that far maybe a mile, two miles from Marcos to the house?

Felix: No, not even a mile.

Adrienne: Does the house, where is the house located?

Felix: 7th Ave and Mohave.

Adrienne: And Mohave, and then the projects were where?

Felix: Right there on 3rd Ave.

Refugio: Yeah.

Felix: Yeah.

Adrienne: 3rd Ave and Mohave?

Felix: No, Marcos did not go out that far at that time, so it was 3rd Ave and was that Pima?

Refugio: At that time, yeah sure, Pima.

Felix: To Yavapai, right there by Harmon Park.

Refugio: Harmon Park.

Adrienne: So a few miles.

Refugio: We used to walk to everything.

Felix: We walked to everything so it wasn't far.

Adrienne: It wasn't far?

Felix: We walked to school everyday.

You know like in those days we didn't have as many buses as they have now, and when we wanted to go, we'd walk from 7th Ave to Central and Washington. Now that was far but it wasn't far for us because we were going to the movies, and on Saturday in those days everybody went shopping in town, it was so crowded it was like New York City.

Refugio: Yeah, yeah that's the way it was.

Felix: That's the way it was here and then you had Indians selling trinkets there on the sidewalk.

Refugio: Right there on the corner of Washington and Central. Right now ... there used to be ...

Felix: Remember the old guy that used to sell newspapers, the same guys.

Refugio: And the Indians right there at Walgreen's all sitting there along the wall.

Felix: It was Crest; the old Crest store was there. It had a long counter we would sometimes, we would never go in there because it was too much for a soda and ice cream but I remember all those places, Korrick's and all those places but mostly I remember the movie theaters.

Refugio: The movie theaters used to be on the end of town with the Phoenix Theater and they had the Elk's club on top of it and that's where we would go for our scout meetings.

Felix: Yeah, they had the Orpheum Theater.

Refugio: They had the Orpheum Theater which is still there.

Felix: Then they had the Strand.

Refugio: Then we had the Strand and the Studio.

Felix: No, no it was the Fox.

Refugio: Fox was on this side of Washington. On the south side of Washington.

Felix: Yeah it was on the south side but then you go to the Studio was on the north side.

Refugio: And they had the Strand and then on the other end of town you had the Mexican uh, Azteca and ...

Felix: We never went there.

Refugio: The only time we used to go there was when my mom wanted to go.

Felix: But I remember going there with my grandfather, he would we would take the electric cart, the streetcar; we used to have electric cars.

Adrienne: Oh Yeah.

Refugio: Oh Yeah from the Capitol all the way to 7th Street.

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: At the end like right in front of the Capitol they used to have a circle where the streetcar would turn around.

Adrienne: Oh, like the ones in San Francisco?

Both: Yeah.

Adrienne: They had those in Phoenix?

Both: Yeah.

Felix: San Francisco didn't have nothing on us.

Refugio: it used to run from the Capitol to 7th Street. At 7th Street and the Capitol they had the big circle where they would turn it around.

Felix: It would just run just on the main street.

Felix: I can remember when we used to, our block used to go and play the other block, we used to play ball, softball and after that we would start throwing rocks at each other, no matter who won.

Refugio: Make our own games.

Felix: Rules.

Refugio: we used to make our own games. Remember the old big pomegranate tree that was there on the yard there.

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: We used to go in there and find, like masters the best branches that were spread out like that to make our slingshots. Then we would get old tubes and make our own slingshots and then down the street where I-10 goes now there used to be a bunch of cottonwood trees. You know the cottonwoods ran on this way.

Felix: Right there.

Refugio: We use to get the chinaberries.

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: We used to go down there and fill our pockets with chinaberries. You know what they are, it's an uh a tree that grows a bunch of little green they look like cherries but they're green and they are real hard.

Adrienne: And you would use those in your slingshot.

Refugio: They used to grow like grapes grow in bunches. These were trees, I don't know what kind. We used to call them chinaberries, we'd fill our pockets, and then we'd play war.

Refugio: With the slingshot. Man, you got hit with that you got a big purple welt. Man it hurt.

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: Stupid, man, and then we'd get our bb guns and our twenty-twos and we'd go hunting down the bottom of the river.

Felix: You know sometimes when we were kids, you know guys would carry maybe three or four or maybe five slingshots around their necks.

Refugio: But see then there was a lot of rabbits, cottontail and to eat you know. We killed to eat, the doves and they used to have ducks in the ponds over there. See all of its gone, all that's gone now.

Adrienne: Did it used to be so hot?

Refugio: Yeah, we used to be hot, but not like now, no humidity. No humidity, if it was hot like 120 you go into the shade and you were OK, you were comfortable.

Refugio: Now ...

Felix: You can't stand it man.

Refugio: All this humidity, all this building, all these trees that have grown and well.

Felix: Well it's mostly the black top cement and all that creates a lot of heat.

Felix: (To Refugio) Remember when we used to go and pick cotton to go to the movies?

Refugio: Yeah.

Felix: You know where the freeway is at, in 7th Ave well that field right there by all those buildings used to be a cotton field a guy named Indo. He was an Indian from India and he used to own that land and used to farm it, and we used to go over there with gunny sacks and we'd pick enough cotton so we could get, go to the movies.

Adrienne: Get money for the movies.

Refugio: And [expletive] it only took us, we'd be lucky if we made a dollar.

Felix: Yeah.

Adrienne: I'm trying to think. Oh where did you all go to school at? Like when you first ...

Felix: Lowell.

Refugio: Lowell.

Felix: Yes Lowell.

Adrienne: At Lowell? Is that like elementary school?

Felix: Yes, up to the eighth grade.

Adrienne: Eighth grade.

Felix: Yeah.

Adrienne: And all your brothers and sisters went there too.

Both: MMhmm.

Adrienne: And what high school did you go to?

Felix: Phoenix Union.

Adrienne: Phoenix Union.

Refugio: I graduated from there and I barely graduated too, I hated school. I still do.

Adrienne: Sam said that too. He said, "I hated school."

Refugio: I think it was 1949, 1950 because then I was like I said earlier we were already working in the restaurant with my dad and we'd get one paycheck and me and my brother would split it, but I was used to getting money in my pocket, so I didn't go to high school for two years and then I went to Saint Mary's, I used to go to Saint Mary's, I went there I think one semester, but during that one semester I made the junior varsity football team because I was good. Me and *compa* Joe.

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: ... and Rudy Dong and Richard Siswerta ...

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: ...I remember. Richard Siswerta is a big city guy now with the DPS and we all used to go to high school and, uh, me, *compa* Joe and Rudy ...

Felix: That year is when they won State didn't they?

Refugio: Yeah.

Felix: That was the first time Saint Mary's won State.

Refugio: And like I said I got used to carrying money in my pocket and I quit. That's when I quit and went in the Army.

Adrienne: In the Army?

Refugio: Yeah.

Adrienne: And you were in the Army too?

Felix: No, I was in the Marines.

Adrienne: In the Marines, oh.

Felix: I went in '56. When he was getting out I was going in. and when I was getting out Joe was barely going in the Marines, Yeah, but he's dead already.

Refugio: Yeah, I went into the paratroops; 11th Airborne Division.

Adrienne: Did you guys ever go to like church or anything like that?

Felix: When we were kids we used to go to St. Anthony's.

Adrienne: Is that a ...

Felix: ... a Catholic church.

Refugio: I'm Catholic, St. Anthony's and Sacred Heart on Washington.

Adrienne: On Washington. Are those still there or no?

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: Oh Yeah!

Felix: Both of them are still there.

Felix: And there all on First Ave. Grijalda used to live in front of the lunchroom, we used to go we had to walk five blocks from Lowell school to the lunchroom, there used to be a big, black woman, she was mean.

Felix: Remember her? "You better get in line!!"

Adrienne: Now when you guys were in school was it a mix of like races, like Hispanic and ...

Felix: In Lowell School in those days was all Hispanics, there were no whites except for Freddy. Freddy was Italian, but he was white, and then everybody picked on him because he was white. Then he left and came back, and boy he just grew.

Refugio: But you know back then it's not like it was prejudice because that's all there was. Not like now, you know with the prejudice, now.

Felix: In our time, in my time growing up here, I never came across prejudice, you know being prejudice against anybody until I went in the service.

Refugio: We as *Mestizos*³ we used to have the Mexican people and the Whites. The Mexican people as soon as they found out like, you know, you like a girl ...

Felix: "You're a half-breed!!"

Refugio: So then when they found out we were Filipinos you know, we couldn't see them no more. So what do you do? Even now you can't it stop it. If you like somebody and your mom and dad don't want you to see them anymore and you like them you're going to sneak around.

Refugio: That's an old story; that's what we used to do. I remember her name was Irena, and I used to go see her you know, and when she ... what I used to do. There was a big telephone pole in the corner and I'd start kicking cans or get a stick and start hitting the pole and then I would walk away, and that was her signal that I was there and then I'd walk away.

Adrienne: Sneaky.

Refugio: I tell my wife this and she says like you said "sneaky," and I'd walk away and then she'd come out and go to the store which was down there and I knew where it was and we'd meet there

³ The term *Mestizo*, in this case, denotes someone who is part Filipino and part Hispanic.

and we'd just talk, back then it was nothing. Like now you see in the movies now, you know girls, guys they meet the first time and boom they're in bed. Back then it was how I say it, innocent you know.

Adrienne: Yeah.

Refugio: But once they found out I was Filipino or *Mestizo* I couldn't see them anymore and you resort to that, and even now you do it. So it's nothing new, but we went through a lot of prejudice even in 1957 when I got out, that's when my mom used to work with my aunt at the Phoenix (inaudible) right there on 7th Ave.

Felix: Yeah, Yeah.

Refugio: And uh I remember me and my brother was in the Navy then and he was stationed in San Diego, so I just barely got out and he came over, he came home for the weekend so I just barely got out and uh he came over and he came home for the weekend and uh we were in that little restaurant right there on 7th Ave. and, uh, we went in there to have a cup of coffee, waiting for my mom and we sat there and no body would serve us. People, white people would come in and they would get served right away. I looked at my brother and said, "What the [expletive] is going on?" you know and we asked and they ignored us totally, you know.

Refugio: People do not know how to have fun anymore. Like I say we used to go to work, at lunchtime in the fields we all get together and it would be like a buffet you know.

Felix: Family you know.

Refugio: And have fun and we used to work hard, but it wasn't hard then because I guess we were used to it, and like the wood we had to chop and everything to heat up the water in the morning to start, so mama could make a breakfast for the stove. Right now I wish I still could do that.

Felix: Yeah if I could go back to those years in my lifetime, I don't know if I could be the same over here again but I would love to go back to those years. Which you know is already gone.

Refugio: You used to be able to sleep outside, like you were saying a while ago it used to get hot, Yeah it used to get hot but no humidity you know. So you were hot, you know we'd sleep on the porch, remember when we used to sleep outside on the porch.

Felix: Yeah. Sleep on the grass, take a blanket out, and throw it on the grass.

Refugio: (to Felix) Remember when *compas* where they were raised in the corner house?

Felix: Yes.

Refugio: And then before *compa* built the house there, that was an empty lot.

Felix: We used to play ball there.

Adrienne: Softball?

Refugio: On a bright night, on a full moon, all night long we'd play softball there. All of us.

Felix: Remember when we used to have burn the ... they had a big old fifty-five-gallon drum and everybody would bring their own potato. Wrap it up in tinfoil and we'd prop it in there and then we'd all be eating potatoes.

Adrienne: Now you guys, I know you guys speak Spanish right?

Felix: Yeah.

Adrienne: Now, did your mom influence that or you guys just wanted to learn it on your own?

Refugio: Well, now ...

Felix: It was the neighborhood.

Refugio: Yeah it was the neighborhood, my mom being from Mexico, she spoke Spanish and my dad used to speak Filipino to us all the time, and then in 1947, '46, '47, he became a citizen at the Friendly House, and he said, "I'm American, now; no more Filipino." But he spoke fluent, like his dad, they both spoke fluent Mexican, you know I guess being with the whites, but, uh, Spanish got to be our, like I said because he wouldn't talk Filipino to us. The only time he talked to us or hear him talk to his friends when we went on the weekends to the field with him to work, and they talk to each other, you know and laughing and shooting the bull, but we like me, myself we forgot a lot of it. In fact, most of it because it was 1947, but the Filipino language is a lot like Spanish because they have a lot of words that are exactly the same. *padre, madre, trabajo, mañana, dinero*, you know stuff like that. But in my case, that is, when my dad stopped speaking Filipino to us and I've learned more, and most of our Spanish is you know street Spanish. When we were growing up and when I started working at Good Samaritan I used to do the translating for the Mexicans coming over here and I've learned more correct Spanish, medical terminology, you know. So I've learned a lot more.

Adrienne: Now did you all ever go out to eat dinner like as family or like, go to, I know there are a couple of Chinese restaurants?

Felix: Sing High.

Refugio: Sing High.

Adrienne: Sing High?

Refugio: Sing High has always been Sing High.

Felix: We've been going there since it was a one room.

Refugio: Yeah, well, two rooms, the back one was the one that was locked up.

Felix: The kitchen.

Felix: It was right over there on 2nd Street and Madison.

Refugio: So we've been going to Sing High since ...

Felix: Forever.

Refugio: Forever. Now they've got the big restaurant they moved from where they were, the little one. They've got a big one now on, uh, 1st Ave, 1st Street?

Felix: Yeah 1st Ave and Madison.

Refugio: Yeah.

Felix: It's never moved out of the neighborhood though. It's gone from 2nd Street to 3rd Street to 1st Ave. Before he died, Lee died he had restaurants in I think it was up there in Sun City. One on north 7th Ave, but then you know they still have this one. The wife and the son will run it now, but that's like a family place, you know. We've been going there since we were, when Lee was as young as us, you know. We've been going there since we were kids and I remember Lee was a kid washing dishes in the back.

Refugio: Yeah but we used to go in there and get our dad's out of the gambling in the back.

Felix: Yeah.

Adrienne: Um, what were some of your favorite foods, like at home?

Felix: At home? Mostly Filipino foods, Yeah we had treats when we had Mexican food but mostly my sister's would cook, like when we were growing up we'd all whenever his mother was making tortillas we'd all be lined up. She must have thought she had about twenty kids.

Refugio: She never finished making ...

Adrienne: Eat them before they were finished.

Refugio: Then we got full and she would start piling them up, but uh food has always been soups, vegetable, and rice.

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: Always had to have the rice.

Felix: Rice was three times a day.

Refugio: Even now. Mom, mom used to have a big pot of rice and we'd be out playing and that was our snack. You'd go in there and get a make it like a snowball ...

Felix: Put salt on it.

Refugio: Put salt on it and go off and play. It used to be our cereal in the morning, but I never did like it. But my sister's used to put a little cinnamon in it and powder, but that used to be our cereal, steamed rice. Just put milk and sugar on it, and when we killed pig ...

Felix: That was a treat.

Refugio: Goat.

Felix: Yeah.

Refugio: That was for any occasion back then, any occasion, any holiday it was picnic time. They kill a pig.

Felix: And the neighborhood was there.

Adrienne: Everybody was there.

Refugio: And everybody was there. No fights, no nothing.

Felix: We used to have a lot of fun man.

Refugio: The only thing I hated was when they had a few beers. Oh, they love to speech. Turn the tub over and stand on it and they'd start making speeches.

Felix: Talking.

Refugio: When I got married, my dad started talking. He got on the mike; you know the microphone and the band stand and started talking. They love speeches, they love to talk.

Felix: Yeah. You know but most of the Filipinos that came were mostly uneducated Filipinos but they loved, loved to make speeches, you know. And most of them were uneducated but yet they talked pretty good English.

Adrienne: I know you were kinda young during WWII, but do you remember anything, like the atmosphere in Phoenix when they bombed Pearl Harbor or anything like that?

Felix: Well we were real young, that was what, when they bombed Pearl Harbor I think that was, I was four or five years old?

Refugio: I was born in '36. '41 was what, we were really young. I don't know how we knew ...

Felix: As we grew up we started hearing... my dad, at the house, we still have a big picture of Eisenhower ...not Eisenhower, MacArthur.

Refugio: My dad had that picture for a long time!

Felix: I know! And my dad did too and I don't know what happened to it. And I was gonna ask you guys (referring to the students) since you have such research, is there any way you could see any picture of MacArthur, because I don't know what happened to the one my dad used to have.

Refugio: When dad had that one it was right there.

Felix: Yeah I remember.

Refugio: You could never take that picture down.

Felix: And I had never, it came out in the newspaper oh I don't know how many years ago and I kept it, and I said that's the only picture I got and its maybe 2 by 2 and I cut it out of the newspaper. And I cherish it, I take care of it, I got it on my desk in the workshop. And I've never, never been able to find an actual picture of MacArthur and that's why I thought I'd ask you.

Refugio: Our fathers were really ...

Felix: Yeah, because you know ...

Refugio: He was in the Philippines, MacArthur was in the Philippines for a lot of years. And then they had to ship him out and he told the Filipinos and he said I'll be back. And he came and freed the Filipinos and he ...

Felix: Liberated.

Refugio: Liberated them.

Adrienne: OK.

Felix: That's why the older generation, you talk bad about MacArthur and they get mad at you.

Adrienne: They get mad.

Felix: Yeah, they don't say things about him.

Refugio: And even now you know me, I don't know what happened to that picture, and if, my dad had it all framed so did your dad 'cause I remember seeing it. That's why I thought I'd ask you guys 'cause of your research and all that ...

Felix: So, that was like hanging a cross of Jesus Christ, they hung that picture ...

Refugio: ... but I've never been able to find any pictures of him, like I say I've got this one I got in the newspaper for years.

Felix: you don't even know what happened to that picture.

Refugio: I don't either.

Felix: Well, somebody took it, 'cause it was there when you left the house. I don't know if they left it up there or somebody took it. Its either Sammy or Junior got it.

Adrienne: Who was the last family member to live in the house? Are you guys still living there?

Felix: My sister.

Adrienne: She's still there?

Felix: No.

Adrienne: OK.

Felix: No, she died already.

Adrienne: When did she ... oh really?

Felix: She lost the house. Her daughter lost the house. Her daughter lost the house and she came to live with me. Her and my brother-in-law. They stayed with me almost ten years.

Adrienne: So you guys didn't own it.

Felix: My sister owned it.

Adrienne: OK.

Felix: Until she turned it over, signed it over to her daughter. And then she's the one who lost it. But my brother and myself tried to get it back. We asked my niece if everything was alright, and she said, "Yeah everything's all right, everything's taken care of." But she never paid the money back, they borrowed ten thousand dollars.

Adrienne: Ohhh.

Felix: Me and my brother tried to get it back, but now it's too late. The lady that took the, bought the loan, we even talked to her. My brother said "We'd get ya the money back, whatever you want for it."

Adrienne: You grew up in the house, I would ...

Felix: Yeah, well that's why, mostly because we grew up in the house, you know, that's why we wanted it back. Not because of the market value ...

Adrienne: Exactly because I know Vince was saying that the house isn't in the best shape right now ...

Felix: No, its uh, well its been in my family all my life. My life has been in that house. Memories before, there is no memory before that for me. That house was where I, like him, grew up. He knows where he came from because he was told, but as far as memories before that house, we had none. Because our memories start at that house.

[end of interview]

SAM CARBAJAL

Interviewed by Adrienne Dudley with Isaac Manley
10 September 2006

Sam: Hey!

Adrienne: OK. Now it should be starting.

Sam: Oh. Hey!

Adrienne: There you go, alright. This is an interview with ...

Sam: Oh, Sam Carbajal.

Adrienne: On September ... what's today?

Sam: Tenth.

Adrienne: Tenth, 2006, at our downtown ASU location.

Sam: Room C230.

Adrienne: 230, by Adrienne Dudley. And also present at this interview is ...

Isaac: Isaac Manley.

Adrienne: All right, for the record do I have your permission to tape the interview?

Sam: Oh, of course.

Adrienne: All right.

Sam: Spell "permission."

Adrienne: Please state your name and its spelling.

Sam: Sam Carbajal. That's S-A-M. That's C-A-R-B-A-J-A-L.

Adrienne: And where were you born?

Sam: Phoenix.

Adrienne: In Phoenix.

Sam: 1942. April 16, 1942.

Adrienne: And when -- OK. You were born in Phoenix... See I'm ready to ask questions even though you already answered 'em. And from what country did your family originally come from?

Sam: Let's see. Father's from the Philippines, mother's from El Paso, Texas. Supposedly. I don't know too much about that. Who likes El Paso anyway?

Adrienne: And who were the first family members of your family to come to Phoenix?

Sam: What do you mean, the first ones?

Adrienne: Mm-hm, like your dad? Or his mom?

Sam: Oh, well, well, actually my dad. Yeah he's the -- let's see, how would you call it? The, the first, as far as the family. And we're the second generation. I, well, I am one of the second generation. So he would be first, right?

Adrienne: Yes.

Sam: Yeah, he's the only one.

Adrienne: All right, and then when did he arrive in Phoenix?

Sam: Oh, let's see, that would have been after World War I, see, eighteen, nineteen. I would say 1928, 1929, somewhere in there.

Adrienne: All right, and he was the only one in his family to come here?

Sam: Yes, he was.

Adrienne: All right. Let's see, was this the first place that he came to when he came to the United States or did he go through...

Sam: No, actually he, from my understanding he lived in Seattle. Landed in Seattle, in California for a little bit, and then came to Phoenix.

Adrienne: Do you remember why he came to Phoenix?

Sam: 'Cause it was here. [laughter] No, it's, no, it's -- actually, work, I would suppose. In those days it was just a matter of going where the, again, he was a migrant worker, so -- and worked as a chef and as a cook, but mainly migrant -- so where the crops took him. So I guess he came here and decided he liked it. Why, I'll never know.

Adrienne: So he didn't tell you anything about, like, when he first got here?

Sam: Actually, no. My father was very, very quiet about him, historical talk, like, back, in the Philippines and whatever. And I'm not sure why. I guess -- and you get to talk to most of the, the, the older Filipinos that were originally here. Most of the, most of *them* never talk too much about their past. Whether they killed somebody or whatever, I don't know. But the only thing that my dad would say how he grew up in a farm in the Philippines. They used to eat the, the, the rats. He used to be very adamant about that. No, the rats, they were the, the, the ones that ate the rice, the crops, and so forth. So they were clean, I guess, I don't know. But yeah they used to eat rats and, oh ... never mind.

Adrienne: So he was a migrant worker and he, did he do anything else for a living?

Sam: Yeah, he worked for quite a few years. Worked at Westward Ho, and several different hotels here. Biltmore. And as a, a waiter, and as bus boy, as chef, cook, and all, everything.

Adrienne: And where did he live at?

Sam: Where did he live?

Adrienne: When he first got here.

Sam: Oh, good question. Basically I don't, I'm not sure where and what part of the city. But from my understanding -- and this is from what's his name? Vince Murray. He found out all these addresses and stuff. So from that point you'd get the information. He knows, he knows more about that than I do. [laughter]

Adrienne: 'Cause they didn't talk about it that much. Now where was, like, your first house? That you lived in?

Sam: There on 1721 South 7th Avenue.

Adrienne: And can you describe, like, the house? Like the way it looked? Or ...?

Sam: Yeah, let's see. Adobe. Plastered-over. Had a veranda, almost total around the house. Wood. Shake roof. Had a chimney on it. We never used the, inside the, the fireplace. Had a basement, never went in there. I was too scared. But ... my father bought the house in '38, didn't move into it 'til 1940 from my understanding. I was born in '42. So by the time I knew anything was going on or whatever...

Adrienne: That was the first house you remember.

Sam: Right. We had, linoleum was on the floor. And we had *tons* of people living there. I mean, being a kid like that, you know, more than five people is tons.

Adrienne: So how many, how many rooms did it have?

Sam: Twelve rooms.

Adrienne: Wow.

Sam: [inaudible], it was, so, like a ranch style house, but. The house, again, in history, at one point was a fish market or a meat market, fish market, you know, from my understanding, again. And the backside of it was the ... the killing field, I guess. Where they slaughtered whatever.

Adrienne: So were you guys, were you close to, like, the river? Where did they ...

Sam: Yeah, just the Salt River. Yeah, yeah.

Adrienne: OK. All right.

Sam: Yeah, I remember that very well, growing up, we used to go -- it's like Mark Twain stuff, right? No, actually, I remember walking to the river. The city dump was 7th Avenue right at the end where the, you know, where the, the bridge is?

Adrienne: Mm-hm.

Sam: OK, the city dump, you know, actually the, 7th Avenue ended right there. And it was a city dump from that point over towards 19th Avenue. But if you took the lower part where the storm drain is, it emptied into the Salt. And it was a, it, it was, like, natural habitat. We had bullfrogs, and snakes, and *everything*. That was great. But we built the ...

Adrienne: And how much...

Sam: Mm-hm?

Adrienne: How much, how much land did they own?

Sam: Who?

Adrienne: Your dad.

Sam: Oh, I thought the City of Phoenix, I don't know.

Adrienne: Where that house was. I mean, like, how large is their lot?

Sam: Well, the lot, well, again -- one, two, three -- supposedly it was four lots. OK. It took up from 6th Avenue all the way to 7th Avenue. And from Mojave halfway or -- I dunno how many feet -- a hundred-and-sixty feet I guess, this way, so. Supposedly it was four lots. But I think Vince said it was more like three, three-and-a-half, somewhere in there. But anyway ...

Adrienne: And, when did your mother come to Phoenix?

Sam: Good question. Let's see, she married my dad when she was fourteen.

Adrienne: Wow.

Sam: Yeah. Guess when I found that. Just recently! Anyway, she must've been here, let's see, I would say, oh ... I guess she come almost the same time, maybe '30, 1930, '31; somewhere in there.

Adrienne: OK.

Sam: Oh, well, I dunno. I dunno too much about, other than -- see, and there we go again with the, with the *silence*. These are the "silence of the lambs" stuff, right? Nobody says nothin'. But anyways ... they came from El Paso. My grandmother was married -- one, two - three times. God, nobody knew what the[expletive]was going on anyway. Anyways, my grandmother married a, a Carbajal. OK. And then -- well, she married three times and then, I don't know what happened to him, there was no history on him. Then, she married a Franco, which my mother took that name. She didn't take, she was basically a Carbajal, right? But she took the name Franco instead, right. Psh, whatever. I like Carbajal better. Anyway, and then my grandma's third husband was Principe. He was a Filipino guy. The other two were the Mexican guys, so. But when they came here, of course, my grandmother, I guess, was a divorcee, right? But they called it "gay divorcee," anyway.

Adrienne: "Happy."

Sam: No, yeah, whatever. Yeah. Well, actually, yeah.

Adrienne: See Isaac's eyes go? No?

Sam: You don't remember the movie, huh?

Adrienne: No.

Sam: *The Gay Divorcee*, anyway. Anyways, well, they got here, she married Principe, and life went on. But I dunno, man, I remember my grandfather that I knew, Principe, Eugene. Can you imagine "Eugene"? I mean, I dunno. *Eugenio*. But he was Filipino and I've never known a Filipino by the name of Eugene.

Adrienne: And what memories do you have of her? Like, the way she acts? Or ...?

Sam: Who?

Adrienne: Your mom.

Sam: I don't remember.

Adrienne: You don't remember?

Sam: No, she left when I was two.

Adrienne: Oh, OK.

Sam: So ...

Adrienne: All right. And then what memories do you have of your father? Was he, like, strict? Or ...?

Sam: Well, no, actually was not strict. It was sort of -- we grew up with, sort of like the honor system, OK? It's like, "these are the rules," OK, and you do what you think is going to be all right. So, and basically it worked very well. I grew up, anyway -- and I think my brother and, well, all of us did, four of us -- we grew up not wanting to disappoint, 'kay? Because, he wasn't very strict. Well, the only two times that he spanked me 'cause I burned down the, the tree in front of the house was one, and then I burned the dump down. So, those are the only two times he, he really, and I should've known better, but that's all right. But he didn't believe in the spanking. And I guess it's because he was raising the four of us by himself. Of course my aunts were there, helping him.

Adrienne: Were those his sisters?

Sam: But -- pardon?

Adrienne: The, the, your aunts, were they his sisters?

Sam: Oh, no, no my mother's.

Adrienne: Oh, your mom's sisters, OK.

Sam: So, let's see, how's it go? See, I lost my train of thought now.

Adrienne: Oh, sorry. They were helping his family raise you.

Sam: Oh, anyways, OK. So he wasn't very strict, honor system. But we'd spend, you know, when we weren't going to school, we were down at the river bottom, fishin' and getting' frogs and whatever, right. And we'd leave early in the morning and come back at evening, night, and did our business and whatever. We mowed the lawn and never had to be told what to do. We always knew what needed to be done. And that's the beauty of growing up with that type of, what do you call? Parenting. Well, yeah, parenting.

Adrienne: And what do you remember most about growing up in Arizona?

Sam: I don't know. I guess it was fun.

Adrienne: It was fun?

Sam: Again, I grew up in a time, again, after World War II. And, and then when Rock 'n' Roll came in the fifties. That era, OK, is one of the most beautiful times to have grown up, believe it or not. It's just great. The music was great, the people were happy, and everybody was happy. It

makes sense. So, again, my memories are -- course I was the youngest, too, so, hey, didn't have to work that hard. So everybody had to take care of the kid, right? I love it! [laughter].

Adrienne: I'm the baby too, so I know.

Sam: You know what I'm saying? Yeah. So, yeah, no, it was fun. It wasn't as *hot*. Well, when you're a kid you never feel the heat anyway. But it wasn't as hot. There wasn't as much cement around. I remember, I don't know, it just, everything was, was either dirt, dirt road or whatever and, oh, no sidewalks. It was great. And I remember not wearing, I used to hate to wear shoes. I always ran around barefooted. All the time. Until I was in the, I think the third grade. Second or third I got real bad athlete's foot. In fact, they had to wrap my feet. I missed something like four months of school.

Adrienne: Wow.

Sam: Because they had to wrap wax paper on my feet, and all the, go through the whole gambit. Because they couldn't get rid of that. So finally, hey, got cured. Now I got three left feet. [laughter].

Adrienne: So you're talking about school, what are your earliest memories of school?

Sam: I didn't like it.

Adrienne: You didn't.

Sam: Never did like school, never did. But again, I was one of those exceptional students who didn't have to go to school 'cause I always passed the test, right? And I was very, sort of introverted. And I never, I did most of my talking outside of school. I was very shy, actually. But school, Lowell School, is where, again, my, the grammar school. And I remember kindergarten very well. Used to have to make the mats, you know, your sleeping mat. Psh. Anyway, just some, actually some paper. I guess it was that brown -- whatever you call it -- brown, like a brown paper bag stuff, right? And you put string on it, you hang it on the wall, and then, naptime, you took it off and you put it on the floor. Psh. That's what they used for the mattresses, right?

Adrienne: A lot of cushion. Where was that school located?

Sam: 1st Avenue and Yava ... between Yavapai and, and what's the other one? Yavapai and Coco ... not Cocopah. I forgot the name of the street. It's right there on Buckeye Road, near Buckeye Road, anyway. And then we used to have to walk to lunch. We walked from there and -- Vince knows the building, the old Duppa building, next to the, the American Legion Post.¹ It was -- one, two, three -- about six blocks away we have to go to lunch. And the building is, if you look at it now, it's all adobe. And it's a little small thing, but that's where they served lunch for the kids at Lowell School. God, I used to hate the smell of that place. My god.

Isaac: Did you walk to school?

Sam: Huh?

Isaac: Did you walk to school? When you were younger.

Sam: Yeah. Well, again, yeah. Yeah, we walked from -- it wasn't, well, again, it was 7th Avenue and Mojave. Oh -- one, two, three -- it was about ten, twelve blocks away. From 7th Avenue, and you go to 1st Avenue, all the way down to, almost Buckeye. So it wasn't bad. And we walked most of the time. So ... let's see what else. It was a beautiful, beautiful building. I think there's some

¹ The Duppa House is located at 115 West Sherman Street.

picture somewhere, but it was, talk about the -- well it's not the little red school house -- it was a brick building two stories high, no three stories. But it was the old typical school that you see in the movies. It got stairs, no elevators, mind you, just stairs. But it was three stories and classrooms all the way across. Big, big yard. They had the shop in the back. And then they finally got a cafeteria in back. Yeah, just when I was leavin'. They got the cafeteria and that used to smell bad too. But, I never ...

Adrienne: The cafeteria?

Sam: I don't know what they cooked, but my god! It was awful.

Adrienne: What were your favorite classes? Or teachers? Or, like, activities that you would do at school?

Sam: Oh, I dunno. I guess, remembering, now I don't remember much of the lower grades, I guess. Let's see, Mrs. Painter, fourth, fourth grade. She was, I think, eighty-five all through the years. It was as if she never aged, right. But, but see the amazing thing is neat -- and I guess this is nature's way of taking care of young people, little kids, right -- is that time basically never changes. You know, you look at, you know, it's maybe, what, first grade up to eighth grade or whatever. It seems like teachers never, teachers, your old people, never age.

Adrienne: Right.

Sam: They're always forty or thirty or whatever, right. And then all of a sudden you hit twenty and thirty and you look at yourself and say, "My god, am I old." Oh, anyways, Mrs. Painter. For, let's see, I was in her class 'cause she used to teach fourth and fifth grade, so I had her two years is neat. But she would start at the beginning of the class she would explain what -- she was a neat teacher -- she explained the, the curriculum, what she's expected, what was expected of her to teach the children. But in the meantime, she would read us *Robin Hood*, the, I mean the big, big book. And, let's see, the other one was *Tarzan* and *Camelot*. OK, well, they, anyway, *great*. I mean, I could hardly wait to get to her class so, 'cause it'd take about fifteen minutes to read, you know, certain pages and by the end of the, the school year it was done. And it was neat, I'll tell ya. I grabbed more from that class and her reading than any other class. I hated math. I'm no good at it. You ever thought about that? School? I mean, some people are meant to go to school. Some people *like* school. I dunno, I never liked school. I learned more off the street. Again, and it's the mentality, if you don't like a certain -- you don't do well, OK? I didn't find out 'til later that I could have excelled if I would just put my, my heart into it, into school. I don't know, it just ... I learned my math, I learned my, compositions, I learned letter write -- I learned everything outside of school. And I don't know, and I think it's because -- and I never had, actually, yeah, you look at it. And I think it was more like my upbringing, to a certain point. Yeah, is, I never like to punch a clock. Even though going to be in a migrant worker, I mean starting that way, you were there at sunrise. But, hey, sunrise, what time is it? I don't know, the sun's coming up there, you know. As soon as you could see the crop, then you went to work. And then when it went down, when you couldn't see it, you'd stop. So who in the hell's gonna punch a clock, right? Anyway. But I think I got some of that because, oh, when I'd gone to service I was very disappointed 'cause there you had to punch a clock, right? *But* that's where I learned my discipline, OK? Whoa, this is neat. In fact I would've made it a career -- anyway, we won't go into that right now. I would've, I loved the service, anyway. But again, it's, I got the discipline and I, you know, that I think that school, the early years, OK, teaches you that, the discipline. You have to -- it's like going to work, right? You get up, go to school. "What did you learn?" Well, I don't know. Apparently nothing 'cause they want me to come back tomorrow. [laughter] Anyways, but that's, I don't know, that's just one man's opinion about schooling. And, I don't know, I just, getting back to Mrs. Painter, fourth grade. And I can't remember much. I hated all the rest of 'em. And then we had the science, Mr. Dickson I think it was. Oh, our class was bad. I made a little ceramic thing. *Ugliest* thing in the world. And my wife said, "Oh, that was pretty," well, you know what I mean. 'Cause I gave it to

her, but what can she say, right? But it didn't take too much, not too much. I never was, never good at artistic stuff. But anyway. OK, next question.

Adrienne: So how large, like, how many people were in your classes? Were they, like ...

Sam: I dunno.

Adrienne: Maybe fifteen?

Sam: Again, it's gotta be a whole bunch. Let's see, one, two, three, four, five. Five times six. About twenty. Twenty-nine, thirty, somewhere in there. I mean, these are big classes, again.

Adrienne: Did you have a lot of your friends in your classes?

Sam: Uh-uh.

Adrienne: Not really?

Sam: No, you just ... Actually, again, in those days it was, oh, it's like the neighborhood, right?

Adrienne: Mm-hm.

Sam: And when you're in grade school, the kids that you grew up with, those are your buddies, right? OK. So you go to the -- everybody goes to the same school. And, for whatever reason, my best buddy, Bobby Forenas, we never ended up in a class together. Never did. It's, you mean, wow, whatever, right. But you never made new friends as such. The only thing -- it's like, OK, you, you talk to them in class and you went to recess and you'd play. After school, everybody went home. And they had fun with their friends. But you'd never have friends like, "Oh, can you come over and spend the night?" You know. Psh, yeah right.

Adrienne: So those friends that you did have, like, in your neighborhood, were they, like, Filipino? Or were they Chinese? Or ...?

Sam: Everything.

Adrienne: Everything?

Sam: Oh yeah. We had Blacks, Mexicans. We had Whites. And see, this is the beauty, again. And, and I guess in those days there was a lot of negativism, OK. But I never saw it, ya know. Nobody ever talked about it. Everybody was friends, right? So I didn't know any. But you know, the first time I ever ran into that discrimination stuff is on my way to North Carolina or South Carolina. Where did I ship? Anyways, I took the bus from here to South Carolina, Charleston. Where's Charleston? It's North or South?

Adrienne: South Carolina.

Sam: Anyway, to go to Puerto Rico. But the trip in between is -- then I saw the signs: "White" and "Black," you know. And I was on the bus and I get off and I look at the sign and I says, "What the hell? I ain't white and I ain't black. What the[expletive]am I gonna do?" Right? So, the easiest -- again, I took the easy way out, which wasn't the *best* -- but I took the Black. I went to the Black. Hey, what can they do?

Adrienne: Right.

Sam: And, but again, and talking, and after I landed in Puerto Rico and I got buddies with some Black people, they says, you know, "They could've killed you just as easily as the whites could

have." Right? And I said -- well, see, this is neat. But that's the first time I ever ran into a situation. It was going on here, but I never, basically, I never was aware of it, apparently. Or I was too, too dumb to even recognize it, right?

Adrienne: Did your, did your dad ever have, like, interactions with people of different races? Or ...?

Sam: Yeah, he had a lot of girlfriends. Oh yeah, he did! Anyway.

Adrienne: That were like, you know, different, like, were Japanese, or ...

Sam: Yeah, no, actually, well, he did. Well, one thing for sure, again, again -- and this is after the war, of course -- is he had a little bit, not, not too much, but again, it was some animosity towards the Japanese because of what happened. And I think they killed most of his people out there. But he never went back to the Philippines. He, again, but, but after awhile it sort of cooled down and whatever. But yeah, he got along with the Chinese and the -- he talked to everybody. And we, we used to have the homeless guys, right? And, but they'd come around and, you know, and ask for a sandwich or whatever. My dad would cook a whole meal for 'em. Just invite 'em in, and they'd eat, and then leave. And then we wouldn't see 'em 'til the next following year. But they wouldn't, they don't, didn't do what they do now, is come around everyday, right? There was a dignity to being a hobo, OK? There was a dignity to it. If these guys ask for sandwiches or whatever, they got fed -- and they might have gone to different houses -- but they always knocked on the door, they, they after they ate and whatever they thanked you, and they left, they left you alone, basically. They never asked for money. Very seldom they asked for money, so. Probably they had more money than we did.

Adrienne: So, you were talking about food, what type of food do you remember?

Sam: Ooh. Oh my god, it's great. My god, I used to love food. Well actually, all the vegetables, and fish. Again, Chinese-style or Filipino-style, right. We used to go to the Chinese restaurants maybe once a week. I grew up, we grew up with rice, vegetables, and then whenever they'd have decent fish at the Chinese market, we'd get that and we'd make *kinilaw*. You know what *kinilaw* is?

Adrienne: I don't think so.

Sam: It's a raw fish, basically. Raw fish with -- add lemon and, and what the lemon and the vinegar does is to, it sort of marinates it and cooks it a little bit, so. Delicious stuff, man, whoa. Octopus. Again, when it was available. I used to love to go to California. I'd visit my uncle in Salinas. 'Cause then we used fresh oyster and abalone and we used to go to the ocean and get that stuff. Man! But yeah, and then we'd slaughter a pig. Ooh! In the later years, when I was in high school, we were slaughtering a pig once a week. And just having a party. It was all party-time. And all the Filipino families would come. And that was the gathering place is the house over there. And, man ... My brother-in-law was a great cook. Again, fixing the, the chocolate meat[?]. OK, the blood and, oh man! Oh! I still miss it. And then the goat was something else. Oh, you should hear this, right. Now, do you remember how, or have you ever been involved with a goat? Killin' a goat?

Adrienne: Not a goat, no. A pig, but not a goat.

Sam: Yeah, oh, no, the goat is neat, the way they did it, right. Yeah, they take a, the bottle or whatever, a container with vinegar and all the spices and whatever, yeah? And then you put it in the goat's mouth and have him drink it. And what that does, it marinates, while it's still alive. Isn't that neat? Hey, don't have to worry about buyin' the marinade in the bottle. Just take vinegar to 'im. Anyways, by the time you slaughter it and then you cut its throat, it's marinated. And it gives it

a different taste altogether. My god, it's delicious. Oh! And then when they cook the, what they call *chen-koon-chot* [?], I don't know how to spell that.

Adrienne: Oh, I have no idea.

Sam: *Chen-koon-chot* is takin' all of the organs, OK -- and this is only from the goat --p- the heart, the kidneys, whatever. You cut a little spot, and you put it all in the pot, and you make, sort of like a goulash, 'kay? But then you take the bile, right? The sack of bile, and you put -- you can't put too much otherwise you'd kill yourself -- you put a little drop of bile in. It just gives it entirely different taste. Oh my god, it's great. Anyway, so ...

Adrienne: So would you say the Chinese restaurant was your favorite place?

Sam: Oh yeah, yeah.

Adrienne: Was there any other ...

Sam: That or the Mexican stuff. [laughter] No, well, I grew up eating tortillas and rice and, 'cause of my aunts. OK, but, anyway. But yeah, but given a choice, I would pick Chinese.

Adrienne: OK. And then where was that restaurant located?

Sam: Oh, 1st Street and Madison. That would be the Mandarin that was there. The Sing High was actually next -- no Sing High, then Mandarin was here. The Peking restaurant was on 1st Street and Madison, yeah. Peking was the, sort of like the elite.

Adrienne: Oh.

Sam: OK, they have the big tables and whatever, anyway. But for some reason or another, my dad never liked that place.

Adrienne: The Peking?

Sam: Yeah, Peking restaurant. He never liked it. He'd rather go to the Mandarin or the Sing High, you know, whatever. Anyway. Very, very seldom we went to eat any place else. Like steakhouses or anything. I don't know. Didn't grow up when hamburgers, of course, was ... Well, I didn't. Actually, my first hamburger? God, gotta be almost a freshman in high school. I never ate hamburgers. Well, I guess I did, I don't know. I remember my sister cookin' hamburger, but we never had hamburger hamburgers, you know. Went and bought 'em and such. Course there wasn't no McDonald's stuff, right?

Adrienne: Not yet.

Sam: Well, not yet, no.

Adrienne: All right, and then, what kind of activities did you home -- have at home? Like your responsibilities or your chores?

Sam: Everything.

Adrienne: Everything?

Sam: Well, m'kay. Well, again, growin' up it's like, everybody knew what needed to be done. OK, I, 'cause, bein' the baby, OK, I just ate, [expletive] and slept. That's it, right. But no, it was, again, takin' out the garbage, whatever. The normal. But if you, if anybody saw the garbage full, OK, you take it out, whatever. It doesn't matter. No need to be told. Now, as time went on, my sister, well,

my oldest sister left. And this was in '55, '51, I think, or, anyways, I don't know. She left. My other sister married, she left. Thermal (California). And then my brother joined the Marines in '56, '57. So it was just me and my dad. Now, again, I was still in school, right? So I had to take over everything.

Adrienne: Everything.

Sam: Cook, iron. I was his wife. [laughter] But it was a neat time. I learned a lot and, but again, it was something that needed to be done. And, he would come home from work, I'd have a supper all ready and, again, it was ... And I did that for about a year, year-and-a-half. So ...

Adrienne: When your sisters were still there, did, were they the ones that did, like, the cooking? And the ...

Sam: Actually, yeah, as far as -- but my dad, my dad most of it. But my sisters, again, my oldest sister, I even remember her in front of the stove. But she wasn't a very, she didn't like cookin', if I remember. Yeah, she didn't like cookin' very much. She, she never was good at it. The only thing that I remember when I went to visit her in Stockton, and that was when I was ten -- oh, was it eleven, I guess I was. The only thing that I can remember her cookin' really good was spaghetti. And meat spaghetti sauce.

Adrienne: Like, the easiest thing to cook.

Sam: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, so I, no, but she, it took her three days to cook the, the sauce. And that's the only spaghetti that I really love to eat. That's right. I hate, I don't like spaghetti from the restaurants and whatever. But it was neat. But anyways. But that's, I remember her being in front of the stove, but I dunno. I remember the smell. My god. Anyway. And it was a wooden stove too. Yeah, it was a wooden stove. Anyways, OK, well.

Adrienne: 'Cause I'm just wondering if there were anything that your father wouldn't do that your sisters would do. Like, was there a difference between the genders or ... Not really? It was just everybody did what they did?

Sam: Well, yeah, again, it was, OK, without my mother there, I guess, again. And I think this is why, one of the main problems why my sisters, you know, is that they had to take care of the younger ones. But that was understood when my mom left. Hey, somebody had to. But again, and I remember that as a family we used to have to go pick onions and carrots, and that was part of the ... When my dad, on the off-season from the Westward Ho, OK, from the hotel, and the tourism, when that was down, we went to pick carrots. And that's the way the cycle went. During the school year, he would work at Westward Ho and whatever, and that was a regular job. And then when the tourism was out and we were out of school, we went to work. Except, I remember, again, my sister, I remember very -- she *hated* the onions, right. 'Cause she'd go to school, and then smellin' like onions and, ugh, well, whatever.

Adrienne: So on the days that you all didn't go into the fields or, like, you weren't at school and your dad was off, did you guys do anything, like, as a family together?

Sam: Yeah, he, he'd take us to, in fact I remember, we used to take drives. And we'd go *all* the way. It was an all day drive to Mesa, East Mesa. It was a, what they called a "crocodile farm." Way out there, on highway -- just before you get to Apache Junction. It was a, it was like a, a big zoo. That was fun. And we'd go down there. He'd love, I guess it reminded him of the Philippines, I guess, I dunno. But he'd take us there and we'd go on down to the pool hall. He would go in the back and play the dominoes stuff and whatever they play. They gambled. And then he'd, the guy that was running the pool hall, again, my dad would give him money and then he'd let us play pool. Hey, made sense, so. Then we'd go, sometimes we'd go downtown shopping, he'd take us and buy ice cream and whatever. Ooh, get in the ice. There was a Lily ice cream plant right there

on Buckeye and Central Avenue. It was called Lily, the Lily Ice Cream. That's where you got your ice, OK? And once a week, we had a, the ice box, you know, you've seen the old wooden ice boxes, right? And you'd get, we'd get the fifty-pounder. But whenever we'd go get ice, my dad would invite all the kids, because he'd buy 'em ice cream, in the little cups like that, yeah. Everybody waited for that. Just, anyway. But he loved doin' that. He was very easy going. But again, strict to a strict point, but very, again, he, he relied on your honesty. He relied on it. Well, you know, "If you've gotta lie, you lie. But," again, "if I ever catch you, your [expletive] is mine," right. [laughter] Well, anyway, go ahead.

Adrienne: How old were you when you first went to work, like, on one of the farms?

Sam: Oh my god. I remember walkin' and they wouldn't let me do anything else. Gotta be three, four. I mean, it wasn't work, I mean, but, you know, I saw 'em and I did, I did my one carrot-per-day, whatever. After a while I was, they gave me -- my dad, actually, there was a guy that's, there was, these shears that they used. It was one piece of, of metal, it was an iron, like scissors. And they were tapered like so, tapered, OK? And it's like scissors. But it's all one piece with a big spring in it. And you, and this is how you cut the, the onions, OK? And it's what they called *topiando*, you know, topping the onions, so you could put 'em all in the big sack. Anyways, my dad -- it was neat -- had this guy made, make one for me for my hand. Little small thing, right. And I'd be going out like that. A little small one. And I was the only one that had it, right? And see, that's what mean about my dad, right? See he went made me one of those. My god! But I remember picking the onions, I remember doing the carrots. We'd have to tie the carrots, bunch 'em up, and then somebody would come in, put 'em in a bunch, and put 'em in the truck and whatever. But I was very young, remembering all that. And we did that up until -- the carrots and the onions -- we did that, and we were still in, I guess, seventh grade, eighth grade, I think. And then all of a sudden that stopped and we became the elite. We went to pick grapes now. That's all we did was grapes. My dad and my brother-in-law, every once in a while took lemons and whatever, if they were harvesting lemons, then they'd take that contract and go out there and do that. But I never went on that. I went grapes. And then one year we went to pick pears in Chelseaville, California. And that's another thing about migrant workers, great! You get to travel. California. Went to Idaho. Went to Michigan. Went to Texas. I mean, we traveled all over. Colorado. This is neat. Again, hard work, but, hey, it's like the travel guide, right. It's great! Wouldn't recommend it nowadays, but, right, what can you say?

Adrienne: Did you have a farm on, like, your, at your house?

Sam: Oh, no, no, no.

Adrienne: You just, like, went to other places to do it?

Sam: Yeah, no. The only time that I grew up, well, I was ten years old, I went to visit my sister in Thermal, California. She married Mariano Lagadon, who was part owner of a vegetable farm right outside of Indio; in Thermal. I spent the, my, my tenth birthday there. Went to school, fifth grade I went there, vegetable farm. Now, that was an experience and a half. It's great. Again, see, and I was very fortunate. I got to meet some people from Wisconsin, an old, old farm family, and fell in love with their daughter. Ah, love it! Evie! Evie, right? God! Anyway. But yeah, we used to go out there and, let's see, irrigate, late at night. My sister and her husband would be makin' out in the car, and they'd have me go outside and watch the water, right. It was great! But yeah, that's my farm ex -- actually, living in the farm, that was it. Other than it was my uncle Andrew who was a big contractor at one point or other for cantaloupe. He stayed at the, at the farm houses or whatever. But we'd go there just to visit and then that's it.

Adrienne: And then come back to your house, right?

Sam: Yeah, yeah.

Adrienne: And then during what occasions would you and your family get together with, like, other families, like, Chinese-American or, like, Japanese-American?

Sam: Jeez it seems like everyday. Again, no, the, we'd have the, let's see, Christmas, all the holidays. I mean every, once a week there was a, a sort of like a Filipino, the club itself, there was. And you couldn't actually call it a club. But it was, OK, all the families got together at the Prince Hall, OK? This is the Masonic Lodge. Belonged to the black people, right? And they would rent the hall every Saturday night. And all the family, everybody went. There wasn't adults, all the kids. And then Christmas time, oh, it's great. Everybody would get the fruit, whatever it is, the bags and stuff. And toys. It was neat, I tell ya. God, that was a great experience again. Dance. And the band, they would never have to hire a band, 'cause there was just ...

Adrienne: Everybody.

Sam: Yeah, the Filipino they, one sax and one guitar and whatever. Sounded like[expletive]but it was great. [laughter] But yeah, we'd do that, and then at South Mountain Park, again, they'd slaughter the pig and then everybody would take, I dunno, the pots up there and whatever. It was neat, OK? Yeah. We'd, sometimes we'd go to the river bottom. Now, not too many of the families would go down there. But every once in a while somebody'd kill a goat over there and, whoa, all the cars would converge over there, right. And it just seemed like word got around whenever somebody was killing something. My god! They all just, *kounk!* It was great! How is it? It's like tom -- you don't need the tom-tom [expletive] to communicate. You can just smell it across the valley. Like, "Oh, yeah! Right."

Adrienne: Now did you speak any other languages other than, like, what'd you all speak around the house?

Sam: Well, mostly English.

Adrienne: Mostly English?

Sam: Mostly English. My father, again, Filipino, English. He knew a little bit of Spanish. But, but we spoke, the kids, with my aunts, mostly English. But again, that's where we picked up the Spanish part. And everybody in the neighborhood spoke Spanish, OK. And then English, both. A lot of broken, but, hey. My uncle, well, called him uncle, he was, he came from the same province as my dad, Johnny Bacud. He spoke, like a very fluent Spanish. He could write it and, oh, he could converse it. Castilian Spanish. Oh my god, he was beautiful at it. But then he'd speak Filipino, yeah? Whoa. And he'd, and English, he did En -- Oh, he was a very talented guy. And ... I dunno why, but, god, he could have been doing anything. But he chose not to. Makes sense, huh? And that's what you wonder about. You, you see all these guys, you know, through the, through your life, and you say, "Oh my god, these guys had, had some talent." There were some musicians and some artists and some guys that would do leatherwork and whatever. And here they are working around, picking crops and stuff. And seemed to love it. You explain it to me. I guess the spirit, you know. Say, "Hey, money isn't everything." Right? Right? Makes sense.

Adrienne: Do you know why, like, your father didn't teach you Filipino? Or ...?

Sam: Oh, he tried. He bought us books. It was just, to me, we learned certain words being out amongst the Filipinos, right? I never cared to learn it. It was too hard. Like I said, it was like going to school. I don't like school, right? And, I could, I'm, basically I do regret it to a certain point. But it, it's not like, you know, really being sad about it. I, I don't know, it just ... You know, and they talk about the customs being lost and the languages being lost and whatever. Again, my father left the Philippines. He never wanted to go back, OK? If he was *that* interested in his homeland, right, he would have been talking about it, he would have gone back, trips, and back, but he never did. So, maybe that is why, the way that I feel about my heritage, and yes I'm proud, I am. But this man that I knew came from the Philippines, but he was a, he fought in the war, and...

Adrienne: All right. What is your earliest memory of attending church? Did you guys go to church regularly?

Sam: Well, let's see. Call me a, sorta like a, a half, well, hold on. Oh, let's see. A broken-down Catholic or a half-[expletive] Catholic. Yeah, all right. My father, basically never, every once in a while, OK. He never emphasized church. Whether you went or not, it didn't matter. My aunts were the ones that sort of gave that structure, right. So my sister, even though some, most of the time, she -- would get me dressed. Get -- *I'm* the only one that went to church! Nobody else went. They'd get me dressed and, you know, send me with what's-her-name over here across the street. "Oh, let's take him," right. Hey. So I went to St. Anthony's.

Adrienne: Where was that at?

Sam: 1st, yeah, 1st. Everything, across the, well, let's see. Two blocks north of Lowell School. Everything was right there. Walking distance, right. Anyways. But, went to that church off and on. It wasn't a regular thing. I always lied when I, lied when I confessed my sins anyway. I had to leave something for next week, right? [laughter] Anyway. But through the years this was the main church for the neighborhood, St. Anthony's. And then, one day, in fact, I was altar boy there for, I lasted about six months, I think, and they threw me out. Anyway. We used to hear the sermons. And most of the sermons were in Spanish, 'kay. And, and this was the proper Spanish, the Castilian Spanish, and Latin and stuff. Oh my god. Who in the[expletive] understood what the[expletive] the guy was talking about, right? But you went through the motions, right. You go through the motions. Anyways, this one time, he, he talked English this one time. And I was, I was, I guess, I was fourteen -- no, twelve, twelve or thirteen, I guess. He's saying, "Well Sundays is meant for family and you do with the family," which is great, right? And then afterwards we're puttin' the wine away and we're downstairs. For some reason or other I, I thought about it and then I saw what was happening. Well, I always did see it, but it never clicked. And I'm seein' all these guys down there drinkin' beer and smokin' and whatever. And I -- seriously! -- And I'm saying to myself, "Well, what did I hear up on top?" And here, and the preacher was here over here, the priest was there! "My god," I said. God, hypocrisy, all over the place. And I was old enough to understand that. So the church part of it I never took too seriously from that point on. Never took it ser -- well, I never did take it, but more so then. It's what you make of it, I guess. You find your own peace. You don't have to go tell anybody. Anyway.

Adrienne: At the church was it mostly Mexicans? Were they were speaking Spanish?

Sam: Yeah, mostly, mostly Mexicans.

Adrienne: And then aside from, like, school and church, what other things did you and your family do? Like, sports, or, like, you and your brothers and sisters.

Sam: Oh, well, we played softball. Harmon Park. And went swimmin'. But mostly we went to the river bottom. That's where we got our exercise. We went swimmin' there and built a raft and whatever. We just did all sorts of things over there. God. Some of them I don't even want to talk about. God. And then we used to swim, yeah. We used to, the canal. We used to swim from 19th Avenue all the way to 35th. Actually, not swimming. The canal would just carry us over there. To my, my, my uncle. Well, I would say second uncle. He was related to my, my mother's side of the family somehow. Name was Cobos. They owned a dairy over there. Very seldom that -- they were the elite, of course. They had not only the cows, but they had the money too. But they, they had the dairy. So every once in a while we'd just jump in the canal and go over there, right. But that's another part. But we went all over. We walked all over. We used to go to the capitol over there and shoot the pigeons, right. And in those days, you could eat the pigeons. You could eat 'em. Yeah.

Adrienne: Did you all have like a, 'cause you said the parents had that, somewhat of a club. Did the kids do something like that? Or ...

Sam: Well, no.

Adrienne: Not really.

Sam: No. It's just the adult Filipino Community Association, which got started way, way back. And it was carried on, but it wasn't as, as strong, and it just grew weaker as they got older, I guess. And at one point or other, after I got out of the service -- this was in '63 -- they start, the *mestizos* wanted to start, and we got something going, actually. My cousin was the president, my brother was the, whatever, the police guy ... What?

[clicking noise].

Adrienne: It's clicking. I don't know. It would make that noise so I had to stop.

Sam: Oh, anyway, but it, that dismantled after, after about a year. It didn't last too long. There wasn't enough ...

Adrienne: Momentum, maybe.

Sam: Yeah. There wasn't enough people that actually gave a darn, so.

Adrienne: Oh.

Sam: Yeah, and the meetings got less and less. And well, again, you know. And I don't know. You look at the, the *mestizos* and, everybody gets interested, it's -- and, and I'm one of 'em too -- is that you get to certain stage in your life and you're saying, "Well, let's see." And what actually brought it about, of course, is, is the house [inaudible]. Now, Vince talking about the history and going into the Asian -- I said, "Well, OK. Let's put our heart into this. Maybe the Carbajal family, the name will go with the house." OK. That's my main concern, basically, is, if it can be done, that would be great. This is the legacy of my father. Makes sense, right? So my granddaughter can say, or my nephews and they can say, go the museum and say, "Oh yeah, look at that. That's great." Eh? Makes sense. But see, a day late, dollar short for givin' a darn. You know what I'm saying? Growing up, getting the family together and whatever. And it's not losing customs, it's just losing some kind of energy about your past. All of a sudden it just reignites, and this, we're in the reigniting stage. Hey, I wonder what happened to the shuttle. Yeah. Anyway, never mind. I think it took off, didn't it? Did it take off yet? Did you hear any? They were supposed to take off today. Oh well.

Adrienne: Do you remember any kind of, like, treatment, how you were treated -- like, positive or negatively -- while you were in Arizona, because you were Filipino?

Sam: No, actually. *Oh*. Again, that's, see, I never ran across it. And if I did, I ... I don't know. There was no ... You know, and you stop to think. And, in fact, see, I, I look back in, in my school years. And one thing that my father taught me, taught us, is that if you do your own making, nobody is to blame except you. The thing when I mentioned earlier about, if I don't have the talent or whatever, OK, is, it's a possibility, who knows what I could have done, 'kay. I look back in the school, again, I wasn't good in school, I never did like school. That's why, did anybody recognize what I had inside? Did I have the guidance -- in school. Not necessarily, my father, basically, "Yes, go to school, get all the education. You don't want to be doing this all your life." 'Kay? This is his approach. The school, and, looking back, there wasn't too much of an effort to energize you to stay in school and, you know. Everything was copasetic. So long as you don't make waves, you're OK, right. But again, this is thinking now. Looking then, *then*, I don't give, nobody gave a [inaudible] about that, you know. There were some parents you had, basically, that said, "Yeah,

and there was, these are the school kids that like school, that excelled in school.” And there was maybe three out of five-hundred, right, that really excelled, right. Became poets and dancers and [inaudible]. “Oh yeah, he used to go to the school. *Oh, that* [expletive]. *Man, how did he make it?*” Right? [laughter] Anyways. But, yeah, it’s, if I was treated differently, I didn’t notice. I don’t know. And, you know, there was parts in Phoenix, in growing up, that had the White and the Black. They had, they had it separate. I never saw it. I never did. I never saw those [expletive] drinking fountains or the toilets. Of course, I never went to the toilet. I always went in the alley. Anyway. [laughter]

Adrienne: Before it became a federal offense.

Sam: Yeah, right, yeah, right. But anyway, I never saw that. I never did. And my father never brought it up. Nobody ever brought it up in the neighborhood. And we had, like I said, we had whites, we had blacks. Everybody grew up together neat. Makes sense. Anyways. Next question.

Adrienne: So when you, when you went away to, you know, join the forces or whatever, and you did see, like, the, the Black and the White when you were traveling across the country, was there a time in your life where you were like, “Wow, I’m Filipino”? Like, when was the first time you realized that you were, like, Filipino? Was there any time that you identified, the first time you identified as Asian? Or ...?

Sam: I, I don’t, I basically I don’t under -- a realization that who I was?

Adrienne: Mm-hm.

Sam: As far as... I’ve always known that I was ...

Adrienne: That you were Filipino.

Sam: Oh yeah.

Adrienne: There wasn’t like a time in your life where you would, you fit in with everyone, and then someone may have said something, and then you were like, it ... I don’t understand how to ask that question.

Sam: Well, again, as far as, pertaining to who I am, and some people would ask me, well, “Are you Mexican?” I said, “Yeah. Half-and-half.” They said, “Half-and-half of what?” “Filipino. That’s my good side.” I always, that what I used to tell ‘em, “that’s my good side.” But again, it’s, it’s the prominence, it’s the prominent, the strong side. And never felt ashamed of it. I never have. But again, if people think, “Oh, and he’s a Mexican” -- well, some people think I’m Indian, pff. Which, you look back in history and it’s a possibility, Alaskan and all this stuff comes around. Anyways, whatever. But no, I never felt any, you know, any different. And I’ve always been Filipino. Part-Filipino and part-Mexican. *Mestizo*. I’ve always been that. And that’s the word that was used a lot when I was growing up. “You’re a *mestizo*, you be proud of that.” Make sense?

Adrienne: Mm-hm.

Sam: All right.

Adrienne: All right. And now were gonna talk about, like, the actual, like, buildings and things, like, if you can recall specific buildings or structures or sites. Like the house that you lived in. We got the address for that.

Sam: Right.

Adrienne: Do you remember, like, when it was built? Or ...?

Sam: Well, according to, again, Vince has the history.

Adrienne: Vince.

Sam: But, again, it was built back in the 18 -- late 1800s. Or should I say 1900s? 1800s, right? Well, whatever, 18-something. By a Mr. Kunz. Come to find out it was the Montgomery House. But they found out Montgomery never lived in the house. So, but it was always called the "Montgomery House." For whatever reason, who knows. Somebody got paid money. Anyway. Kuntz was the one that built it. Adobe, plastered over, like I said earlier. Anyway. Wood shake roof. Anyway. It was a fish market, I told you, right?

Adrienne: Mm-hm.

Sam: Anyway.

Adrienne: And then, it's still standing today, right?

Sam: Oh yeah, yeah.

Adrienne: And does it still look, like, the same? Have you been by there?

Sam: Oh no. Oh yeah. No, they knocked down the other half. Which they shouldn't have, OK. No, actually. Because from the historical point of view they just destroyed part of the history of it because that part was the fish market. And nobody's gonna know that it was in there. OK, they wanted to go back to the original estate. And, see, to me that was a mistake. 'Cause there was a lot of history on the other part of that house. And my, and talking with my, my mother-in-law, who lived two blocks down, she remembers coming and buying stuff from that house. This was when *they* first moved in. That was before anybody was born, I guess. That's some *old* people there. There's some *old*, *ancient* people, right? And, that was convenient, eh? I met my wife, lived two, two -- we dated. Yeah.

Adrienne: Two doors down.

Sam: But anyway. But yeah, see, see the history? And, and a lot of the older, older people remember that. And they just destroyed the whole [expletive] thing. So, hey, what can you say? But anyway, it's original to, the original, I guess, building. Who knows.

Adrienne: And then...

Sam: Anyway. Let's see, other buildings? We had the Maricopa Meat Packing. We used to steal cigarettes from the cars. [laughter] We did!

Adrienne: And where was, where was that at?

Sam: That, at the end of 7th Avenue. It's on the west side of the street. As you move, when you go into the bridge, that building, now, that used to be a meat packing building, OK. And the cars used to park outside and we used to go in there and steal the cigarettes from the cars. Whoa, it's great. That was the meat packing. And then we had the -- well, it's still there, the, the granary, right there on the freeway. The one that had the grain silos and stuff. That's still there. We used to kill pigeons over there. Those were nice pigeons. That's before the pigeons started eatin' all that stuff. Yuck. Oh, let's see, other buildings. Lowell School, of course, 1st Street and Yavapai or wherever it was. Lily Ice Cream, right. The Ice House, remember that. And then Westward Ho. Biltmore.

Adrienne: Where was Westward Ho at?

Sam: But around the neighborhood, again, St. Anthony's been there ever since I can remember. That's the church. Other than that, there wasn't any, anything spectacular. Other -- Oh, the Riverside Ballroom. Oh, that's right. On Central, Central Avenue and, before, just before you get to the bridge. It's on, it was on the east side of the street. They had, the Riverside, it was a big swimming pool, it was a big park, and they had the ballroom. And a lot of big bands used to come into the ballroom. And this was way in the forties, I guess, way back in the forties. Before I learned how to dance. Anyway. I remember that. There was another place, the Mexicans, Calderon Ballroom. That was on 16th Street -- or 14th Street and Buckeye. It used to be Henshaw. That's where the, the Mexican music was played. That was a nice place though, *god*. Got drunk a couple times there. Anyway.

Adrienne: Your house, I forgot to ask you, how many years did you all live there?

Sam: Well, let's see. I was born forties, thirties, OK. [inaudible] Well, see, from 1940 on to, my sister had it up to 1999. So, it was over fifty years, I guess. Well, in the family, it was one, somebody in the family had it.

Adrienne: All right, we talked about the changes. And you guys didn't have a farm, so I guess we're about done.

Isaac: Did you go to school...

Sam: Huh?

Isaac: The same school, throughout, throughout your childhood?

Sam: What's that?

Isaac: Did you, did you go to the same, same school? Was it always Lowell?

Sam: The ... you mean...

Isaac: For school. Di -- I mean, like, did you go there for high school as well?

Sam: Oh, no, no, no. We go to Phoenix Union High School. Yeah, I graduated out of Phoenix Union.

Adrienne: OK, where was that at?

Sam: Right here.

Adrienne: Oh.

Sam: Across the street.

Adrienne: Oh. I'm like, I don't know.

Sam: Yeah, no, hey, come on. Yeah, it's just across the street, actually. Well, the, the auditorium is still there and building number eight, which was the science building, is still there. And then you had to cross a street, the old stadium was all, and on the other side, the football stadium. And then Phoenix, it used to be Phoenix Tech Incorporated, OK. And then you had Carver School, which was the Black high school. They all incorporated and it was neat.

Sam: At one time, Phoenix Union was the biggest high school west of the Mississippi. Biggest high school.

Adrienne: Now, when you were in high school, was there, was it more diverse than when you were in, like, your first grades? Was it like, were there more, like, were there more Mexicans?

Sam: Yeah.

Adrienne: Or was it just all mixed?

Sam: It was a mixture. *Whoa, my god*, it was a mixture. It was great. And I said, there was no, as far as race animosities going between, you very, very seldom saw anything like that. And that was, that was amazing. And again, it was in the fifties, which, again, [expletive] didn't start happening 'til later on. But there was no, nothing like that going on. And I thought that was beautiful. Afterwards, after, you know, coming back from the service and whatever, and I look back and say, "Great, those were great years." People just got along together.

Adrienne: And the last one is "How would you like to be remembered?"

Sam: As, again, as a very caring. Caring and -- let's see -- intelligent, to a certain point. Mostly caring, though. And as a helpful individual. And in believing in humanity, most of all. If you believe in humanity then, hey, the world's got a chance somewhere, it's got a chance. Otherwise, *forget it*.

Isaac: And one question. What's the most memorable thing you remember about your father?

Sam: The, actually, the work ethics. Very, very, again, not necessarily the strictness of it. Like I said, he depended, basically, he relied on you to be honest, he relied on himself to do whatever, right. But he always -- again, you make a mistake, it's on you, sort of, OK. But his attitude towards, towards life, it was just amazing, again. Because as his child, I never, we never wanted to disappoint him. I never -- because I held him in such esteem. Not because he was my father. He was a good individual. He was a good, simple individual. Never wanted too much, he just, whatever, OK. But he never demanded. He gave you confidence when you needed it. But he never demanded that you do anything. He left it all up to you, and that's great.

[end of interview]

MINO INOSHITA

Interviewed by Scott Solliday
27 October 2006

Scott: OK, this is Scott Solliday and I'm doing an interview with Mino Inoshita, and today is October 27th, and let's see, could you tell me when and where were you born?

Mino: I was born in Santa Maria, California, 1933. That was about the Depression year.

Scott: OK, and what did your family do in California?

Mino: They were farming. Dad had a farm in Santa Maria, truck farming. He had people working for him -- horses, cows, tractors, the whole works. And I don't remember too much about that because I was just about eight years old when we left that place. As the baby in the family, I didn't have to do much work then. So I don't remember all the details about the farm, but it was a nice place.

Scott: OK, and then let's see ... As I understand, when you first came to Arizona it was at the Gila River Relocation Center?

Mino: We were interned in about 1942. I don't remember the first place, but it was Tulare, California. We stayed there temporarily while the camp was being built. And then we moved somewhere late in '42 we ended up in Arizona.

Scott: OK, so you're down there for about ... ?

Mino: Oh, gee, we went in there '42 we came out '44.

Scott: And that's when you came out to Phoenix?

Mino: That's when we came to Phoenix. The reason for settling in Phoenix and not going back to California -- and that, of course, was the parent's decision on that -- but, um, there were three families that were from the same place in Japan my parents were from. And the three families were Tadano, the Matsumori, and the Tanitas. And they sponsored us out of camp. So we had a place to work, a place to begin and start our lives over.

Scott: OK, and as I understand, you pretty much had to get established and it took some time to really be able to -- your family -- to be able to move out on their own?

Mino: Oh, gee ... If I try to remember the details of that ... The story goes that people that left camp were given twenty-five bucks and you're on your own. There wasn't much. We settled with the Tadano family, and they had an old farm house, and that's where we settled and began life all over again. And it wasn't much of a house. No running water, it was a mess. But it was a beginning. I don't know if I could describe that house, but if you could imagine wood that had been exposed to the sun in Arizona for fifty years or more ...

Scott: Starts to turn grey ...

Mino: It was never painted, never stained. It was ... just left untouched. You see the grain on the wood, you see the whole thing turning black, etc. That's what it pretty much looked like. It just had one wall. It didn't have the drywall like we see in modern times, no insulation. That was it. The flooring was probably built off a two-by-four right off the ground, so it wasn't much flooring either.

Scott: Where was this located at?

Mino: Lateral 14. Lateral 14 is in Glendale. Thirty-fifth Avenue, Thirty-fifth Avenue and Glendale, between Glendale and Northern. That's where the Tadano's were farming. They had a, well, a truck farm and they also had a *shoyu* factory there. And pretty much it, so we basically started working for them.

Scott: That was way out in the country.

Mino: That was the countryside. That was the date where you could actually identify every mile we had this irrigation water running down it, we had cotton trees, cottonwood trees, growing on every mile. And, uh, it's different now: you don't see those trees and you don't see the water. But that's the way it was.

Scott: Yeah you can't see the canal pretty much anywhere anymore ...

Mino: Oh no you don't see that, like a lot of these old homes, they used to have their own water wells and you don't see water wells anymore. You gotta go down, what, 500 feet, 600 feet, today, to get water on the ground. You can't do that, so times have changed.

Scott: Now during this time you're in school and ...?

Mino: Yeah, Washington Grammar School on 27th (Avenue) and Bethany (Home Road), no, 27th and Northern (Avenue). Part of their family move, after about a year, maybe less than a year, we moved and built our own house off of ... right behind the church here. And then I went to Isaac Grammar School.

Scott: So that's ... you took the bus to school?

Mino: Yeah, the bus came around, picked us up, and went right to school. Yes.

Scott: Did you help work on the farm when ... ?

Mino: Not until I got into, oh, probably going to high school age. Grammar school, no, I was basically at home. I had the responsibility of babysitting my little sister and taking care of what they call the *ofuro*. *Ofuro*, they were the bathroom or the bathtub, and I used to have to heat up the water. Gather up firewood and burn it under the stove under the bathtub, got it boiling hot for everybody.

Scott: So it was the big Japanese-style bathtub?

Mino: Yeah, they're basically about, oh, I guess five by five, maybe four feet deep, and there's a floating piece of wooden platform you sit on and they sit right down on the bottom so you don't have to touch the hot pan on the bottom. It's boiling hot. That's how we bathed in those days. You washed on the outside and soaked yourself of the bathtub, and that was it. That's famous though. In fact, there in those days a lot of people that left camp, they ended up here in the Valley. It was a temporary stopping point for 'em, right along Indian School Road by the old airport, where 35th and 27th Avenue and about Indian School Road, I think. There was an old airport down there. Right outside the airport there used to be a lot of homes, the Japanese were renting those places. And they all had their *ofuros*. So you go down there and watch that place at about five o'clock at night, you'd think the whole town was burning down, 'cause everybody was heating up their pool.

Scott: Were they outside or inside?

Mino: No, they're inside. They had the small house that contained it in small building itself, separate from the house. And um, that was life then. They used to think of it -- I don't know what you want to call it -- a shantytown today? But that's what it was.

Scott: OK, yeah, I heard about that, going down Indian School, and of course, now, looking down that way and, not a trace of any of those things anymore, but it's certainly a change of ...

Mino: Most of those people that were working there were working for a fellow named Matsuda. Matsuda was a group leader, but he would contract work with some of the larger farmers, and he'd supply the labor, so they worked for Matsuda. As time went on they gradually moved on, went on with their lives. A lot of them went back to California.

Scott: Were most of the families involved in farming in some way?

Mino: It was the only thing they could get, the only thing they could find. The only thing they had, in fact. Most grew up on a farm. We used to hear stories about mostly business or produce calls, adding peoples and they were mostly Japanese peoples that were working there. So lot of them, they had college degrees or whatever and they just couldn't find work anywhere else, and that's where they were working. Times changed, you don't find 'em there anymore.

Scott: Well that's sad, there's practically no farming left anymore, for a hundred miles almost in any direction anymore.

Mino: That's true.

Scott: But I know from early history that it was Japanese farmers in particular who were the first ones to grow lettuce and cantaloupes and strawberries and ...

Mino: They managed to do that in this hot weather. I know.

Scott: Lot of the things we take for granted now that nobody ever ... Well, what I read, that nobody thought they would be able to grow that here. What were some of the crops that your family was raising?

Mino: The key one was strawberries. A difficult thing to do, but, you know, that's where the market was. You gotta do something nobody else can do: strawberries. The return on that kind of investment was pretty good. It's something you can manage, something that requires a lot of manual labor, and that's what the family did. And then you had the big harvesting season. You'd hire a lot of people to help harvest that. You have a short harvest season. Right along Glendale Avenue, that used to be major focal points. There were Tanitas, the Inoshitas, Tadanos, there was Yamamoto, Matsumori, several. Right on Glendale Avenue.

Scott: And those were mostly strawberries?

Mino: A lot of strawberry farms. Well, they had other things, too, but the strawberry was the key crop. Onions, lettuce, cantaloupes, whatever -- that was part of the game, too, but the key one that made the focal point was really strawberries.

Scott: And sounds like those are all crops that really take a lot of work to tend by hand, such as plowing rows and seeds and ...?

Mino: No.

Scott: But you got involved in some of that work later?

Mino: By the time I was in high school, we, I moved off the church property that was over on Glendale Avenue. That's between about ... where was that? That's currently a park there, now. That's the same park I used to farm and work to help my dad. It's about 40th [Avenue], between 40th and about 39th, somewhere in that area. It's on the south side of the road. There's currently a city park there now.

Scott: South side of which road?

Mino: Glendale [Avenue].

Scott: And that's your family's own farm?

Mino: It was owned by Wallace Hoel. Wallace Hoel was the guy that owned that farm.

Scott: And then they leased it from him? Is that how they ... ?

Mino: No, I think they ... Eminent domain, the city took it. He had a lot of land and he lost a lot of it. And that last piece was his but the city grabbed it before he could develop it. That's a story in itself, Wallace Hoel. Wallace Hoel and my brother, Tom, really got along, and they would go into those type of things all the time.

Scott: Yes, I talked with him a couple weeks ago and he talked about it ...

Mino: I hear from my brother 'cause I worked in the [inaudible], I heard ...

Scott: So it sounds like you didn't really go into the farming business?

Mino: No, no! I wised up in the sense that ... Well, I remember I was probably a senior in High school. I was looking in the books one day, and we could see that all the family members working on that farm and you'd count how the income gets distributed among them. It's not much. And so, I decided, well, there's not much room for me, so I'll go look somewhere else. That's where I went into engineering. Discovered everything about the computer business, that was the very beginning of computers, the computer industry, and I went into that.

Scott: Back when you had to punch cards in and ... [laughs].

Mino: Well, they wouldn't be all punch cards, they'd be [inaudible] the drive mechanical devices, and it went way up to the different industry. I ended up with thirty-eight years in that field before I retired. And I saw these circuits go from a computer that wouldn't even fit in this building to one that's just sitting on the desk right there. Looking at the last one I worked on with thirty-five [inaudible] technology, so that's high density stuff, the whole computer. Besides my [inaudible].

Scott: Where'd you go to college?

Mino: ASU.

Scott: ASU.

Mino: Started off it was a teachers' college. When I first started, they didn't have any engineering. That was the best I could do. So I got a degree in graphic design, thinking I would go to California, join my buddies down there and do drafting work. But -- I did that -- but as time went on, I switched over to engineering, got my engineering degree, and went off to the computer industry.

Scott: It sounds like from all of the different people in the Japanese community here, that they had to start farming, but it was really hard work, and like you said, it was not a lot of money, and it seems like that later generation, very few people really wanted to stay in farming.

Mino: Very few. Well it all depends on when, where you're talking of, where you're coming from. But, the whole industry opened up following World War II -- when the loyalty question was no longer a problem -- that Japanese Americans -- the whole industry opened up to us. And a lot of

them started off in California working for the airplane industry. And I used to go down there talk to my old buddies and they'd tell me what they were doing, how much they were making. I just didn't like the life there. I mean, we're talking about people who's going to work, traveling an hour, two hours a day. And there about two or three families living in one house, just as they got started like that. I just didn't want that. So I stayed here in the Valley, and we can get to work in ten to fifteen minutes here. So I decided to stay here, but yeah, the whole world opened up. It was different. When you look at all of the problems in addition to that, prior to that, you hear a lot of problems of prejudice working against you. That probably was true, that probably happened to all the immigrants in this country. But we had our share of that, and a lot of people, very intelligent people, like my brother Tom. Senator Kennedy graduated top of his class and he couldn't find work. But farming was probably the best place to be. It was good money in those days because I still learned that like in Depression years 40 percent of the country is unemployed, well the farm was the place to be. Dad was hiring people, so ...

Scott: You don't have to worry about going hungry.

Mino: Yeah, and really we had a lot going for us. But then following World War II the problem of the loyalty question disappeared. And the whole industry and everything just opened up. And in my thirty-eight years of working, you know, I never saw the prejudice everybody used to talk about. Never even experienced it. I have no idea what they're talking about, OK? So things change.

Scott: That's pretty remarkable change compared to what your parents must have gone through, and ... How about when you were growing up, going to school? Do you remember any ...?

Mino: Oh I don't remember anything big. Typical kids, you know, they're, they have problems here and there, but they're nothing big, they're nothing significant. It may be having in some point in the day you might fight somebody or rattle with them or whatever, but it's gone the next day. It's not hanging over. It's just gone. It's not a constant bickering or constant challenge. I don't remember that.

Scott: So it was little change after going through all this World War II things turned around suddenly. It's interesting for this history because you look at some of the early history and so much of what set the Japanese community apart, it seems like after World War II everyone was more welcomed into American society, is what it sounds like.

Mino: Oh, yes, that big loyalty question disappeared, and I give all the credit -- I don't want to say all, but maybe a lot -- but 442nd and one hundred battle [inaudible], they went there with a [inaudible] and not only because of the war itself they had to fight them but they also had the loyalty question that they fight. They did one [expletive] of a job; the most decorated unit of its size in the history of this country. That's a story in itself.

Scott: Yes, an important one of World War II.

Mino: It matters to those people but, [expletive], the same [inaudible] applies to all the people that served in the armed force in the old days. You had to win that war. Lot of people wanted to have a million people sacrifice their lives. It's a lot. That's everybody, not just Japanese Americans, everybody.

Scott: The whole world.

Mino: Yeah.

Scott: Let's see, now. It seems like this intersection right here was really the center of a lot of what was the whole center of social life ...

Mino: The social center was right in center right here, 43rd [Avenue] and Indian School Road. From what I read, there was a book out on that, somebody [inaudible] documented a big part of it. And mostly because of the [inaudible] they needed a community for themselves, they didn't have television, they didn't have a lot. So the two different churches, there's a Christian church across the street on Bethany Home Road, 43rd [Avenue] and Indian School Road, and the Buddhist church took the south side. And the Japanese community went 'round the corner. They had a school there, gymnasium the whole works. And that was the people taxed themselves to do it. And that's crazy, you don't hear of that in modern times.

Scott: And that was, all the families put in money for ...?

Mino: Well I don't know the actual details of it, but you hear stories like the farmer making his contribution, twenty-five cents for every crate he comes out and goes to the store or goes to the community. I guess I don't know if people were giving their labor and their time to that. I don't know exactly where all the money came from. They basically taxed themselves.

Scott: What that Japanese language school, that was over here on the corner?

Mino: That was a Japanese language school, yes. I never went in there, never experienced it, but that's what I understand the [inaudible]. I was willing to bet that if you were to take a job somewhere -- South America, whatever ... I have a brother that did that: he ended up in South America. And I asked him, "where did you send your kids to school?" He said when some of them got old enough he sent them back to the states. Well, did they grow up bilingual? Yeah, they learned Spanish, whatever, but they went to a private school. OK? To learn English, alright? Well, it's no different the Japanese came to this country, some of them really didn't know where they were going to end up in the long run. So it was understandable they had to train some of them in Japanese. That way they could go back to Japan, they had to have that language.

Scott: Did they still have the school after World War II? Was it still open?

Mino: They lost it.

Scott: So it was only before the war?

Mino: Yeah, it was. I don't know the details of it. It never got started again after the war. It just evaporated.

Scott: Well maybe some of that, there was not so much uncertainty about ...

Mino: I'm not too sure I understood all the reasons for that. Maybe because discrimination was changing, maybe, too, that they saw a lot of opportunities elsewhere. Maybe, um, a lot of them were running from their background, OK, they want to hide it, they just don't want to expose their kids to it. I don't know all the reasons. I do know that there was a lot of mixed emotion, even during and after the war. It took a long time to settle some of this out. Some of them were not understanding why they had to go to an internment camp, believing that, oh, they're bad guys, so they try to change, they're trying to hide their names or whatever. I don't know. I don't know the real reason. Everybody's different.

Scott: Let me go back a little bit, now. Both your parents were born in Japan?

Mino: Yeah, both of them were born in Sumomoto, Japan.

Scott: And then, so they came here obviously before the war?

Mino: Oh, let's see if I can remember. Dad came to San Francisco in about 1901, and they married in about, I'm gonna guess, about 1917, OK, and I don't know how they got to know one

another or what. The story in those days was the picture bride type of thing, so I don't know, I don't do it. So the family started this history in California in about 1917. I don't really know the details.

Scott: OK, and so they had been here quite a while before the war?

Mino: Oh, yeah.

Scott: OK, let's see here now ... What kind of social events were there in this area? Were there dances or some kind of events they might have at the gymnasium?

Mino: Oh, I'm talking about after World War II, the only experience I had was the gym. And it was occupied -- people were living in there during right after they came out of camp. They were living there and after most of them left and moved on, I would say about the Fifties -- mid-Fifties -- that's when they tried to revive it. And one of the first activities was socializing. Young adults would get together, having dancing lessons there, things like that. Western dancing, square dancing, round dancing, or whatever. It started there but it never really got anywhere. The school never reopened, and it needed a lot of fixing, too, so I don't know.

Scott: Because you're, well, out in this area, this is pretty far away from town and ...

Mino: It is, it is. But for the first generation it was the language barrier that was really the social life. They needed some outlet somewhere, and if you come to the church in those days there would be a dance in there. Oh, let's say about one third of the church budget comes from the events. And a lot of them were social events where they would dine, and they'd have things like ... Oh, like here it's pretty much the same, it carried over from the old days. The *bon odori* they'd dance out there, old Japanese dancing, and you'd see the women out there, cooking the food for the event.¹ And you just hear the chatter going on, they'll be cooking, chopping lettuce and cabbage and everything up and they're just talking. And you hear them talking about families, babies, you know all their relatives and what's happened during the last time they talked. And you just hear the chatter going up in the whole kitchen. It's not about sports or anything else, it's about their family. Just chattering and they're really happy doing that. That's their gift to the community, generated money for the church. That is really what it is. The religious event was very similar and all. You have all of these, were churches there, people getting married, people pass on. Everything we'd [inaudible], and that was the social life in a way, because, oh, the time you hear it you're going, "Gee, the only time we get to talk and meet one another is during funerals." And then somebody else passes away, they're just too busy with their life. That was the social outlet. Just amazing.

Scott: As you're growing up, did you eat mostly Japanese food or ... did you start eating more typical American types of food?

Mino: I don't know what typical American food really is, um, but usually rice, something to, everything put on the rice, as opposed to bread. But we did eat bread. And for breakfast, in my working days, we used to eat eggs, everything, we didn't worry about high cholesterol and all that diet stuff. Two or three eggs, scrambled, was not unusual. Steak and everything that came with it, that's not unusual. A lot of rice, and time goes on you get lot of spaghetti. Probably one of the biggest things outside of Japanese food that we did eat would be spaghetti. Love that spaghetti. I love that stuff [laughs]. Japanese foods we had when special events come around, like New Years Day. We celebrate the New Year by wishing everybody a lot of luck in the coming year. But all the wives, females, stayed home -- they cooked dinner. They prepared all kinds of Japanese foods. The males go around visiting everybody else, wishing them good luck in the coming year and all that stuff. And every place besides the [inaudible], you touch upon sake and

¹ The *bon odori* (Bon dance) is a dance that was held during Obon, a Japanese Buddhist festival to honor the dead. It is typically held in July.

a glass of beer or whatever. You'd just go do that and the day begins about nine, ten o'clock. And it doesn't even until twelve, two, three o'clock in the morning. That was the New Year. That's when you eat a lot of Japanese foods. Day to day stuff is a lot of veggies [phone rings] and meat, we did have meat but it was chopped up in pieces. Very little meat in your plate. Call that *okazu*.² All the leftovers you had, you just throw in there and cook it up.

Scott: Let's see, I talked to your brother Tom. I guess he's actively involved in the business part of the farm ...

Mino: Yes.

Scott: ... Do you remember anything about the different suppliers and how that worked with the different suppliers?

Mino: Supplier?

Scott: Or, or not suppliers, the produce business, I guess. That was really more your brother's involved in that, you didn't really do ... ?

Mino: No, I wasn't too involved in that. Uh, there's one thing that's unique, it was Tom himself who was at that age to help dad run the farm. There was a [inaudible] here. Dad was about fifty-nine years old when I was born. That means I was eight years old when the war broke out and, hell, he's what, fifty-nine, aged sixty-seven years old? He's flat out broke, right? But he's got how many kids? He's got nine. And so he tried to restart his life. It turns out the older brother married off, one of them physically wasn't able to do anything, and when it came to Tom, at his age when he got out of high school, he was the key guy running the farm, doing all the latest machinery work. Dad couldn't do it -- he was too old. So they knew they needed him the most, and he knew, he had an interest in it, he had the ability to do it. So it was Tom was that really created his life doing business with other [inaudible]. He was one of those that's unusual. If he wasn't out here, he got, came out of Phoenix High school second in his class, offered a full scholarship to U of A, and he turned it down. Turned it down because the family needed him the most. That's what happened to him. He had to turn, he had a responsibility, so he's the one that really ... Mas [his other brother] was there earlier on, too, but Mas married and he was living on his own farm, he separated out, so Tom was the only one left. So he basically carried on that. Don't remember where the produce shop, but I used to drive to deliver produce to her in the morning and I don't remember the produce [inaudible]. But there's a lot of them out there. I don't remember the business details. When you have five brothers and you're the baby boy in the family, you don't get a chance to do much, you [don't] get a chance to say anything or participate in anything like that.

Scott: I mentioned that it was your parents' house that is one possible historic buildings that we can find here in Phoenix that sometimes seems a little unusual but when we look at it, it's change for this whole community to go from farming to, eventually, after the war, not farming. So it almost seems like an important turning point, moving into just a neighborhood, not really farming anymore. That was when your parents retired from the farming business that they moved into that house?

Mino: That was part of a ... Oh, I don't know how we were fed, but we'd basically been renting all the farms, trying to recover from the economic problem we were having, but yeah, when they acquired the property on Maryland and 63rd [Avenue], that was their first home and they were the owners. But, well, I don't know it was just like any other house at that point in history. It was a nice comfortable place from what we used to have, yeah.

Scott: That was in the fifties they moved in to that house?

² *Okazu* is the Japanese term for the foodstuff that accompany rice in a meal. Usually it is a type of fish.

Mino: Don't remember the exact date, but it would have to be sometime in the mid-Fifties, yeah.

Scott: So they were not really farming anymore at that point was that the ... ?

Mino: Oh, no, they continued. Dad kept one until '80, mid-eighties. I would say probably about '89. And I would say he retired a few years before that, mid-eighties. He's working all along. Mom was there, too. They both were.

Scott: It's a lot of work.

Mino: Oh, a lot of work in there in those days, it's, uh, I don't remember exactly what they had left, but in those days I think green onion was the thing they did. It's something they can still do at an old age, is wrap the green onion, tie 'em and bunch 'em up. That's one thing I remember is green onions. All the heavy stuff, strawberries, that was gone. That's too heavy. Big heavy produce like watermelon, cantaloupe, that was gone. The green onion is a light crop elderly peoples can handle. At that point he just converted it, converted the whole thing into a rental business.

Scott: And that's where your brother Tom was pretty much involved in that, wasn't he?

Mino: A lot, the only one. I was pretty much gone. I went through college and I was getting along. My brother was already gone. He was in South America. Mas was there with his own place. It was all Tom. Tom and Dad, they talked about what they were gonna do and that's what they did.

Scott: Now, were there, by that point, still Japanese farms around this area or were they ... ?

Mino: Yeah some but they were closing down. You know, within ten years of one another everybody was shutting down. That's the value of land for, it just made common sense. You just look at the net worth that you had in your land and look at the trade off for income. That you could make off of that [inaudible] versus farming land. It's the best reward, typically best reward the return on your value. Simple math tells you, "Quit! Forget it!".

Scott: It's just not worth farming anymore at that point when you got the economics turn.

Mino: The likelihood of passing a family fortune, a family business on to the next generation, sure do, and history tells you that if you can pass it on for three generations, you're [expletive] good. Two, you're lucky. OK? Four, almost impossible. They were crossing that threshold. They say that my brother that's our age, and to [inaudible] that's very rare. It could happen though. It does happen. But in all likelihood, it doesn't. And lot of these people that we tell to the point that they're able to send their kids off to college and whatever, and they wise up very quickly. Why would I go back to the farms? That happened to me, second generation. Do I regret it? No, I don't think I regret it. It's sure hard to beat the land values like that growing up, very hard. So I did mine in a different way.

Scott: It seems like it's a very natural common-sense transition there ...

Mino: No, that's all it is. You're forced to do that. You find yourself aging, you can't make the work as hard as you do, you have to do something. You've got the land that you have. Whatever value you have, and you have to sit there and analyze it in terms of reward in terms of return on your value. When you go through that motion of figuring out what you're gonna do. Dangerous, but you don't have much choice.

Scott: It just becomes time to switch out into something else, into some other business. Certainly makes a lot of sense. There's no farmers left anymore.

Mino: Some were very wealthy when they left the farms, OK? But you stop and think about that. I don't know what people were paying for farms, but farming and investing in an asset like farms, real property, has one key advantage in that you can't mess with it. It's not liquid, so you have to work with it, wait for it to grow or whatever, or wait for the industry or development to move toward the land until it changes value. And you can't mess with it, it sits there and it just compounds, OK? Just like you would buy a house today, with very little down, you just hope the appreciation of that house goes up, [inaudible] you can really do in any other way. Well the value of farmland the same way. And if I were to say it compounds at about, oh, three or four percent a year, that would probably be a good lower number for an average farm throughout the country. But there are hotspots in this valley and there's really growing and there's a real demand for the big compound much faster than that.

Scott: That adds up to a lot after quite a few years.

Mino: Ownership and a lot of people will tell you the value of their home is just beaten, right? But over a long period of time its three, four percent. The market place, the stock market, they tell you can get ten percent on the average for about eighty years. But you had to work at it, you had to be careful, you had to have a lot of luck. Same thing. The difference is that you can buy land -- forty, fifty, sixty years ago -- that's farmland. Warren Buffet was [inaudible] seven bucks a share was the story recently we saw on television, and we share it with over a hundred thousand dollars today. Same thing.

Scott: This whole area was covered with farms and now they're all gone and, you know, we haven't seen a lot in terms of photographs, and we're not sure what was really out here. So I'm wondering if you can describe a little bit about the farm. You had the house that the family lived in was right there on the farm, is that true?

Mino: Probably the one I stayed in the longest was about, oh, late forties, late forties to probably mid-fifties, before we made that first house we talked about. And that was a farmhouse we rented. We rented the whole acreage we were farming. Nothing much, you know, made out of wood, had running water, had electricity in it. But it wasn't anything close to a modern house, modern today. I don't know how to describe it. The basic foundation was probably a two-by-four base material with plank wood on top of that for the flooring. And over time that wood curls and you see the floor is no longer flat. The edges warp up and then you can look down in there and one of the places where you can push dirt right through that thing. And you looked at the walls they were very rarely painted. The wood is generally black, like it's been rotting so long out in that hot sun. I don't know, there wasn't much to see.

Scott: Now did you have, were there other things, like a shed or barn?

Mino: Yeah, a shed. The shed is generally a basic structure with a ... with a tin roof on it. You normally see tin. Very inexpensive material to cover a roof on. Most of 'em were made out of wood. Most were wooden structure, two-by-four, two-by-six, and whatever. They're open on the side, but there's not much. Basically, just shade. I remember some of them, the strawberries, we had, you had to move them around, they were temporary structures, and so we used -- there's no foundation on it, it's right up on the soil, and you just put poles up and we hang those palm trees trimmings ... and use that to cover it, put the shade up when packing your strawberries in that place, and ...
I dunno, it wasn't much.

Scott: Did you have a well for your water?

Mino: No, that particular house we did not. The city would supply water in that place. Some of the farms did have a well. Right across the street, he had his own water well. He had a more modern house but basically the same material. But he managed to keep his up to date. He painted it and whatever. It was a nice house.

Scott: And then, it seems, each farm would also have to be right next to a lateral for irrigation. Is that ...?

Mino: Yes, we were right next to the irrigation ditch. Yeah, there wasn't much room there. You often find yourself right next to the road, too, because you had most of the land for farming. So you got squeezed into a little corner somewhere and that's where you had your house, and your tractor, and your equipment. And there'd always be a road and irrigation ditch right near there somewhere.

Scott: So all that in one place and then just the fields taking up the rest of the land.

Mino: Right.

Scott: OK, because it's ... hopefully be able to recreate some of that, but that's what it was.

Mino: Yeah it's nothing [inaudible] in terms of modern times. Off in those days, one of the things that probably stood out more than anything else that you always had the outhouse somewhere round the area, too. That's one thing that you don't see in modern times. And the zoning rules were not always restricted. I remember having chickens and everything growing out around the house. That was life.

Scott: Yeah, I know. I think my homeowners' association would be very upset if I tried to have chickens in my back yard [laughs].

Mino: Oh, yeah, you won't see that.

Scott: OK, I think that's all the questions I have here. Is there anything else you wanted to add, any other comments?

Mino: Its hard to understand the perspectives of things, but I think for general information that I think I'd like to comment about is the loyalty question that hit us in 1941, and the thing that's most understood or heard about in public forum is basically prejudice, etcetera, etcetera, against Japanese. However, you rarely hear the argument the government actually had and the reason why they did it. They did what they did, and you rarely hear that argument and I think its valid, OK? It was just unfortunate that I happened to be Japanese and I'm the one that had to get interned, too, but, and I'll challenge anyone that when you move to a foreign soil, of which you're not born in, right? You'll find that your loyalty always goes back to the country that you're from. Most of the time that's what happens. Particularly when you come from a country that you love, you're enjoying yourself there, you have no real problems about living there, suddenly you get this place and you're living somewhere else, and it becomes a conflict where you are, then, and where you came from. And always your loyalty lies in the country where you're born, so, our parents ... What I'm trying to get at there, is should a war break out between the country you're in and your home country, there'll all be questions that come up, no matter where you are, and that's what happened to us. And the only thing that makes it different is that -- to tell you the truth -- I have no idea where most of the *isseis* of the first generations of Japanese were at that point in their lives. Where were their true loyalties? OK? Long after the fact ,today, they tell you they were loyal to the United States, but at that time in history, what was it? OK? And the government didn't have time to figure it out, they didn't know us. We had no proof of record of where we were, so it became a challenge, and of course they took the wrong road. They just said they didn't trust anybody so we all had to go into the camps. As opposed to having the fighting break out right in California, somewhere Who knows whether there's a Pearl Harbor following the Pearl Harbor, and so on. So they had a decision to make. But being born in this country, you're enjoying everything in it, right? And I am pretty sure I had what was called dual-citizenship at that point in my life. But I didn't need it. I had no reason to think of any other place 'cause I was born right here in this country, so in that respect I think I can understand the frustration that people had, but

you can also see that the government had a real responsibility to protect the people in the country, so they have to make a call. And that's the call. OK? And it turned out to be wrong. But the people that formed the 442nd realized that that's what the problem was, that's what made them fight so hard. They realized they had two problems on their hands -- the loyalty question and the war itself. And so when you think about that, and you put it in today's perspective of the Iraqi war, you're seeing something every similar, OK? But it's been played down mostly because of the past fifteen ... all this talk we've had in the past, but who knows what could happen?

[end of interview]

TOM INOSHITA

Interviewed by Scott Solliday with Donna Ito
8 October 2006

Scott: OK. This is a, this is an interview with Tom Inoshita.

Tom: *Inoshita.*

Scott: *Inoshita.*

Tom: *Inoshita.*

Scott: And the date today is October 8th, and this is Scott Solliday. And, let's see, could you tell me, where were -- when and where were you born?

Tom: I was born in Santa Maria, California, October 24, 1931. I think we lived there until about age nine, when the war broke out. And then we went to, to Tulare Assembly Center. And from Tulare we came to Arizona in 1942.

Scott: Gila River?

Tom: Yes. And we've been here, well we moved from Gila River to Glendale, Phoenix area. And we've been here ever since.

Scott: So after, after the war you came up to this, this area right here where we're at?

Tom: Yes. Actually, we came out, oh, just before the end of the war. Because, oh, the government opened the gates to the camp to leave approximately a year before the actual VJ-Day. So we lived in the community for about a year, and then the war ended. So we, we were in the community when the war ended.

Scott: Now, you were still fairly young at that time. You would have been a teenager at that time.

Tom: Yeah, about thirteen-years-old.

Scott: And what did your family do when they moved out to this area?

Tom: Oh, my father went to work for the Tadano family, who was processing soy sauce. And my mother worked as a farm laborer with, oh, Japanese crews. I think they called it at that time the Matsuda Gang. M-A-T-S-U-D-A, Matsuda Gang. And that was, oh, just plain, oh, farm laborers. They did all sorts of different things that Mr. Matsuda could work out with the farmers in the area. I think, though, the most, most of the time, oh, they did fairly difficult work. Oh, like, what they call thinning. They thinned a lot of lettuce. They thinned a lot of other vegetables as well. So, oh, and thinning is an operation that's pretty hard. It's, it's, you stoop over and you, you're cutting the weeds out at your feet level with a short-handled hoe. Then there were other, little other jobs that required a lot of bending over. Oh, for instance, oh, they used to turn vines in the summertime. And a cantaloupe vine, or a watermelon vine, or a honeydew vine, it grows on the ground, and so you have to pick it up and lift it out of the, you know, the water furrow. And so that was back-breaking work as well.

Scott: ... short-handled hoe ...

Tom: Yes. Yes.

Scott: To be able to do that is a lot of hard work.

Tom: Right. So, so they did a lot of that type of labor. And it was easy for, for the Mr. Matsuda to organize, you know, a gang of Orientals to, he could go out and do these different jobs. So I think that's why, that's what they did. Oh, my mother and father both, they graduated from that type of thing into farming on their own. And so about _____, the transition was to eventually having a farm of their own.

Scott: To be someone's employee and then save money. And did they lease land or buy their own land on their own?

Tom: They, they leased the land. Oh, the first parcel that they leased was on 63rd Avenue, between Grand Avenue and Northern. Oh, if I remember correctly, the person who leased the land, his name was Williams. so we called it the Williams Ranch. On that place, which was just ten acres, oh, they planted strawberries. And, oh, course at that time, a small strawberry patch could produce tremendous volumes of dollars. And even though it was labor intensive, to people at that time who could not be employed elsewhere, it was a very good way to go, at that time.

Scott: Yes. 'Cause you say "labor intensive," it seems obvious that it would -- strawberries, you're not gonna use a big tractor and ...

Tom: You can't. You can't use big tractors, right.

Scott: Everything has to be done by hand.

Tom: Right.

Scott: And, and it was really -- was that ten acres of family operation? Or, or ...

Tom: Yes, it was a family operation. Yes.

Scott: Did they ever hire any other workers to, to help?

Tom: Oh, yes they did. They, oh, you, you have to hire helpers to plant the vines. Oh, when you start out, you plant the, the mother strawberry plant about three feet apart, down the furrow. And then from the mother strawberry plant, a little vine comes out, and have to plant that little vine in the dirt in a straight line. And then, with irrigation water and taking care of it, it takes root. And you have now two plants. And it, and it closes the gap between the three feet. On about the third transplant, you now have a solid row of strawberry plants. And so, by the time it happens a year later that it's ready to harvest, there's an intense amount of work involved in that. And of course, oh, if you, if you take an older person ... my mother and father were advanced in age by this time. Spending all that time on that farm there growing strawberry plants was very productive for them. You know, they, they, otherwise they would be sitting home trying to find welfare or something like that, you know, which they didn't do. They, they worked all the time out there. And of course the crop paid for their effort, eventually.

Scott: It would just take that first couple of years of establishing it before it really started to, to produce.

Tom: Yes.

Scott: Now, strawberries are not ... you don't hear about strawberries a lot in Arizona today. Is that, is there some reason why after a while the strawberries were no longer grown here?

Tom: Well, it, it didn't exist even before they came. It came into existence when they left the camps and tried to find something to do. So they created the industry, the strawberry industry was created by these people who came from the camps. And then they maintained it while they

were able to work. And then of course, as soon as the kids came along, oh, there was no reason for that to continue. That's just too labor intensive, too difficult to do. And so they, *they* did it during that period of time, and it was the only way it could've been done.

Scott: Yeah, the, the following generation just wasn't usually interested in, in sort of that.

Tom: Right. Right.

Scott: And of course, a lot of the modern farming, they're not interested in that because they try to do large areas.

Tom: Right.

Scott: Where you shouldn't use the [inaudible] machine or these ...

Tom: Right.

Scott: So it just didn't fit in with the modern type of agriculture.

Tom: Right. Doesn't, it doesn't fit. And no one wants to do that kind of hand labor anymore. It's just, it just doesn't work. Although, I gotta say that in Arizona the, the strawberry industry could be recreated by, say, another group of disadvantaged immigrants, as an example. Oh, the, the strawberry grown in Arizona has a unique flavor. And that unique flavor brings people from everywhere to eat the Arizona strawberry. Now, now, if you, if you taste California strawberries, it seems bland compared to the Klondike variety which is grown here. Oh, if you eat the Arizona variety, it's so unique that it, even though it's dead, it would, it would create its own market the minute someone took the time and the energy to create it, to grow it, and produce it, and sell it. And that's what the Japanese did at that time.

Scott: Yeah, that's, seems to be one of the common complaints that people have often is that the food you buy in a grocery mart, in the supermarket today doesn't have quite as good a flavor as would just certain varieties that were grown. And when it's grown in such a large quantity, it just isn't the, the right flavor for a lot of fruits.

Tom: Yeah. The, the, the Arizona soil around here had a lot of alkali in it. And the alkali gave the strawberry that unique flavor. So that unique flavor is what a lot of, you know, whaddya call 'em? - - gourmets or whatever -- That's what made 'em look for that. So, yeah, even myself, I, I miss the old Arizona-grown strawberry.

Scott: Yeah, you don't see that too much anymore. I guess some of 'em, I think somewhere in Arizona they, they grow strawberries.

Tom: Yeah.

Scott: Not very much.

Tom: No. I've never seen 'em, actually, for the last five years or so. I haven't seen 'em.

Scott: Now, did your family live right there at the farm?

Tom: Yes.

Scott: And you had a house there?

Tom: Oh, wait a minute now. The very first ranch, which was the Williams ranch, the family lived right here on the church property.

Scott: Oh, right, right where we're at?

Tom: Yeah. They, they built a shack, and the family lived in the shack. And then went out to farm, work on the strawberry. And of course, they worked on the, with the Matsuda gang, and worked on the strawberry. And you know, after the regular work and weekends and whatever, they worked on their own farm. And then gradually they worked for themselves entirely and didn't go to work for the Matsuda gang. And then they were, at this time, they were now growing and producing and living off of their own farm profits.

Scott: 'Cause it's, yeah, good. Well, for, since it, it seems like almost all the Japanese community was mostly involved in farming, which kinda spreads people out a lot. So it wasn't ... But, but it, I think it, in the earlier years, I had heard that there were a lot of farm workers lived along Indian School, goin' down ...

Tom: Oh yes.

Scott: ... from, let's see, what is it? To the east of here?

Tom: Yeah, the biggest majority of 'em seemed to have lived between 27th Avenue and 43rd, on both sides of Indian School. My wife comes from that, that community of farmer, farm laborers. Oh ... I, I think they might be, might be someone else to, who would know about that a lot better than I would. I didn't live in, within that community, you know. And my wife was very young. Oh, I think the, the, her oldest brother Hideo might remember a lot of the incidents there at that camp. The mother and father have both passed away, so. And my wife had sisters and brothers younger than her, but they would be too young to understand it. Um, I don't know who else there is. Somebody older than me that lived in that community would be the person you probably need to interview, um, to find out about that part.

Scott: It seems that this location right here was really sort of the center of the community, though. The Buddhist temple and JAACL. Which I think, I believe that was what was called the Japanese Hall?

Tom: Yes.

Scott: The, the old brick building that was over on Indian School.

Tom: Yes.

Scott: So this was really sorta the center of the Japanese community in this whole area then?

Tom: Yes. We, we, of course, built our shack, our house behind the old church building which was located [inaudible], see being north of us here, north of where we are now. So, there were three buildings, three families that built houses back there. There was Matsumoto, ourselves, and two Sunitas. And we were there possibly two years, and then we moved away to another farm ranch house. We did. I don't know what happened to the others, you know, but we went the farming route.

Scott: And then after you left the house that was here, do you know if another family moved in after that?

Tom: Oh, I heard that another family moved into the building. And they, they were here until they, well ... Oh, I can't think of the name of the fellow. I'm sure my older brother knows their name, but it escapes me.

Scott: So it was, it was sort of temporary housing, and then everybody would

eventually ...

Tom: Moved on.

Scott: ... get established somewhere else with their own farm or business or whatever they would do.

Tom: And they, and they moved away, yes, uh-huh. And eventually they, the buildings were removed and all that remained was the old temple. Which, which now, when I say "old temple," I'm talking about the temple that eventually burned down. You know, that burned down in 1959. Yeah.

Scott: And that was when it was located just to the north of here?

Tom: Yes, yeah. My wife and I were the last ones to be married in that old temple.

Scott: Now, we've also found that there was a, what was called the Japanese Association, which was all the way down in downtown Phoenix. Do you know anything about that?

Tom: Well, no. You know, the Japanese Association, that happened before my time. So I wasn't involved with that. And I think that, that the Japanese Association is part of the, well, OK, you know, the eventual lawsuit that happened in 1941, I think the Japanese Association had some effect on that. And so it's been not discussed very much with me. I'm a newcomer by that standard. So I don't know.

Scott: That was all before the war.

Tom: Yeah.

Scott: They didn't really _____.

Tom: Right. And I did not, oh, I did not inquire into the thing. Because at that time, oh, the, the wounds were still there. And so I did not open of those wounds. At least I tried not to, you know. So I, at the same time, that made me ignorant of the old association.

Scott: Now, so you were a teenager when you came out to this area. So you went to high school around here?

Tom: Yes, I went to, oh, Phoenix Union High School, from behind the church. Well, lemme, lemme back that up. Oh, when we first came behind the church, I went to Isaac Grammar School. That would have been the last half of the seventh grade. And then I went all of eighth grade at Isaac. And then from Isaac I went to Phoenix Union High School and graduated from Phoenix Union High School in Nineteen- ... I'm class of 1950.

Scott: OK, that's, that's a little distance from here. How did you get to school then? Did you ride, did they have a school bus?

Tom: OK, we, we, from here, we walked to Grand Avenue and 35th Avenue. There was a little store there called Harry's Food Market, and we would gather there and the bus would pick us up. This, it was a City of Phoenix bus. So they took us to the depot, depot at, oh, Washington and about, oh ... 7th Avenue. And then from there the Phoenix Union school bus would take us into school. Oh, that was a pretty daily routine, you know.

Scott: And then after high school, what business did you go into?

Tom: Well actually, in our place, I became the farm's salesperson when I was about a junior in high school. And so in the mornings I followed the routine of going from the house, loaded with the vegetables, and I would deliver it to the produce market, five o'clock in the morning. And then from there I would go to the school. And then I would go to, oh, back home, after school. I'd pick up the vegetables, which were already processed, and deliver them to market for the afternoon delivery. And then go back home and pick up the evening, the afternoon harvest, and load it up and be ready for the next day. So this routine was already pretty much established by the time I was, oh, I graduated from high school. And there was, there was no other way. I just had to continue it, I didn't have a choice. 'Cause the income from that was needed by everyone.

Scott: [inaudible] the whole family.

Tom: Yeah. And so since that was, since that was my area of responsibility, oh, I had to continue it on. Even though I, you know, I was offered hardship scholarships, and I was a, I had fairly good grades, and I, economic circumstances, I would have gone on into engineering college, but I, I didn't have any choice. We had to eat.

Scott: Now, did you sell the produce directly to different grocers?

Tom: No.

Scott: Or was it wholesale?

Tom: The way that the produce market works is, is they have people who work on a commission basis. And the standard at that time was these brokers would contact all of the grocery stores, all of the shippers. And they would present your product to them. And they would put your orders together. And so I mostly had to, oh, stay in contact with the brokers and coordinate their orders and, of course, I had to relay them home. So, from the standpoint of the schoolboy time, oh, I had to coordinate the orders early in the morning. And then, oh, when I got home in the afternoon I would coordinate the next day's activities. And so it was a constant thing. The thing about it is, though, is that at that time the products, I mean, that my father and mother and other rest of the family, they would package the items, box 'em and all that. And normally their work was above average. And so because it was good work, the, the person selling them was always able to stay ahead of the game. So if you have a good quality product, it's always in demand and so it's fairly easy to keep it coordinated. And so really the key person that was involved in that was really my father, because his work kept it coordinated. Because just quality products sell, all the time. And so I was just an order-taker at that time. You understand what I'm saying, huh? I did speak English, of course. And so my father, he, he would have trouble at the market because he spoke Japanese and, and it was a little bit difficult. So I guess it, it becomes the way that you have to go at that time.

Scott: It sounds like the quality of the produce, it's, it's the growing, but it's also the harvesting and packing and everything that was done, that was done very carefully to make sure it was a good quality.

Tom: Yes, yeah. Oh, but then, too, though, you know, my father and my mother and the people helping them, you know, you, if you control that stuff and do a nice job of packaging, it always will sell. And so, so for me, during my last two years in high school, oh, we were busy all the time. It, we, that was our way of making a living. So at the point of graduation, I didn't have any other choice. I just went on, you know, just kept on working. You, at that time there was a brother in business college, another one in high school, another sister in high school. And so, if I were to ever quit doin' what I was doin', we would all be starving. So there was no, no other choice.

Scott: Very [inaudible] part of the ... if you're growing food, you still have to sell it. Now, now where was the, where were you delivering this to? Was it down in downtown Phoenix?

Tom: Oh no, no. We, we had a, at this time, we were mostly on the, oh, Hoel Ranch, H-O-E-L. And the, the ranch farm was located on 39th Avenue and Glendale Avenue. It was forty acres. And on that forty acre farm, um, we, we started there after the Williams Farm. And so we were there from about 1948 to about, oh ... 1965 or so. We farmed vegetables there the entire time. So, oh, during this time, after high school and for about fifteen years afterwards, the entire family actually progressed, oh, from that ranch. You know, the income that came from that ranch. Oh, um, my part in it, I think, it was best illustrated by the, when I started at it, our gross sales were, like, 30,000 dollars a year, for the entire farm. And when I left, sixteen years later, approximately, the gross sales were like 250,000 dollars a year. So the, the, the growth in the sales and the dependency on it, oh, is illustrated by the entire family is dependent on that income stream.

Scott: Now that was, that's a big difference in the gross sales. Did the expenses go up a lot in that time? Or ...

Tom: Oh, yeah. But then, too, I think the biggest majority of the difference was that when the farm first started, there was no tractors. They, they started with old used tractors, and by the time I left that place we had four tractors, modern tractors, cultivating machines and different things. And those things is what made the increase in gross possible.

Scott: OK, quite, 'cause that's quite a, quite a difference there. So it was really, it took a long time to get that established. It took all those years to kind of develop the farm.

Tom: Yeah. But back in the Williams Farm they, I cultivated the strawberries behind a horse. My father did most of it. He operated the old horse cultivator, and I would help him. But of course my father had to feed the horse and he did all the suiting the horse up and getting it all going. And then I would have to grab the handlebars and take it on from then. But when it, when I got done with that part, then he would have to take care of the horse and all that. So I was more of a helper at that time. But that tells you the level of machinery on the farm at that time. So when we went to the Hoel Ranch, we started with just that, no tractor. And, you know, in the end you wind up with tractors and modern machinery and trucks and cars and that sort of thing.

Scott: And now, how large was the Hoel Ranch?

Tom: That's called the Hoel Ranch.

Scott: And how large was that? That was ...

Tom: That was just forty acres.

Scott: Forty acres. But that's a lot more. The other one was ten acres.

Tom: Yes.

Scott: The Williams. So this one has a lot more land to sort of ...

Tom: Yeah. And you know, if you, if you grow vegetables, and you have intensive labor, you can grow intensive labor crops that generate lots of money, and the amount of money that you generate from these intensive crops, is, makes everybody able to live off of the products that were created at that time. And of course, you know, the creation of that product is really the function of the Arizona soil. And so, nothing secret about it, it's just hard work. And, I mean, you make your own product, and, um, you know, that ... A family today, doing first class work, I'm sure could create their own environment, even in this modern world today. As long as they were to work on labor intensive items, you know. It's not impossible. It can be done.

Scott: Yes, well, for something, a good crop that brings in a lot of value, why, that's a lot different than some of the other things. It sounds like you were never involved in cotton farming.

Tom: Uh, yes, I was. Mr. Hoel had, in addition to this forty acres, he had land that he had separately from the ranch that we rented. And on this separate, separate land -- that was about 160 acres -- and on 160 acres, he grew cotton. And, um, Mr. Hoel himself was about fifty-six years old at the time, and I was about sixteen at the time, and so, Mr. Hoel hired me at first to drive his tractor cultivating the cotton. So then, I grew from cultivating the cotton to where, just, just plain, uh, driving skills, if you want to call it that. I was able to cut down the cost of maintaining that cotton. Eventually, he made me a sort of a percentage partner in the cotton growing enterprise. And so I started in the cotton growing that way. Eventually, I started growing cotton as well, from the ...

Scott: Now was that a common arrangement? Where you would get a share of the crop for working for some one?

Tom: You know, I actually don't know. It wasn't that common sort of arrangement, but it was a way to get me to work with him on the part of his farm where he was growing cotton. As an example, I could cut a straight row and I could cultivate in a [inaudible] manner and be inches away from the cotton, and rather than letting the weeds grow, I could cover them up with accurate cultivating. And, so ... This is the type of thing that I did that made Mr. Hoel offer me a percentage of the cotton for working for him. If you had a farm laborer walk down that same row with a hoe, it would take him maybe an hour to get down that row. With, with a tractor, [inaudible], I could cover that line in five minutes. And so, by the time you got done with 160 acres, you're way ahead. So I think the driving skill is what made the partnership possible. If you're, if you're a young man, and the labor market pays thirty-five cents an hour, and you get a percentage of the cotton crop, there's a whole lot of difference.

Scott: (inaudible).

Tom: I don't remember the numbers, but we would be talking, maybe, ah, eight-, nine thousand dollars. For a sixteen-year-old boy in those days, that was a lot of money.

Scott: Um, let me see here ... Now you mentioned that your family farmed at the Hoel Ranch, that that was up until about 1965?

Tom: Yes.

Scott: And did your family, was that, did your family continue farming after that? Or were you still farming?

Tom: Well, by this time, no. My parents were elderly, and by this time, the older members of the family, they went, like, the sisters got married, they moved away, and so ... My brother, the oldest brother, he had tuberculosis, went to the hospital, took him to school. By this time he was gone. Younger brother, he went to college, had graduated from Arizona State, and about this time, he was on his own. And so everybody was out of the way about 1965. And so, that ended that.

Scott: Seems like about that time that all the houses were being built.

Tom: The ranch itself, the ranch itself was acquired by Mr. Hoel, um, just after about 1906. You see, he was just a cowboy whose dream was to have a ranch and be able to live off of the ranch when he got old. I met him when he was about fifty-five years old, and he had cancer. I was fifteen at that time, and he had cancer at age fifty-five. Um, that was 1948. The land boom in Arizona began, began about 1954 in that area. Right? I mean, going back a little, the town of Phoenix was 35 to 50,000. And then, beginning in the early fifties, it jumped. Mr. Hoel's lands, he sold the first forty acres of the two hundred ... -- he had 210 acres -- he sold the first forty acres of the 210 acres about this time. I don't remember the exact year, but it would have been about 1953, 1954. He sold it for 160,000 dollars. And of course, about that time, he was just, he was

just a cowboy and I'm just a tractor driver, but he did own the land. And so when he got the 160,000 dollars, he stopped by the tractor and said, "Hey, I got this check for 160,000 dollars. What do I do with it?" And so I helped him go down to the bank, open a checking account. And about that time they paid, like, about three percent ... And so we got that all set up, and you go back to driving the tractor again. That doesn't take very long, you know. So that was, that was the start of a real estate relationship. That real estate relationship that began about that time continued on until he passed away at ninety-six. So I ... Ninety six when he passed away, and let me see ... he was fifty-five when I started off with him. So it was a long relationship. The knowledge I have of real estate started there. And so when I quit the farming in '65, I was really already into real estate.

Scott: And so you were ... working mostly with Mr. Hoel? That's right, because he had the land there. Now, was he actually developing the land?

Tom: No, he sold the land -- the 160,000 acres [dollars] -- for 4,000 [dollars] an acre. By the time we sold the next piece, it was 8,000 an acre. By the time we sold different pieces, the, the, the boom, and the land prices, was, began about 1953, '54. You know, by 1970, we're collecting 20,000, so maybe we sold these first pieces too early. You know what I'm saying? I think in the end, in the end, Mr. Hoel had a large amount of value in the real estate.

Scott: He was selling some of that land and buying land in other places?

Tom: Yeah. We sold, out of the first 160 acres, we got -- I'm Sorry, 160,000 dollars -- we sold forty acres at 160,000 dollars.

Tom: All of these real estate deals, from the time he was, from the time I was fifteen and he was fifty-five. He passed away at ninety-six. And, of course, the relationship ended with his death.

Scott: [inaudible] in the 1980s?

Tom: I don't remember the exact year. He was, he was ... I'd have to do some mathematical work to figure that out, but ...

Scott: But it's a very long time.

Tom: Yeah.

Scott: Um, OK here, um ... Let me ask you a little more about the Japanese community. Was there certain events, different things that, because ...? There was ... a lot of families were spread out over a large area. Did they get together special events?

Tom: Oh, yeah. I got involved in the ... in the church mostly because my father built the house -- or the shack -- behind the church. And that happened, I was maybe fourteen years old, fifteen years old. So we were naturally, be involved with that part of it. And so ... And of course, at that time there were [inaudible] that lived in that community, and there was [inaudible], there was Henry Ishikawa, Jerry Matsumoto. There was a group of about ten or eleven kids. We were growing up. So I went to, um, high school, I went to Isaac, started in high school, with a space of about three, or maybe four years that I didn't have those vegetable selling responsibilities. I started that about three years where I didn't have any work and I roamed the area with the rest of them. So we went swimming in the canals, and went to whatever we did. I, I ... I can't recall completely, but we played basketball, did a lot of things. Of course, they continued on when I started working with the vegetables. Yeah, we were ... That's something I have to think about to relate it correctly, but yeah, but we were teenagers. And we saw ... we played basketball, went dancing in the old gymnasium ... dancing in the old gymnasium. We did all of the church community things, from the old church. I went to school, and all that, from behind the church there where we lived.

Scott: So it was all in that area just north of here?

Tom: Just north, just north of us here. This area south of the church was a small ranch the Ozasa family farmed. They had a boy, his name was Senji. His father made a living by growing tomatoes. So, um, there again, tomatoes is a ordinary crop, but if you do a nice job, package it right, [inaudible], that was a family that could make a living doing a nice job of the tomatoes. That was the Ozasa family. The line just north of that block wall that you see there, just north of the classroom, there used to be a fence there. That was the ... South of that was the Ozasa farm. North of that was the back of the old church. There were three houses in that area. The first house was, at the south border, was the Tsunitas. Just north of that was us. And north of that was the Matsumotos. And of course, the final [inaudible]. And the end was the church itself, and the minister's residence, and, uh, eventually, a [inaudible] classroom.

Scott: [inaudible] gymnasium, also?

Tom: No, not ... The gymnasium was JAACL property, on the west of the church. The church itself, the entire property is ten acres, almost square. Two acres on the east end is the church. Eight acres on the west end was JAACL. And JAACL had a gymnasium surrounded by about five houses, five buildings, and the gymnasium was in the center. The gymnasium was big enough to play a full-scale basketball in. And there was a stage on the end. The basketball court needs to be approximately 55 feet wide by 96 feet deep. And there has to be a little bit of room on the sides, a little room on the end, and the stage. So we're talking about a building that was about 140 feet long and about 80 feet wide. I'm just guessing, because I don't remember.

Scott: Was it a brick building?

Tom: A brick building. Red brick building.

Scott: It sounds like what they originally called Japanese Hall. That was the name ...

Tom: Yes, Japanese Hall, the gymnasium. We ... the young people -- and I was part of it -- we have social activities of all types there. Whatever we could do at that time. And gradually, of course, the different families that were involved in that [inaudible], they moved away. Some of them I never saw again, from that time. But they were all ... It served its purpose. It served a definite need at that time. There were people ... When the government opened the gates to the camps, these people had nowhere to go, some of them, so they just wound up over here. From the camp to here is not very far. And so they, a lot of them, ended up in the rec hall that way. The rec hall itself got divided, and so one family would get started, put up the suitcases and all and make a wall. Next family would come, and they had more suitcases and whatever, and cardboard, and make another wall. And so, I don't know how many families lived in there, but yes, by today's standards it would have been a fire hazard and everything else, you know. But these families, they needed that.

Scott: So they could get by at that time.

Tom: Right. [inaudible] in the houses. Some, I'm sure, would remember the names of the people, but I can remember the Matsumotos, the Kajikawas, Ozasa ... There were more than that, but I don't remember their names, you know.

Scott: Now, do you know ... these were families that had originally been in Arizona before the war, or [inaudible] California?

Tom: I think most of them were, although I don't know. And there again, too, there was ... Due to that lawsuit that was involved, there is an undercurrent of ... to stay quiet about it because you don't want to open any wounds, you know. So I was always conscious of it. I still, I still do not

want to do anything to injure the relationship between those groups. There's a ... there's a whole different philosophy between Christianity and Buddhism to begin with and so it's difficult. And I've tried to [inaudible], and I've tried to keep peace with them. There was an actual lawsuit over it, and that tells you how bad it was at one time.

Scott: Now was there also, you know, the Japanese language school that was in this area, also.

Tom: Oh, I've heard about it, but I don't know much about it.

Scott: It might have been earlier. That might have been before the war.

Tom: Oh, I think, from what I've heard, the Japanese language school was active before the, ah, 1940. The lawsuit happened in 1941. OK? Until the Japanese language school was active before that. And that's what I heard. I don't ...

Scott: [inaudible].

Tom: No. I don't know that. I suspect, however, from the lawsuit -- and I have, at one time I did read the lawsuit -- but I read that when I was twenty-five years old, twenty-seven years old. I was a young man and I read the lawsuit. My perspective of at that time, and today is probably different. I was probably more, more ... Well, I didn't have the background really to look at it at that time. I would like to read that over again today, but the philosophy that were involved in that I think were more religiously, the more religious atmosphere then than we realize today. I mean, there's a whole lot of difference between Buddhism and Christianity. Some people are real anti-Buddhist. Some people, of course, are Buddhists. You know? So it's ... it's there. I don't know how to correct it.

Scott: Now after the war, it seems that things changed quite a bit, and I know ... I don't find any reference to the Japanese language school after the war. Was there ... ? Did it seem that the Japanese community was ... was trying to become more acculturated to the American society rather than keeping Japanese language and culture at that time?

Tom: You know, that's a situation that I'm actually not, probably not qualified to say anything on. I only know what I heard. OK? But I have heard that the language school ... Well OK, there were two groups that were, that were fighting each other over the Japanese Hall. One of my contacts with it was with a Buddhist. That was Joe, Joe Nishita. He's passed away now. He was only fifty when he passed away, but, he's the guy that, that the title to the property was held in the name of three different individuals, and Joe was one of them. And then the fight that was involved with that ... To illustrate the degree of, the intensity that was involved in it ... People pointed a gun at him, and "Sign this document or we're going to shoot you." And he was just eighteen at the time. It scarred him. And he was scarred -- darn right! -- the way I looked at it. I talked to him when he was like, he was only thirty-five, forty, at the time, after the war. And so, you see, with that kind of incident in the background, no one really wants to bring up the actual circumstance. And I'm, I have to admit, I was one of them. I did everything I could to uncover [inaudible] property. But the personalities involved, I kept them buried as much as possible. Did you ... ? You need to clear up the legalities, and I did that, but you can cover up the personalities. And I think that, in general, however, that Joe represented the group that was, before the war, was the group, they kind of dominated the JAACL Hall. And that group that dominated it before the war, was, they had [inaudible] the Japanese functions. Like before the war, maybe, if a person had a Japanese funeral, a Buddhist funeral -- and they still do it in parts of California -- they would say "*Banzai! Banzai! Banzai!*" In honor of that person that passed away. OK? As part of the ceremony of that time. In the ... in the first generation, of course, they have their funerals. They did no such thing. And many Christians attended the Buddhist funeral ... "*Banzai! Banzai!*" To them it seemed old-fashioned and even disrespectful. So once the war ended, I've not been, I've not seen a ceremony here at the Buddhist temple where they say the three *Banzais* in honor of the person who's passed away. But I do see it in California. You never see it in the Christian [inaudible]. And

the group that opposed Joe, this was the group that ultimately became the Arizona JACL, Incorporated, and eventually was the group that the court awarded the property to. Now the court ... When they went into court, the war broke out, and so the judge had his own [inaudible], and the way I remember the documents I read was the judgment, something like "I award the property to Arizona JACL, Incorporated" in the absence of both parties. And of course, the way I remember reading about, it was superior organization, a more American view of the situation, a more legal view on it. And of course, on ... I didn't get to see the other side's testimony, but I would suspect that the winning side was more American, legal facts oriented. And so they won because of that. And of course, I don't know enough about it to know. And part of it, of course, is my own inhibition [inaudible].

Scott: You can look at it years after it happened.

Tom: I have a general ... And I think that even today, there is an undercurrent of, um ... you know ... You need to be careful with that subject, at least that's the way I ... I try to be careful with it. And you know, you have ... you have a Japanese funeral here, and I've seen members of the Christian community attend the Buddhist funerals, and I've seen them [inaudible] each other. I can't believe this. So what can I say? You know what I'm saying? See, it's a ... it's a ... it's difficult. But [inaudible] mobile park business, and so we attend different funerals -- anyone who has passed away in our park. And so I've been to Jewish funerals, I've been to Hispanic funerals, I've been to different kinds of ...

Scott: Everyone's different.

Tom: Everyone is different. And you know, I respect all of them. I don't have a problem with it, if that's the way they do it, you know. And so I don't, I don't have a problem with anyone else's thing, so I don't want to cause any problems over it. Same way here -- I'm not trying to cause any problems with it.

Scott: I know even after so many years, some things are very sensitive ...

Tom: Maybe, maybe in another generation. Well, yeah, over fifty years [inaudible] the facts of the situation ... But I don't think it's going to happen in my lifetime. Not the full impact of it. Because I'm the guy that talked to Joe. Joe was very much alive. And very much had personality things and differences and whatever, and I listened to that kind of stuff, because you have to ... From a historical point of view it has to be a [inaudible] to get a more accurate picture.

Scott: I know that just with the World War II and the fiftieth anniversary, there was always so many controversies because there's veterans and people who are involved, and nobody agrees on so many things, and it's hard to ... Fifty years is not enough time, sometimes ...

Tom: Sometimes.

Scott: Sometime [inaudible], but you know, in looking at the history of the Japanese community in Arizona, one thing that's very evident more than anything else is this very vicious racism directed toward Japanese people, especially in the 1930s. Maybe you heard some of those stories of that, and certainly during the Second World War, with internment ... Um, but did that change very quickly with the end of World War II?

Tom: Well, OK. I graduated from Phoenix Union High School 1950. I went there before that ... And of course, when I went there, there was some racism. You see, two years before that, I went to Washington Grade School. And when I went to Washington Grade School, I was in the seventh grade, and in the seventh grade when I went there, just about all the boys in the seventh grade, they would come up, and their racism would show. They would hit me. You know, "You killed my dad," or "You killed my uncle," or whatever. Like that, you know. "I hate your guts" kind of thing ... So in the seventh grade, the only other person that was Japanese in the class was a

boy named James Matsumori, Jim Matsumori. He didn't go to camp like I did. And of course, when he was challenged like that, he would just run away, walk away. But in my case, when somebody would say, you know, something [inaudible], I took the attitude of putting a rock on the guy's shoulder, and on mine. You knock my rock away or I'm going to knock yours. And, um, almost always I just hit the guy. And I wouldn't walk away. And so, this happened in the entire seventh grade. And you know ... This was in 1946, so the only [inaudible] anti-Japanese were maybe ... There was a family called Phillips. Maybe [inaudible], maybe ... You know, they were ... they treated me like a normal individual. Mr. Stamps, the teacher, he was like that, too. But then I got to the eighth grade. I was at Isaac. And I had a couple of fights at Isaac, and that was it. There was no more "I hate you," or no more "killed my dad," or "killed my uncle." None of that stuff anymore, by the time I got to the eighth grade, that's only a year later. By the time I got to Phoenix Union High school -- I was a freshman -- we're walking toward the football game, a bunch of boys attacked us, four of us, we were walking. Bunch of boys attacked because one of our group, [inaudible], just put the guy down on his back. That was the end of it. That was the last racial incident when I was a freshman. No racial incidents when I was a sophomore, no more when I was a junior, no more when I was a senior. By this time, the ... you could, you could talk to a white girl, maybe about school, and not have somebody get red in the face and want to pop you one. So that's six years later. It took about six years. In the downtown Glendale area, you know, I said I was the farm's salesman; I was also the farm's buyer. I bought groceries, and I bought the tools and hardware, and so in 1950 I saw "No Japs Allowed" signs. They pretty much were gone by ... they were pretty much all gone by the time I saw the last ... I graduated in 1950. So they were pretty much all gone by 1950. But before that, there were a few here and there. So the anti-Japanese feeling pretty much -- in my way of looking at it -- pretty much gone in 1950. The man we rented the farm from, Wallace Hoel, he was a, he was an American, but he was a staunch believer [inaudible] people. To my knowledge, he never discriminated against anyone. But that was, I think, unusual, because he rented the land to us, and of course, there were times when he was attacked for doing that -- renting the land to a bunch of Japs, you know. And so, yeah, he had some personal incidents over that. But he never did anything to, to elaborate on or, you know, make a big deal out of it, or anything like that. So he did his part.

Scott: And eventually, after a few years, five years after the war, it really ... the racist attitudes seems to have ...

Tom: Right, and even amongst the seventh graders at Washington ... OK, well, I would put a rock on their shoulder, they would put one on mine. After a few blows, it would be over. The guy and I would shake hands. A year later I would be greeting him. You know what I'm saying? Three years later [inaudible]. See, so that person did his part, you see. And maybe when we started it with a case of "You killed my father, you [expletive]." [inaudible].

Scott: It just took some time. I know for my children today, it's hard for them to envision how people [inaudible]. It was not that long ago.

Tom: Yes. You can see those people -- Palestinian youths and Israelis -- and what they must go through, and the hatred and whatever that comes about. Oh, you can see it if you experience it. I think I was still ... still in that light. And I think I myself, when someone says "You're an SOB" or whatever they want to call you, you know, you have to bear with it. I think I've done my share of bearing with it.

Scott: Yes, certainly sounds like it. Um, let's see ... [laughs] [inaudible].

Tom: Am I getting off track?

Donna: You're doing excellent.

Scott: Yes, very good.

Donna: Excellent.

Scott: And, well, actually, I've asked all the questions I have here. I don't have any more questions. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Tom: Well, you know, you have to ask me, and I [inaudible].

Scott: We covered that pretty well, so I thank you very much.

Tom: You're welcome.

Scott: I appreciate taking the time to do this interview. Thank you.

[end of interview]

DAVID LEANIO

Interviewed by Isaac Manley with Adrienne Dudley
7 October 2006

Isaac: This is an interview with David Leanio on October 7, 2006. We're at the ASU Downtown campus. And my name is Isaac Manley. I'm also here with Adrienne Dudley. For your record, do I have permission to tape this interview?

David: Yes, you do.

Isaac: Please state your name and the spelling.

David: David Leanio. Leanio, L-E-A-N-I-O.

Isaac: And where were you born?

David: I was born in Glendale, Arizona.

Isaac: And when were you born?

David: December 6, 1946.

Isaac: And when did your parents move here to Arizona?

David: I guess, probably in the thirties. Yeah, I would have to say. That's why my older sister, she's the one that would know all of that.

Isaac: Where did they come from? Did they come from the Philippines?

David: My dad came from the Philippines, my mother came from Sonora, Mexico. And she lived in Florence. Both of her parents passed away when she was young, so she was adopted. My grandfather, Salvador Fallis[?] adopted her and took her in.

Isaac: So, why did your father come here to Arizona? Do you know?

David: I guess at that time there was a lot of work here. You know, a lot of ...

Isaac: Yeah, it seems like a lot of people moved here for the work and, you know, they moved to various places.

David: Yeah, there was a lot of produce back then. There was a lot of grapes, lettuce. And when we came, when we first started working, it was in the grapes. We would follow, my dad was a contractor. So we would follow the harvest. And we would start here, we would go to Queen Creek. And then in Queen Creek, and we would pick grapes at Arrowhead. But now it's a mall. [laughter] That used to be a ranch, though, back then. And then from there we would go to Coachella and Indio. And when the season was there, the seasons wouldn't last more than maybe, not even, two or three weeks. And then we'd pack up ...

Isaac: Just pack up and ...

David: And go again. And then we'd go to Arvin, and then Delano, and then Fresno. And then we would come back and go to school. Yeah, then my dad would stay over there. But that was basically our, our [inaudible]. If you was old enough to carry something, you was old enough to work.

Isaac: Do you now why ... did your father move directly from the Philippines here? Or did he go to California first?

David: I think he went to Hawaii first. And then from there, a lot of them did that. They go to Hawaii and then from there they would come over here. I think he was in California, and they called it Cucamonga. It was a lot of grape vineyards there. My dad used to be a cook for a lot of the labor. Back then they had labor camps where a lot of the Filipinos they would follow the seasons. And he was a cook all the time. If he wasn't contracting, he was a cook.

Isaac: OK, do you know why your father left the Philippines?

David: I would have to say to better himself, or try to better his family back there, but he started a family here. In '70, we were gonna go back and visit his ... go back to, and visit, we were gonna visit the family and everything, but he had a heart attack, so ... Yeah, about two months before we left. So I never did ever get a chance to go back there.

Isaac: Did he used to tell you stories, or anything of that sort, of when he used to be in the Philippines?

David: Not really. No, he never, he was always, I was always with him 'cause I was the only one that liked to work out in the fields, and he would take me. But I remember going with him and he would go talk to the ranchers and get the contracts and they would sign a, you know, an agreement that this would be done and that would be done. And that's basically all I knew. I never knew too much about, anything about the Philippines, you know. And if he did, I just don't remember. [laughter].

Isaac: That's funny 'cause when we interviewed Sam he said the same thing, that, you know, there wasn't very much talk about, you know, Philippines. It was mostly, you know ...

David: You know, here.

Isaac: Yeah, just right here.

David: "This is how you do this, this is how you do that," the basics.

Isaac: Let's see, what do we have here ... Do you know approximately what time they moved here to Arizona? Like, in the thirties, or ...

David: I guess around maybe the thirties, I would have to say around there, or maybe before that. I really don't have an idea there, you know. When they really did move here, I ... I don't have any recollection to that.

Isaac: So, where did they live? Do you recall the ... Or where was, you know, their first house?

David: Well, our first house, my sister, they have pictures, it was in Maryvale. My dad had a ranch out there. And what happened was, the way he lost that is that, you know, the stores, they used to give you credit. And he got behind, and so they foreclosed on the ranch. And they had to come out here. But my sister said they all had the old, they used to get together over there, and they would kill a pig once a week, and split the meat amongst everybody, and have a barbeque, and that's the way they did it.

Isaac: You don't know any other specific locations?

David: We lived off of, I think it was, Linc -- yeah, Lincoln, by the airport. I remember we lived there. And then from there we bought our house, they bought the house there on Pueblo and Riverside.

Isaac: And is that the house that you grew up in?

David: Yeah, we grew up there. We were, when we went there we were the, I would have to say the second house being built in the whole neighb -- the block there, yeah.

Isaac: Let's see, can you describe the house any?

David: It was a two bedroom. And ...

Isaac: And there were five of you?

David: Yeah, there were five of us. And my dad turned the garage into another bedroom. But he never finished it, so ... But my older brother would stay in there, in that garage, fixed it up more or less. And I slept in the front room, and the girls slept in the other bedroom, and then my mom and dad had their bedroom. But, it's still there, it's still ... it was made out of brick. It was a nice house, you know. It looked a lot ... I go now and when we get in the kitchen it's so small, compared to what it used to be when we were kids. [laughter].

Isaac: I'm sure it felt so big when you were small.

David: Yeah, we couldn't fit there now. [laughter] One at a time. [laughter].

Isaac: That was like five people in the house!

David: And I tell my grandkids, "You guys are lucky! You got your own rooms." Back then, you didn't have that luxury. [laughter].

Isaac: So your parents, did they own the land that the house was on?

David: Yeah, yeah. Well, they didn't own it. When they bought the house they, they ... Yeah, they own it now, it's theirs. My younger sister is living in that house now. With her three kids.

Isaac: OK, that's good.

Adrienne: Do you remember the address for the house?

David: Yeah, its 310 East Pueblo.

Isaac: And was it, how was the neighborhood? Was it other Filipino families? Or was it a mix of ...

David: Back then it was a mixture of mostly White, and a couple other Mexicans, and that was it. But now it's basically all, all Mexican now. And there's no Whites, no anything.

Isaac: Do you have memories of your mother and father? Like, how would they, you know, you said your father used to, was a cook ...

David: Yeah, I remember ...

Isaac: How was your family life, you know?

David: Oh, there was a lot of times that, yeah, he was, what do you call it? a migrant worker. So a lot of times he wouldn't be there. But when he was, he would cook. And we always had food on the table. And we were brought up with either Mexican food, or Filipino food, or the both, a combination, yeah. You know, we'd be eating rice and tortillas at the same time. [laughter] And I got to go back, on the address of the house, I just blew that one. It was 318 West, yeah, 318

West Pueblo. And ... But no, we had to walk to school, it was maybe about two and a half, no maybe about two miles. And we walked and didn't think nothing of it, you know, back then. We all, all of us went to the same school, it was called Rio Vista. But now it's, they tore down the old school, I think there's only like two buildings left. And it's called Cesar Chavez now.

Isaac: So ... Growing up, what do you remember the most about Arizona, as far as ...

David: Oh, it was ... It's changed so much now that when we were growing up, I remember having tremendous storms like, in December. I mean, just rain where you would have the National Guard going along there telling you you had to come out 'cause the river was gonna overflow. And nothing like now, now it seems like it's ... Well, the population, too, was, back then, I'm talking about like '55, '60, was only like fifty-five thousand, you know. The most all ... Baseline is the last major road going south. And that used to be all orchards and Japanese farms. And it was so cool up there, so nice. But all that's gone. Now it's all industrial, and homes, and ... I'm very lucky, I bought my house up there about, I'd say, going back thirteen years now, right off of Thunderbird Trail. Yeah, 310 East Thunderbird Trail is where I live now. And it's, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. It's just right up against the mountain, but still you're close to town. And it's, oh, it's so convenient. But it's just getting so congested that it's just, it's turning to be another L.A., really. And they say by 2000 ... I guess twenty-O-six, Tucson and ... we're all gonna be one big, one big area.

Isaac: I've seen studies as far as, you know, just this corridor between Tucson and Phoenix.

David: And just everywhere, I remember it was just so simple. But now it's just nonstop. It doesn't matter what time of the day, or whenever. I remember, like on Sundays I had a paper route, and I used to get up, you would hardly see a car. You know, it was like, there was, everybody was home, reading the paper. Just Sunday was, you know, just a ...

Isaac: Yeah, a lot less busy, so to speak.

David: And now, it's just, there's none of that anymore. Even my Sundays are, I have a landscaping business, and I do everybody's yard, and Sunday I do mine. That's my house day. [laughter].

Isaac: That's your day, yeah.

David: But one thing our, I have to say about our father, is that he showed us how to get out there, if you wanted something, you know. We were brought up, if you wanted, you go out there and hustle. And there was nothing that you couldn't do. And it's true, you know. It's true. I've been doing what I'm doing now for the last ten years. And I don't advertise, I don't do anything, but I get a lot of referrals, yeah, 'cause I go out of my way, you know. I, like he says, it doesn't matter if you're cleaning a toilet or whatever, you do it good, you're not gonna be there, you're gonna go up. That was their philosophy. And I think, he was also like a bookkeeper. He was very, very intelligent, my father was. I think he had like maybe a third grade, second grade, but his handwriting and everything, was just so ... And as for me, I mean, I got a high school diploma and everything else, but I just, my reading and writing was not up to par. But you learn how to work around it, you don't give up.

Isaac: Now, do you remember, as a child, going to like, maybe like going out to eat or, you know, going to certain places?

David: Back then there wasn't hardly going-to-restaurants, we would go to other houses. They would all have a little get-together, and everybody would bring something, you know, their specialty or whatever, and like a big potluck. And that was our "going out." There wasn't too much going-to-fast-foods, back then. But it was nice 'cause we got to play with the other kids, and our dads and moms, they would be over there doing their thing and we'd be just running around.

Isaac: Let's see ...

David: Oh, I, excuse me, I take that back. The only time we would go out was like Saturday night, we would go to Sing High, after the, after the dance. And we would go there, you know.

Isaac: Do you think we have the addresses for those places?

Adrienne: You told us the cross streets. Do you remember, do you know the address for that restaurant?

David: Oh, it's not, they changed, they moved it over to ... It's right, you come up Central, underneath the bridge. What's that street there? Anyway, you come up, you make a right, and it's right over there in the corner, right by the jail. The Sing High.

Isaac: That's where it used to be?

David: No, it used to right there on 1st Street, right there. Now, where the, where all, the Sing High, and the new garden, and the pool hall was ...

Isaac: Yeah, pool hall. Were all on, all over there on 1st Street.

David: Yeah, it was on 1st Street, and it was where it, now, the basketball, the Suns arena is there. And that wasn't there, that was all, that was like our, the Filipino little gathering. There used to be a little Filipino restaurant right there, where you could go in and order *adobo*¹ or peanut [inaudible] or, you know, all of those good dishes. And ... but that's all, yeah it's all torn down now.

Isaac: Were there any like, Filipino grocery stores? Or, you know, something like those?

David: Not back then. But then, they would basically grow their own. I know my dad, we had a big garden in the back. And what he couldn't eat, we would give to the others. And they would do the same thing. So we always had fresh vegetables, and fresh chickens. We never went and bought it. You want a chicken, go over there and get one out of the pen, and twist the neck, and dip it in hot water. [laughter].

Isaac: I remember you said my father, killing chickens. We would have to pluck the feathers and everything. Let's see ...

Adrienne: Really quick, can I ask something?

Isaac: Oh yeah, go ahead.

Adrienne: Can you name your brothers and sisters? Because I know you say "my brothers and sisters," but we don't know their names.

David: Yeah, the oldest was Adeline. And then there was, I think it was Bobby. And then my sister Flora. And then myself, David. And then Becky. And Richard was the baby, and he's fifty-five. I'm gonna turn sixty this year. Just another number.

Adrienne: Thank you.

David: You're welcome.

¹ Unlike Spanish *adobo*, which is a marinade or sauce, Filipino *adobo* is the dish, usually made with pork or chicken, soy sauce, garlic, vinegar, bay leaf and peppercorns.

Isaac: OK, what were your first memories of school? Do you ...

David: School ... It was here at Rio Vista. That's where, like I said, that's where all of us, all five of us, went, and we all graduated from there. I remember coming from, like, in the summertime I would come back and the teacher would say, "Well, can you write an essay about," you know, "how was your vacation?"

Isaac: Right, what you did.

David: Yeah. And I would tell 'em, "Yeah, I was at Camp Cucamonga," or, you know. And it was, but it was a labor camp, and I'd tell 'em, "Yeah, we went swimming, and I had a good time and ..." "Oh, David! Here!" And I'm over there swimming and picking grapes and ... But I got an A on the project, so that was good. [laughter] Yeah, that was my recollection. Sometimes we would overstay and we would stay in these schools, you know, out in the outskirts of where we were, like Arvin and Delano. And we'd stay there for a month or two, until we, and then we would come back.

Isaac: So your whole family basically worked in the fields then? Like, growing up and that sort of thing.

David: Right, uh-huh, yeah. Then my sister got married, of course. And then the other one. And then, it was just basically ... And then my older brother went to the service, went to Vietnam. And I was the only one that really, like I said, until about '85, worked in the produce.

Isaac: As far as school, what were, you know, who went to the schools? Was it just everyone? You know, all races.

David: Oh yeah, it was all races back then, it was a mixture. South Phoenix used to be more of a, of Anglo, and more Anglo than Mexican. And very, a couple of, you know, colored families. But we would all go to the same school and all. It wasn't that bad back then.

Isaac: Were there other Filipino families that went to that school? Did you have other friends that were ...

David: I don't remember that we did, that we did at Rio Vista.

Isaac: OK.

David: I know some of them went to Sunland, or some of the other schools around there. When I graduated from Rio Vista, I went to South Mountain, South Mountain High.

Isaac: OK. Let's see, what do we have here ... What were some of your favorite classes, or teachers, activities, that sort of thing?

David: I liked the, I really, I liked, like, woodshop. Homemaking. I took that 'cause I like to cook, so ... And, English was one of them. Just, I just liked school in general, but it was just that I had a ...

Isaac: Hard time ...

David: Yeah. Now they say -- what is it? -- dyslexia? Or when you get the letters backwards, and numbers. Well, they didn't know what it was back then, they just thought you was disabled, or whatever, so. I mean, I had plenty other tutors, my mom, and they would send tutors, I mean. But it just, it just didn't go through this thick skull, so. I learned more to work with my hands and work with people. I mean had, I've had very good jobs, you know, like in the '70s. I was working ten

months out of the year. And I was bringing home over forty-five thousand, so. You know, for working in the fields, that's not bad at all.

Isaac: No, not bad at all. What do you remember about your childhood friends?

David: Oh, I, I still keep in touch with them. I got this one friend that lived down the street, his name was David Salzman. Matter of fact, I go and I do his mother's yard. Yeah, she's one of my clients. And we'll sit there and talk, you know. And I have another friend that, we grew up together, he was a bailiff for here, for the city of Phoenix. And a lot of them have passed away, too, so. And a lot of them died in Vietnam. The time they called me, I was just, I was in Wilcox. I got a letter and my brother in law -- I was working in the produce, also, in Wilcox -- he says, "Hey, they want you in Phoenix tomorrow morning." So I drove all that morning, parked right outside, and went in. And they said I was flat-footed, so that ended my car -- my army career. [laughter].

Isaac: What did you guys do as kids, you know, for play?

David: Playing we, basically, we would make our own toys or we'd ride our bikes and just, in general. Myself, I was always outside. I was running around, or I'd be with my dad doing something, always doing something with him.

Isaac: Do you guys have any specific places that you used to go? Like, down to the river to swim? Or ...?

David: There was the Salt River. My friend David and I, and my friend Julian, we would go like, we would take, like, chicken noodle cans, and we'd go out by the river. It used to be open, you could go down there and, you know. We'd sit by there, and start a little fire, and warm up our cans and spend the day out there. And, nothing- you know, we'd go swimming in there and everything else, and we'd think nothing of it. And now, you know, with all this, what's going on, you know, you don't know, they're just taking 'em from the streets. It's, it's crazy now. It's very crazy now out there.

Isaac: What types of food did you used to, did you guys used to eat?

David: Eat? We ate a lot of, like, fish. A lot of pork. Fresh vegetables. We ate beans, tortillas. Just general, basic Mexican food and our Filipino food. But we always had rice. Everyday, you know, had rice. Up to this day, we still. I like to cook, so I'll cook up a storm and invite everybody over. You know, you can't cook a little bit. We start with a little bit, we end up with a big pot. [laughter].

Isaac: What type of Filipino foods did you used to ...

David: My type of cooking was, I put like Mexican and the Filipino together, and made my own thing. I would watch cooking shows, but I'd go and I'd cook it the way I wanted. I used my ingredients, but go with their scheme.

Isaac: Did your father mainly cook Filipino food? Or did he also ...

David: Basically, yeah, he would cook like Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, you know, Oriental foods. But he was, he was very, very good. And he would sit me down and he would show me or I would help him cut the vegetables. "You cut 'em this way. You do it this way." And now I just, when I cook I just, I don't measure, I just, you know, *cook*. It comes from the heart, so. It's ... I gotta say it's good. [laughter] You can tell. [laughter].

Isaac: Did, so your mom, did she mainly cook the Mexican food then?

David: Yeah. I mean, then later on she cooked just like my dad. And my dad uses a lot of wines and spices. Well, you know, Filipino is spicy food. Well, not hot, but you know, like our *adobo* and

*pansit*² and all that. You know, I even had, my friends used to, "Hey," they would say, "what's your dad gonna cook today?" "I dunno, let's go find out!" He didn't mind. "The more the merrier," he would say. Our kitchen was always open to anybody.

Isaac: Can you describe your parents' interactions or relationships with the people around them? Whether it be Filipino or other races.

David: Oh, they, one time, my dad had a friend, well my dad and mom had a friend in Bakersfield. And it would just throw me off 'cause he was ... White, and, like, from Arkansas. Yeah, and it just, coveralls. And it really did surprise me. You know, my dad, it was just something that you just wouldn't think of, you wouldn't think of it. You know, it just blew me away. But, wow, they were the best of friends. We would go to Bakersfield, we would always go to their house, and they would treat us with all the respect, and I'd play with his kids. It was just amazing, to me. And they were always like that. They were always ... My friend, this David Galviso, they got married, and my mom and dad threw them a wedding reception, or a party, here, for them. So they were always, we were always at parties, or cooking, or always doing something all the time.

Isaac: Was there any ever, like, did you ever come in contact with any sorts of prejudices? Did your parents ever?

David: I remember in the sixties, there were some places that my dad couldn't go in.

Isaac: Right.

David: We would have to go around the back door. And ... My first time as, when I felt that, was in Salinas, California. I was at a Safeway, and this lady just -- I was with my brother in law, he was Mexican -- and she just looked at us and just, I dunno, she just, she said something that just teed me off. And I said, "You know what? Just because my skin is brown, I'm an American," you know, "I'm just as much American as you are," you know. 'Cause it was just the, I don't know what she said, but it just really, just didn't agree with me at all, I didn't like it. But, you know, they, if, I'm the type of person that I'll get along with anybody. But, you know, there's certain things that, remarks that they, they say, that, it don't bother me. It's just, you know, it's just a word. That's all it is.

Isaac: It's kind of funny, 'cause when we were talking with Sam Carbajal, he was mentioning, as well, like, growing up and that sort of thing, it just never really seemed to, you know, everyone got along with everyone else and, you know, it ...

David: And just the environment back then, you know. If there was, you just stayed away from it.

Isaac: So ... What kind of activities did you do at home?

David: Not a whole lot. We, I was basically glued to the TV if I wasn't outside, yeah.

Isaac: Did you guys have responsibilities, chores, that sort of thing?

David: Well, yeah we, the yard was ours. You know. You know, we had to do the yard, take care of the garden, and, you know, feed the chickens, and basically do that. Then when we finally got our, when I first got my first car, then I turned into a mechanic. [laughter] We called it "Shade-Tree Mechanics." More for the shade, though, than the car. And then one time I was underneath and I was snoring away, and my brother kicked in the leg, "What are you doing under there?!" "I'm sleeping!"

Isaac: I think everyone wants to get that first car, and has to, you know...

² A dish made with noodles.

David: Yeah, my first car was, I remember, was a '48 Chevy, and I bought it from a friend of mine in high school. Yeah, he was going to Vietnam and he started to fix that up. And I drove that thing from here to El Paso and New Mexico, Colorado. That was my, it was an old bomb, but it took me everywhere.

Isaac: That reminds me, did your family, growing up, did you guys have a car?

David: Yeah. Yeah, we had a ... Back then, the Filipinos would always have Chryslers or, big cars. No Chevys. My dad had a two-ton International that we would use and, we would ... My mom would drive the car, and then my dad would take the truck. And that's what we used to move around. And when we would go in the, you know, follow the seasons, there's no RV back then. That was it.

Isaac: Did you guys ever, like, take a, you know quote-unquote "vacation"? Did you guys ever go someplace just...

David: No ...

Isaac: To visit? No? It was always for work and that sort of thing?

David: Well, where we went was, our friends were there. Like in Delano, we got to know, that was a big Filipino area. And we got to know, well my *nino* [?] lived in there. And we got to know a lot of the people there. And that was our, when we would go work, that was our ...

Isaac: That was a trip as well.

David: Yeah, a trip as well. Yeah, sometimes we'd break off and we'd go to like Stockton, go visit my uncle, and go fishing. We'd go to the beaches, wherever we were at, you know. So we weren't always working, but we were always, you know, the areas that we would take advantage of everything around there.

Isaac: As far as responsibilities around the house, was there ever, like, any differentiation between the boys and the girls? Or what your mom did and what your dad did?

David: Well, my mom, she took care of the house, inside. And outside also. 'Cause he, sometimes, like I said, he'd be gone, so.

Isaac: Did you guys have any animals or pets around?

David: Yeah, my ...

Isaac: Chickens to eat?

David: Yeah, that wasn't pets, that's more. My younger brother one time had a duck. And my dad got drunk one time, and he came home and he was asking for his duck and he said, "That's it on the table." So he don't eat duck. You know, we had, like, basic dogs, you know, that we had.

Isaac: Did your family go to church? Did you ...

David: We used to, my mom used to take us to church. We were Baptists when we were kids.

Isaac: And, do you remember where the church was?

David: It was right off of Mojave there. It was a, oh I can't think of the name of it ... Something to do with like "the good will" or something like that.

Isaac: What did the church look like? Do you recall?

David: Well, it's still there.

Isaac: It's still there?

David: Yeah, it's a tall building. Brick.

Isaac: Was it, like, most, mainly Mexican people that went to that church?

David: Yeah. Yeah, it was mostly Mexican people that went there. I remember we used to go at night, boy I couldn't stay awake. [laughter] One day I was asleep, and then before I knowed, he was right next to me. [laughter].

Isaac: Aside from school and church, what other group activities did you participate in? Were there sports that you did?

David: Well, when we were, when I was in high school: football, wrestling, all the basics. But as soon as school was out, you know, we'd go back to work. '65 was the turn-around for me, I started working in the lettuce, in the produce. So I would go to Las Cruces, I was working for my brother-in-law. And my, my dad got him started in the business. So, I graduated in '65 and called me -- he used to call me "*hermano*" -- "Hermano, I need some help down here!" So there I go. I didn't even stay for my graduation party or anything, I just took off.

Isaac: When you were going to that high school, was there any, like, high school hang out that you used to ... Anything like that?

David: There was a place just right around the corner from there, a little stand that we used to go to. That was about it. Not too much, it would be like, like I said, on the weekends it was the Filipino, it was the Prince Hall. That was our, that was the main thing when I was growing up, yeah.

Isaac: So, other than the get-togethers your parents, you know, used to, with the Filipino Americans, did they, were they involved in anything other than ...

David: If they were, I didn't really know. But it was basically a real close clique between the old-timers. You know, if someone needed help they were there. But it was basically, you know, we were all ... not poor, but, you know, we had what we needed. So, you know, we weren't really struggling. And as soon as we could, we all went to work, did our thing, and. So, it wouldn't be a burden on the family, and we would help the family out if it needed.

Isaac: What were your, when you first heard of Pearl Harbor and that sort of thing, do you recall that?

David: Not 'til later on.

Isaac: OK. Did your parents have any, did they ever mention, that?

David: No. No, no. If they did, like I said, I was just too young to really understand it. You know, now I look at it like if it was a, like a 9/11. That was our 9/11 back then. That was a very, very tragic, just changed the world completely. And then it still is, you know. What's going on out there with our boys, and everything else, it's just not right. But we lived in a lot of different places. We lived in like, my father ranched for Norton, back in the fifties. About '55, sixties and there. We lived in Grants, New Mexico. Worked at Blue Water. Las Lunas, worked in Las Lunas, New Mexico. Went to New Jersey, Florida. All of those different places when we were young kids.

Adrienne: Do you remember anything else that, like, stood out to you? Like when you were younger, like buildings, or things that you guys used to do, like, on a regular basis?

David: It was basically going to Blue Point. That was our, you know, our weekend sometimes. And then the Prince Hall and the Sing High and the pool hall was the main one. 'Cause, they would always, we would all, all the kids would be outside playing pool, and all the old-timers would be in the back gambling. [laughter] We'd go knock on the door ...

Adrienne: There was a lot of people gettin' in trouble.

David: We'd knock on the doors and they would ... My Uncle Frankie was, he was one of the, he, when they would move, he was the gambling, he would run the gambling houses out there, yeah. So, but they always had their gambling house, not matter where they went, they always would set one up somewhere. And they would all just, you know, some outsiders would come in, but they didn't think chicken fights were illegal back then, so. Back in Yuma the, Johnny Brumio was one of the big honchos back then, contractors. And he would throw a fundraiser, and he would invite the governor of, or, you know, who ran Yuma. And he had the chief of police out there. He had all the banking. Right out there, you know, at the chicken fights. And he would donate so much for the ... cancer, that's what it was. But it was all, basically it was all the same people and, you know, us kids would just run around all together. And, and, oh, down here at Sally's, one time, she had us all get, she was gonna kill a pig and some goats. And we were doing what our fathers were doing. You know, we were the ones killing and doing all of that. And then *our* kids were running around. Yeah, it's just so, so funny. And some of the old-timers came around, and would give us their thumbs-up, and. [laughter] But, but growing up in a, with a mixed life was really a ... I dunno. You know, you can this way or that way, or you can go any way, either way you didn't want to go, you know. And it all depends how you took it. But I, I feel that we were blessed, and we had a good life, and ... Well, I'm not gonna say we didn't have our ups and downs, you know. My, my father, he was an alcoholic, and that's what killed him. Yeah, he had, more blood than -- I mean, more alcohol than blood, you know, so. And they told him, you know, "You need to quit drinking, or else." And he just ...

Adrienne: And did you get married or anything?

David: Pardon?

Adrienne: Did you get married?

David: Yeah, uh-huh. I have five kids of my own. And I have four that live in San Diego, and one that lives here. My wife, matter of fact, my wife's a school teacher, she's gonna retire this year. She's, I think, almost thirty years? Teaching, you know. So, she's already had enough.

Adrienne: Now, are they like, Filipino? Or Mexican? Or ...?

David: They're more in between, 'cause their mother was Mexican, too, so. But they were brought up with the Filipino ways, and the Mexican, just like when we were brought up, too, so. And, now they're, one of them, she graduated from the University of San Diego. She's, I guess, in accounting. But she is doing her thing. And my other son, he went to Devry, and he's into computers. And my other two kids, they're, I guess, one runs a, a dock or something. I dunno. I just, when I get over there it's hard for me, 'cause it's "Stay here, Dad! Stay here!"

Adrienne: You have to hop around. [laughter].

David: Yeah. And, you know, sometimes you just go for maybe like the grandkid's birthday, or my grandkids, it's. And I just have a lot of fun with them. You know, get out there and watch 'em. See myself, sometimes, in them.

Isaac: So what is your most vivid memory of your father? Do you, do you recall? Is there, like, anything that sticks out in your mind?

David: Yeah, he was a, just a very good man. All the way around. He had a lot of respect and treated a lot of people with respect. And he was just, he wasn't, just had one, one person, he worked with a lot of people and gave a lot of people chances and showed them a lot of ways. And, he's just very happy. I wish he was here for my grandkids, you know, and then he could see 'em. He always told me, "You get married, don't send me a postcard." [laughter] But he died, he died very young. He was sixty ... sixty-three. Yeah. Yeah.

Isaac: How about your mother?

David: Oh, she's still alive. She lives in Sedona. Matter of fact, I've gotta go up there tomorrow and do some yard work for her. I gotta go chop some trees down and do some cleaning up. So I never stop.

Adrienne: Do you think she has any pictures of, like, you, you all in front of, like, your houses around here?

David: Oh yeah...

Isaac: Yeah, we have them...

David: Yeah, yeah. Because I'm gonna leave you that for you guys. And I'll show you before I leave, which ones are which, and that way. But, no she has a, she has suitcases and suitcases of pictures of a lot of. But what's happening is they're sticking together.

Adrienne: Yeah.

David: Yeah, you know. And, and she puts 'em up but she doesn't let nobody get near 'em. [laughter] But I'll try to get a hold of this lady, her name is Bernice. And, she has a lot of history about, she, you know, how the circle ran. You know, from the ladies from New Mexico and how they met and this and that. And get a hold of my friend David. He'll help you a whole lot there, 'cause he's really into this also. When I told him that, he says, "Darn, I wish I could be there." But they're always shipping him everywhere. And just email him and just tell him, just tell him "David," and he'll. But, it's really great, it's really an opportunity here. You guys are really doing this for, for something, you know.

Isaac: What would be one thing that you would like to say or leave behind for your grandchildren and that sort of thing, as far as your memories of growing up, or, you know?

David: Well. Well, I notice, you know, I see my grandson and he's there. He gets mad a lot, you know how the young kids. I said, "Man," I says, "you're gonna -- see this? You're gonna have this before, you're gonna have more before me!" You know, the gray hair! "So you gotta stop doing it, because it's no good for your heart, and it's no good for anybody." He says, "All right, da-da-daa ..." [laughter] See him again, he's right back there. Then my other, all, all the kids are doing real good, they're really happy. They're, you know, they're, each of them have their own little styles, the families. And, you know, I had a son that I almost lost him with this crack cocaine, or, you know. We were that close. But he, he caught himself and now he's back. And, you know, I thank the Lord to that. And I, I believe in the Man above. When I'm working I'm praying, I'm driving I'm praying. And just, you know, and I tell my kids that. And, but they're all ... All a parent can hope is that their kids are doing just as good or better, you know. And the ones that don't, well you just hope for the best for them, and, you know, life, life will take care of it. You know, try to. And that's all you can do, really. The way that our society and our changes and everything now, it's just very, very ... spooky, really.

Isaac: What is one, what is your, what would you consider your, like, a defining moment in your life? That made you who you are.

David: I would like to say my father and all of the, just the general Filipino way, and seeing what they went through. I have, I have gone through nothing compared to what they went through. You know, they came over here on a boat, knowing if they were gonna make it or not. With nothing. And then to get married and bring a family and here I am, you know. That's, that amazes me. You know, the heart that they had to leave their own families, to try to better themselves. That's, that's something right there in itself.

[end of interview]

ROSE LEE

Interviewed by Krystin Yee with Vangie Song
16 August 2006

Krystin: All right. What is your name and how do you spell it?

Rose: My name is Rose Lee, and I spell it with R-O-S-E; my last name is L-E-E.

Krystin: Is that the name you were given at birth, or did you have a Chinese name first?

Rose: When I came here, I had a Chinese name, until they gave me my American name.

Krystin: Who named, who gave you your American name?

Rose: That I don't know. [laughter].

Krystin: Do you think it was like your parents? Or, like, the ...

Rose: Probably my parents or some relatives that were here.

Krystin: Oh, OK. If you don't mind me asking, when were you born?

Rose: I was born in 1918.

Krystin: 1918. And where were you born at?

Rose: Pardon?

Krystin: Where were you born at?

Rose: I was born in Canton, China. In the village.

Krystin: In the village. Which village? Do you know?

Rose: Hoi Ping, Canton, China.

Krystin: OK. How long were you there for before you came over?

Rose: I was ten months old when I came over.

Krystin: Wow. That's crazy. Who were the first members of your family to come to Phoenix?

Rose: Who were the who?

Krystin: The first members of your family to come to Phoenix.

Rose: I don't really know.

Krystin: You don't know. Like, was your dad here first, and then brought...

Rose: He was here a few years before he went back to get married. And that's where I was born, when he went back to get married.

Krystin: Are you the oldest?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Rose: Altogether there were ten of us. But I had a brother and sister died when they were babies.

Krystin: In China or here?

Rose: Here in the States. And my living brothers and sisters, I had one brother and six sisters.

Krystin: Wow. How was that growing up?

Rose: Well, being the oldest one, I had to work harder than the rest of 'em. [laughter].

Krystin: Were you kind of like a second mother? Or ...?

Rose: No, not really.

Krystin: No.

Rose: You just had to a little more extra work than the others.

Krystin: How much older were you?

Vangie: Who was the next sister? How much younger was the next sister?

Rose: Not quite two years older.

Krystin: Oh, OK.

Vangie: Are you all spaced about two years difference?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Oh, OK.

Krystin: What are the names of your brothers and sisters?

Rose: Well ...

Krystin: And your parents?

Rose: My next sister was Esther. Then there was a sister that passed away. Then Ruth. Then Evelyn. And Vivian. And I believe that's when my first brother passed away. And then came my other brother. And Clarice, and Sylvia.

Krystin: Wow. Quite a lot of girls. What were the names of your parents?

Rose: My dad was Lee Jew. And my mother was Soho Shi[?].

Vangie: Was she a [inaudible]? What was her maiden name?

Rose: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Krystin: And your parents were both born in Hoi Ping?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: Do you know when they were born?

Rose: No, I don't.

Krystin: No. When did he go over to get married? Like. 1919?

Vangie: How old was he, do you think, when he married your mother?

Rose: My dad went back there, I imagine he was in his early twenties.

Vangie: Then he must have stayed in China at least a year.

Rose: No. He got back there when he got married. Then the following year I was born, and in ten months I came back over.

Vangie: So he married your mother and then came back to the US?

Rose: Mm-hm. No, we all came together.

Vangie: Oh, you all came together. I see.

Rose: The three of us.

Vangie: But you were born in China before you came.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: And all the rest of them were born in the United States.

Rose: No, Gladys was born in China.

Vangie: Gladys was born in China.

Rose: She was born in 1936 when my dad went back to China.

Vangie: And your mom went, too, then.

Rose: We were all there that time. Then in 1937, my dad was gonna bring Esther and myself over. And when we went to the immigration office, we were told that my dad should my, take the whole family to get pictures taken to process their papers, so we can all come back. So that's when we came back in 1938.

Vangie: When did you first go to China?

Rose: Esther and I went in 1930 with a cousin of ours.

Vangie: Oh, 1930.

Krystin: Why did you go over there?

Rose: Well, the old custom, they wanted us know some Chinese customs and manners, which we all didn't absorb. [laughter].

Krystin: So you weren't getting that in Phoenix then?

Rose: Pardon?

Krystin: You weren't getting those Chinese manners in Phoenix? Like ...

Vangie: You weren't learning the Chinese culture in Phoenix.

Rose: Well, we didn't know too much.

Vangie: What did your dad first do when he came here? Do you know?

Rose: In the grocery store, as far as I know.

Vangie: Oh, he already had a store when you...

Rose: He was working in somebody's store at that time.

Krystin: You don't happen to know whose? Whose grocery store it was that he was working in?

Rose: I don't know.

Krystin: No. It was in the Phoenix area though?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: Do you know where he lived while he lived here? Before you guys came over?

Rose: He lived in the back of the store. At that time, all the families, most of them lived in the back of the store.

Krystin: When you guys came over, where did you live? In the back of the store with him? Or did you guys get a house?

Rose: Well, we all lived in back of st -- I think when we came back, mom was probably pregnant at that time or something. I'm not sure. 'Cause Esther born in 1920.

Vangie: 1920?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: So you came, you came to the States in 1919?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: You came to Phoenix the first -- you came right to Phoenix? Or did you live in California for a while?

Rose: We came right to Phoenix.

Vangie: In 1919.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Wow.

Krystin: How did your dad pick Phoenix to come to?

Rose: Well, my dad had cousins and relatives at that time.

Krystin: OK. So, you lived in the back of the store with him when you guys came over?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: When did you guys move?

Rose: My dad had a grocery store. His first store, that I know of, was at 13th Street and East Van Buren.

Krystin: OK.

Rose: Then when we ...

Krystin: What was it called?

Rose: I don't know the name of that store. But then in 1923, we moved to the grocery store where we all grew up in. And that was Lee Jew Grocery, at 1501 East Washington Street.

Krystin: OK.

Rose: That was the end of the town. [laughter] At that time.

Krystin: Really? 15th and Washington?

Rose: Pardon?

Krystin: Was that, is that 15th Street and Washington?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: That was the end of ...

Rose: Well, 17th Street, that's where the streetcar used to go and come around East Lake Park, and then go back into town.

Krystin: Oh, OK. So you guys lived in the back of that store then?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: How many rooms was it? Like in the back. Like, the living area.

Rose: There was one, one, two, three ... There was four rooms.

Krystin: Like two bedrooms ... like, four bedrooms? Or ...?

Rose: Well, there were four bedrooms.

Krystin: Oh, wow.

Rose: 'Cause the girls all, I don't remember how we did it, but we kind of shared with one another.

Krystin: Wow.

Rose: There was three of -- the girls all took the three bedrooms, my dad and mom had one. And my brother slept in another one. Well, he wasn't that old when we were there.

Krystin: OK. Was your dad able to own the land that you guys were on?

Rose: No, he c ...

Krystin: Like the property?

Rose: He couldn't own the land then.

Krystin: No?

Rose: He was an alien resident.

Krystin: OK. Do you know who you rented it from? Or anything like that?

Rose: He owned it by, I guess, he bought the property under a citizen. One of the ... I think he used my daughter's name to buy property.

Krystin: Oh, OK.

Rose: 'Cause she was a citizen.

Krystin: Oh, wow. OK. So what memories do you have of your parents? Like your mom and your dad.

Rose: Pardon?

Krystin: What memories do you have of your mom and your dad?

Rose: Well, they both worked very hard. And ... She worked very hard and didn't get to see ... she only got to see one granddaughter.

Krystin: Really?

Rose: Mm-hm. She died in 19 ... Hm, all of a sudden I got it blank. But she died on December the 7th.

Krystin: Oh.

Vangie: Well she died, was it before World War I, after World War I? I mean, after World War II?

Rose: Just before World War II. Well, no.

Vangie: I don't remember her very well.

Rose: Hm.

Vangie: Were you married when she died?

Rose: I was married and Carol was a year and a half.

Vangie: A year and a half when she died.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: So when was Carol born then?

Rose: 1943, '44.

Vangie: See, so she must have died in '45 or '46.

Rose: 'Cause Carol, 'cause I remember that she wanted Carol, Carol, *hold* Carol. And Carol was old enough that she wanted to walk on her own. So that's how it happened. On December the 7th. Let's see ... I think it was 1947 she passed away. Somewhere around there.

Krystin: What do you remember about your dad?

Rose: Well, he was always hard working. He supported all this big family.

Krystin: Yeah.

Rose: Yep. And all of us took trip, a trip to China before we all came back over.

Krystin: Wow.

Rose: But when he came back over, he had to start all over. Because while he was there he built up a lot of property in China, thinking that we would all retire there.

Krystin: [laughter] Do you guys still have that property? Or is it just gone?

Rose: No. Since he passed away it's all been dissolved.

Krystin: OK. What other stores did he have? Like after that one.

Rose: He only operated one store, but owned other properties.

Krystin: Oh, OK. All right. What do you remember most about growing up here in Phoenix? What do you remember most about growing up in Phoenix?

Vangie: Where'd you go to elementary school?

Rose: I went to Washington School that was at 9th Street and Washington. And just before that, I went to Monroe School for a short period of time before we went to China. Then when we came back, I went to Phoenix Union High School.

Krystin: So how old were you when you went to China? Like what age to what age?

Rose: Twelve.

Krystin: Twelve?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: How long were you over there?

Rose: Oh, according to ... about seven full years.

Krystin: Wow.

Vangie: So you were nineteen when you came back.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Wow.

Rose: I went to high school with youngsters. [laughter].

Vangie: Yeah, yeah.

Krystin: What grade did they put you in when you came back?

Rose: Second grade. Oh, no. Sophomore year. [laughter].

Vangie: Sophomore in high school. Elementary to sophomore year in high school.

Krystin: Wow.

Rose: Yeah, we skipped quite a few years, so it was kinda hard.

Krystin: Yeah, I'd imagine.

Vangie: Just you and Esther were in China all that time?

Rose: No. Esther and I went back to China in 1930. And my mom went home to China with all the brothers and sisters in '32.

Vangie: Oh, OK.

Rose: Then my dad came back to China, 1935. That's where Gladys was born in 1936.

Vangie: So he must have stayed there the whole year then? In '35, '36, he stayed there all that time?

Rose: Mm-hm. We stayed with an aunt and my cousins.

Vangie: And your dad built some buildings while he was there then.

Rose: No, he didn't. Most of the ... You know in China? They built, did most of those buildings when we were there the couple years.

Vangie: Yeah, he had those built at that time.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: So you lived there in the, in your village. In the village or the town? In Canton.

Rose: In Canton. We lived in Canton.

Vangie: Oh, you lived in Canton. OK, how far was the village from Canton?

Rose: We took a boat ...

Vangie: Wow, you had to take a boat.

Rose: To, to the village. Now you can go by automobile.

Vangie: Oh, I see, I see. So you were there a long time in China. Do you remember a lot about China?

Rose: Well, not too much. [laughter].

Vangie: So when you came back, you were a sophomore in high school, you were nineteen.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Where did you meet your husband?

Rose: That was shipboard. [laughter].

Vangie: Shipboard?

Rose: You know, we were seasick at the time, and my dad says, "Oh, you guys got seasick. Why don't you go onboard to get some fresh air." So that's how we were up there, and, fortunately, there was some boys and girls from different schools that we met there, together, and, that's how ...

Vangie: How long, how long was the boat trip from -- did you get it in Canton?

Rose: We got it in Hong Kong to come over.

Vangie: Oh, so you went to Hong Kong to get the boat, and then it came straight across the Pacific Ocean ...

Rose: Mm-hm, yes.

Vangie: To San Francisco or L.A.?

Rose: Well, I got off at San Francisco, and my mother and the rest of the family got off in L.A.. Because I, I lived, I lived here ... from San Francisco.

Vangie: Why did you go to San Francisco and the rest of the family went to L.A.? Did you have relatives in San Francisco?

Rose: No. I had to go to the Angel Island because I was not a citizen.

Krystin: Oh.

Vangie: Well, the rest of them were citizens?

Rose: The rest, well ...

Vangie: Your other sisters.

Krystin: 'Cause you were the only one not born here.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Oh.

Rose: But Gladys was a baby, so that's how she got to L.A. with my family.

Vangie: Oh. So you had to get off at Angel Island and go through immigration?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: How long were you there?

Rose: Just couple of nights.

Vangie: All by yourself.

Rose: Mm-hm. Well, what can you do? [laughter] That's something that you had to do.

Vangie: Yeah, this is when you were nineteen.

Rose: Mm-hm. 'Cause when I came over, that's where we landed.

Vangie: OK. And then how did you get to L.A.? How did you know where to -- or, how did you get to Phoenix?

Rose: I don't remember whether my uncle came over first, or -- I don't remember.

Vangie: Wow.

Rose: Everything was strange at that time. [laughter].

Vangie: Sure, sure, of course.

Krystin: What was the Angel Island experience like?

Rose: Angel Island is where all the ...

Krystin: Immigrants.

Rose: Immigrants had to go.

Krystin: Right.

Rose: To go through processing of coming into the States.

Krystin: Did they interrogate you pretty harshly? Or ...?

Rose: Pardon?

Krystin: How did, like, did they interrogate you a lot? Or ...?

Rose: No, uh-uh.

Krystin: You just had to stay there?

Vangie: Did they have men's and women's barracks or dorms or, how did you, where did you stay there?

Rose: Men had an area and the women had a different area.

Vangie: I see. They just had bunks lined up?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Oh.

Krystin: So why did they make you stay there? Just to check? Process your papers?

Rose: Well, I wasn't a citizen.

Krystin: Right.

Rose: And we didn't have the privilege of coming until we got clearance.

Krystin: Oh, OK. 'Cause I think my grandma and my uncle had to stay there for three months, just being interrogated, constantly. But I think that was a little earlier.

Rose: Who was that?

Krystin: I'm not sure when that was. 1930s.

Vangie: It was Chuck Lee.

Krystin: Chuck Lee and ...

Vangie: And his mom.

Krystin: Chow Lee.

Vangie: And his mom.

Rose: Whose?

Vangie: Chuck Lee.

Rose: Oh, Chuck.

Krystin: Yeah. So, but it might have been different. When did you come back over?

Rose: Well, I think I was released soon because I had been in the States before that.

Vangie: So you had your paperworks? Did you have a passport? What did you, what kind of paperwork did you have?

Rose: Well, it was ... It wasn't citizenship papers, so it was just interrogating papers. Besides, the Chinese weren't allowed to get applied for citizenships for a long time. So I didn't get my American citizenship 'til after I was married.

Vangie: But you had to have some kind of an ID paper, right?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: You had to have an ID paper or some ...

Rose: Yeah. It was just a regular form of ID papers.

Krystin: From China.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Did you have, did you get a birth certificate? Or ...?

Rose: I don't, I don't even, I haven't even seen my birth certificate!

Vangie: Oh, you haven't seen a birth certificate!

Rose: 'Cause in China, in the village, you don't have any certificate then.

Vangie: So how do you, how did you get something to talk to -- that paper that says how old you are?

Rose: I don't know what kind of papers they had. [laughter].

Vangie: So you met Doug on the boat coming from Hong Kong to America.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Was he also a teenage -- nineteen? Twenty?

Rose: He was twenty.

Vangie: He was twenty. And so you met him on the boat coming over.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: How, what kind of a boat was it? A passenger boat?

Rose: US President.

Vangie: US President?

Rose: Steamship President ...

Vangie: Steamship.

Rose: In fact, I forgot. President ... I can't remember.

Vangie: It was the name of a president.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: McKinley, or Washington, or Jefferson ...

Rose: I really don't remember.

Vangie: OK, but it was a steamship?

Rose: It's a regular steamship, mm-hm.

Vangie: Passenger ship?

Rose: Passenger ship.

Vangie: And about how many people do you think it held?

Rose: I don't know.

Vangie: Several thousand? You don't know. Hundreds of people, huh?

Rose: It could be hundreds of people as far as I know.

Krystin: Were there a lot of Chinese coming over, like...

Rose: There were a few, but I didn't know any of 'em.

Vangie: Did they have all kinds of people? *Lo fon* [?], Chinese, Japanese, and ...

Rose: I don't know.

Vangie: You don't remember.

Rose: The only thing I know is, I was talking to Helen Ong's ... dad, that just passed away not too long. Yee[?] ...

Vangie: Oh. OK, OK.

Rose: Yeah, and he was on there. He says, "I remembered you folks all out there, up on deck," and this and that, but I don't remember.

Vangie: Oh. So there were several Chinese ...

Rose: There were some Chinese on there.

Vangie: That ended up in Phoenix, that, did you know them before? Or...

Rose: No, I just knew 'em afterwards.

Vangie: After, 'cause you were all coming to the same place.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Wow ... interesting. So some how you got back to Phoenix. You went straight to Phoenix, or did you go to L.A.?

Rose: Straight to Phoenix.

Vangie: Straight to Phoenix. So somebody must have taken you to Phoenix from San Francisco.

Rose: Mm-hm. Yeah.

Krystin: So when you got back you started at Phoenix Union?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: And they just put you into sophomore year?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: Did you have to go through testing? Or did they just ...

Rose: No.

Vangie: You just started classes.

Rose: I think I had some records of my schooling in China.

Krystin: Oh, OK. Where did your brothers and sisters get placed? Like, kinda similarly?

Rose: Well ...

Krystin: Like, they were older than ...

Rose: They were all younger than I am, so ... In fact, I was talking to Vivian a while back, and she says, "I remember going to Washington School."

Vangie: But she went to Washington, too. And then [inaudible] before [inaudible] to high school.

Rose: Mm-hm. In fact, there's a resident that lives here now. Her name is Minnie Martinez.

Vangie: Oh.

Rose: But I think her name was Ranguel at the time. And she says, "Are you the Rose Lee that used to go to school with me?" She said we used to walk home all toge -- after school, and lived by me. And, come to think of it, I thought I knew her features, you know, at one time, until she told me who she was. So now we visit one another sometimes about what we used to do.

Vangie: So what hours was your dad's grocery store open? You 'member what hours he opened?

Rose: From seven o'clock 'til nine o'clock.

Vangie: So, after, after you were [inaudible] high school, you would come back home and you'd work in the store?

Rose: We all worked in the store.

Vangie: Oh, OK.

Rose: In fact, my dad would wake us up and serve us breakfast. Then he'd go to the market while we tend the store, for the early hours before school time. Then in the meantime, he'd come back and take over while we had our books underneath the cash register. And when the streetcar came, "ling-ling-ling ling." We said, "OK streetcar's here." So we'd grab our books and run out to get the streetcar to go to school.

Vangie: You went to school on a streetcar?

Rose: Well, sometimes my dad took us, and sometimes we took the streetcar.

Vangie: See, where's your store? On what, what region...

Rose: 15th 0-1.

Vangie: 1501 ...

Rose: East Washington.

Krystin: And the school was ...

Vangie: Was at 7th Street and Van Buren.

Rose: Phoenix Union High School, yeah. Well, you'd get off at, at 7th Street and walk up.

Vangie: Oh, you'd get off and walk.

Rose: But a lot of times, my dad would drop us off.

Vangie: I see. So the, the tr -- the streetcar, this was an electric car, right?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: It was, and it just went straight across Washington.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: And you had to get off, it couldn't, it didn't go up north on 7th Street.

Rose: Well, at that time there was a rail that went up north 3rd Street to Indian School.

Vangie: Oh, but not 7th Street.

Rose: You remember those rails?

Vangie: Yeah, well I remember seeing some rails and then, then I never got to ride 'em, and then they disappeared.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: They disappeared in the forties.

Rose: Must have. Before the forties, I think.

Vangie: They all disappeared, 'cause I never got to ride 'em.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: But you rode, that's interesting, you rode the streetcar to school in the morning. It ran early enough in the morning that you had time to get to school.

Rose: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Vangie: And how did you get home?

Rose: We'd walk.

Vangie: You'd walk home!

Rose: But when I was in high school, I'd, I'd learned how to drive. Because when we came back, my dad says, "You girls can learn how to drive, but don't ask me to teach you." So we had one of our customers teach us how to drive. That's how we got a car.

Vangie: So your dad already had -- when your dad first came, you don't remember your first car, or how he got the car, or what kind of car he had?

Rose: We used to have those orphan cars, I don't know what kind!

Vangie: Like the Model A? You don't remember what kind of cars they were.

Rose: I don't remember.

Vangie: But your dad learned how to drive, then.

Rose: He, he was driving already.

Vangie: OK, did your mom ever learn to drive?

Rose: No, she never did.

Vangie: She never learned to drive.

Rose: Mm-mm.

Krystin: So when the customers taught you and then, did you guys have your own car? Or did you guys just use your dad's?

Rose: We had a car to share with us girls.

Krystin: Oh.

Rose: And my ... Well, come to think, I think, there's only two cars then. We got to drive the car, my dad drove the truck. [laughter].

Vangie: Oh, you had a truck and your dad drove it.

Rose: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Vangie: He would go to the market and buy groce -- vegetables and things like that. Then, did you ever play with the neighborhood kids?

Rose: We never had time to play with the neighborhood kids. [laughter].

Krystin: Always working?

Rose: Yeah.

Krystin: Did you -- go ahead.

Vangie: Back then, did they have church then?

Rose: Church?

Vangie: Yeah.

Rose: Yeah, we went to Central and Virginia.

Vangie: Central and Virginia.

Rose: The First Chinese Baptist Church.

Vangie: How old were you when they started that?

Rose: How old? Shortly after we came back.

Krystin: So like nineteen.

Rose: In '38. '37, '38.

Krystin: So your whole family went there then?

Rose: Pardon?

Krystin: Your whole family went there?

Rose: No, just the kids.

Krystin: Oh.

Rose: My mom and dad didn't.

Krystin: Would you drive everyone there?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Oh, you drove there? They didn't come and pick you up?

Rose: No. But after I left, Mrs. Henderson used to come pick the kids up. The younger ones.

Krystin: So when did you guys come back to Phoenix.

Rose: When Carol was six months old. In '44.

Vangie: You got married in '43?

Rose: No, I married in '43.

Vangie: You married in '43. And you came back here after she was ...

Rose: Mm-hm. I guess it was September when we came back.

Vangie: So you didn't stay on the farm two years?

Rose: No, not two years. About a year and a half.

Vangie: A year and a half. And you came to Phoenix because of your family? Or because Doug knew somebody?

Rose: No, because he had, they called it ... some kind of arthritis in his back. Because he'd be on the farm, and, you know, picking or weeding, and he'll lay down into the, into the rows and couldn't get up. Somebody had to come pick him up, so the doctor said, "You'd better go to a drier climate." So that's how we came back here.

Vangie: Oh. So he had a medical reason for coming back here.

Rose: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. But when we got back here, he was OK. [laughter].

Vangie: Well that's good. That's good.

Krystin: What did you guys do when you got back here? Like, grocery store? Or ...?

Rose: We lived in a cottage that my dad own, in back of the store. Behind the store, anyway. And helped in the grocery store until Doug took over.

Vangie: And Doug took over the store?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Oh.

Rose: Yeah. Then ... then in '49, we went into the restaurant business.

Krystin: What restaurant?

Rose: At that time, it was a little restaurant on East Indian School Road, by the name of Lee's Fun M. You know, Chinese Lee's Fun M. That's what we called it, Lee's Fun M.

Vangie: How do you spell that? L-E-E-S.

Rose: Yes. F-U-N.

Vangie: Fun, uh-huh.

Rose: And then the M.

Krystin: What does that mean?

Rose: Lee's Chinese Food Store.

Krystin: OK. Where was that at?

Rose: On 18th Street and East Indian School Road. We were there for a few months. Then we bought the property here on 23rd Street and McDowell. And did our construction work that we had to change it into a restaurant. At that time it was a, an ice cream parlor. Remember that ice cream parlor that had that snow, snow pictures on top and like a mountain? Well that's when we bought that property and remodeled and stood there for thirty years.

Vangie: Wow.

Krystin: What was that restaurant called?

Rose: That, that one we called Lee's Restaurant. And then a few years later, we changed it and completely remodeled the place, and called it Doug Lee's Asia House.

Krystin: Where was it?

Rose: On 2300 East McDowell.

Krystin: What was the name of it, again?

Rose: Lee's, Doug Lee's Asia House.

Krystin: Oh, OK. Is that building still standing?

Rose: It's still there, but it's now a Mexican restaurant. Rosita's Place.

Krystin: 23rd and McDowell.

Vangie: It's called Rosita's Place now?

Rose: Uh-huh.

Vangie: Is that the same chain, the other Rosita's?

Rose: No. This is a privately owned.

Vangie: Do you still own the building?

Rose: Hm?

Vangie: Do you still own the building?

Rose: No. They bought, bought the place after Doug passed away. See, it was too much for Carol and me to handle.

Krystin: You were there for thirty years?

Rose: Well, we were in the restaurant business for thirty years.

Vangie: And they were very successful. Yeah, did a good job. A lot of publicity and ...

Rose: We only, we only worked in the evenings, from six to ten.

Vangie: Wow.

Krystin: Who else worked there then?

Rose: Doug worked in the kitchen with help[?], and I worked the front with the waitresses.

Vangie: But who, who worked in the daytime then, when you weren't there?

Rose: We didn't open 'til six o'clock in the evening.

Krystin: You were only open four hours?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: You only opened four hours a day that whole time?

Rose: No. The first few times we worked from, ten? From eleven 'til nine. And then when it was Lee's Restaurant, we opened from four to ten. Then when it was Doug Lee's Asia House, we went from ten to, from six to ten. Only.

Vangie: Only, wow.

Krystin: That's very exclusive, you know.

Rose: That's why our friends in China says, "You mean you operated a restaurant only four hours?!" [laughter].

Vangie: Wow. That's pretty good.

Krystin: Yeah, that's a good deal.

Rose: But, see that's a, there's a picture of how we operated.

Vangie: Yeah. Yeah, it was very important. Yeah, it was very well known for, they used to, they had, they used to take people on trips.

Rose: We did. One year we took a, all the restaurant owners from Arizona to China. And when we got to China, they would have big banners: "Welcome Arizona Restaurant Association." And the food was completely different. It was good. And they even dined and wined us real good. They even took us restaurant owners back there to their kitchen to look.

Vangie: Doug was president of the restaurant association.

Rose: He was a part of the board.

Vangie: Yeah.

Rose: I don't know who was the president then.

Vangie: Yeah. They were very active in the restaurant association. And they had a lot of publicity. They would have fancy dinners at your restaurant.

Rose: Hm?

Vangie: You had fancy dinners at your restaurant.

Rose: Well. 'Cause we closed every summer, for a whole month. [laughter].

Vangie: Wow.

Krystin: Wow. You guys weren't open that much!

Rose: Yeah. We closed every year for a month.

Krystin: So you guys could take a vacation? Or ...?

Vangie: Yeah.

Rose: Well, we'd be...

Vangie: You did a lot of traveling then.

Rose: We did.

Vangie: That's great.

Krystin: So were there a lot of banquets at your restaurant?

Rose: No, we never took in banquets. It's just personal dining.

Krystin: Personal dining.

Vangie: What was the capacity of your restaurant?

Krystin: Like how many people did it hold?

Rose: A hundred and something. I don't remember how much. It was under two, under two hundred.

Vangie: It wasn't big enough for the Chinese banquets and things like that. Since you couldn't ... I mean, it would have been great food, but it wasn't big enough.

Krystin: So where did you guys, did you guys own that property at the time?

Rose: Mm-hm, yeah.

Krystin: Your husband was able to buy that?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: And then did you guys have a house too?

Rose: No, we were living away from the house. We lived on East Culver.

Krystin: East Culver.

Vangie: When did you buy the house on Culver?

Rose: We bought the property, we bought the property and had it built.

Vangie: Do you remember when that was that you bought it? When did you have your house there? Built?

Rose: Hm. I don't know.

Vangie: But you were there a long time, too.

Rose: We lived at that house for fifty-one years.

Vangie: Fifty-one years. Before you sold it?

Rose: We didn't have to sell -- we sold it to Creighton District.

Vangie: Oh. Creighton District bought it. What do they use it for?

Rose: They re -- well they built their middle school, Creighton Middle School there.

Vangie: Oh, there's a school there now?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Oh, OK.

Rose: Yeah, they took a whole big section of that area.

Vangie: Wow, they lived there fifty-one years.

Krystin: Wow. Were there a lot of Chinese in that community or no?

Rose: No.

Krystin: Like around you?

Rose: Mm-mm, no. The only, there was only one family down the street from us that was Chinese. All the rest were Caucasians.

Krystin: What about when you were growing up? Like, were there a lot of Chinese around you, like, where your store was?

Rose: Well, when we had a grocery store -- I mean, when my dad had a grocery, there was a grocery store on every other corner. [laughter] Like when we'd see one another, like Lucy and them. She says, "You know, there was almost a grocery store on every other corner and we saw each other now than we do nowadays." And we said, "Well, we all survived."

Vangie: And they all survived. Isn't that something?

Rose: That's true.

Vangie: Isn't that something.

Rose: 'Cause Jim Ong was on 10th Street. And then on 12th Street and Jefferson there was Republic Market. And 9th Street, 8th or 9th Street there was a Yin Long Fat[?] Grocery. You remember those? And then on 16th and Washington Street there was Mary's Store. And then on 16th and Jefferson there was Western Salt Lake, no, East Lake Grocery.

Vangie: East Lake Grocery.

Rose: That's where Howard Yee's ...

Vangie: Oh, Howard Yee.

Rose: Yee's father owned it. So there was grocery store almost on every other block.

Krystin: And were all the, were there a lot of kids your age then? Just like, all hanging around together?

Rose: No. We all had our own work a lot.

Krystin: Oh.

Rose: But we'd see each other, we knew one another.

Vangie: Where did Robert Ong's dad have a store?

Rose: His store was on East Buchanan.

Vangie: Oh, it was further south?

Rose: Yeah. 3rd Street and East Buchanan.

Vangie: Oh, he was in the *ky-see*[?] area.

Rose: Just south of the *ky-see*. But after they came back from China, they had a grocery store on 20th and McDowell.

Vangie: 20th and McDowell.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: And then, Tang Shing.¹

Rose: Who?

Vangie: Tang Shing, you bought groceries from him?

Rose: No.

Vangie: Tang Shing?

Rose: No, uh-uh. We bought most of the grocery store from the restaurant, the association. The wholesale house.

Vangie: Wholesale house.

Krystin: Did you guys go to Chinese school at all?

Rose: No. My brothers went, but they didn't stay there long. [laughter] And got [inaudible]. In fact, they had a reunion, about three, four year ago. Vivian came back just for that reunion. It was a nice -- Did you go?

Vangie: No, I didn't go to any Chinese school, no.

Rose: I guess they all had a good time then. Once a week on Saturdays. I never went there.

Vangie: So you were, let's see, you were twenty-three, twenty-four when you got married then?

Rose: Twenty-four and a half.

Vangie: Twenty-four and a half?

Rose: You could say twenty-five 'cause it was...

Vangie: Twenty-five, yeah. You got married. So then you, your life took a different path. You know, you just went, yeah, you just had different experiences and then you went into the restaurant business.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: So that's different from the rest of the Chinese because most of them were grocers.

Rose: Yeah, completely.

Vangie: Yeah, completely.

Rose: That's why a lot of my Chinese friends says, "You don't mix with the Chinese people. You mix with Caucasians," and whatever. Well, that was our business, you know.

Vangie: That was your business, right.

¹ The original transcribed interview recorded this as "Time Shing" so it may be that the interviewee did not understand it to be Tang Shing.

Rose: And every year when we closed, we would have a close-off sale. We'd invite the, we'd have our customers to dinner. Then when we opened up, we'd have an open-up get-together and we'd start business again. That's how we did it.

Vangie: You had a real solid core of regular customers.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Yes, that's the way to do it, you know.

Krystin: Yeah. Only four hours of work a day.

Rose: Then when I left, Terry took over, and sometimes I'd run back to help Terry. The restaurant just felt like, "Oh my, Rose is back."

Krystin: Wow.

Vangie: How long did Terry have the restaurant?

Rose: Just a few years. His wife didn't like the business. It was too hard.

Vangie: Yeah, it's hard work.

Rose: She's a Caucasian, see. They don't work like the Chinese do. [laughter].

Krystin: This is true.

Vangie: Wow, that's a long time you were in that restaurant business. But you had a lot of fun and you had a lot of experiences. You've done a lot of traveling.

Rose: We played around a lot and did a lot.

Vangie: Yeah.

Rose: Worked hard.

Krystin: Were you involved in any, like, Chinese organizations other than the restaurant association?

Rose: No.

Krystin: No. You just did the restaurant association?

Vangie: Like, you didn't get involved with the Chinese United or Chinese, those organizations.

Rose: During the war years, I did a lot of campaigning with donations and stuff. But then, I never belonged to any.

Vangie: During the war they had the Nationalist Chinese, what was that called, what was that group?

Rose: The Chinese Flyers from China?

Vangie: Oh, were you involved with entertaining the Chinese Flyers?

Rose: We were involved with a lot of entertaining, yeah.

Vangie: Uh-huh, OK.

Rose: For a couple years. Well, I was, anyways.

Vangie: So how, what did you do? Or how did you contact them or how did they know about you?

Rose: I don't know. We ended up taking them, showing them around town. Having them over to our house for dinners.

Vangie: About how many of those Chinese Flyers were here at the time? Do you remember?

Rose: I don't know. When I lived, there were three, three groups.

Vangie: You were entertaining some of the Chinese Flyers who came to Luke Air Force Base to learn how to fly for the Chinese government. And you were saying that there were three groups of them. And I don't know whether, do you have any idea how long one group was here for? You know. Did you see them for, like, three months, or whatever, and then it was a different group? Or longer?

Rose: I guess it was just a few months at a time. And then when they were ready to leave, second group came, and third group. 'Cause I think at that time they had quite a few groups come. 'Cause somebody that contacted Esther and then brought back. And ... I didn't know them, so it was after I left here.

Vangie: Yeah, that was an interesting part of Phoenix, too, when they had these Chinese Flyers. And they, did they speak, were they Mandarin-speaking Cantonese people or what?

Rose: Some of them spoke Cantonese and some of them spoke Mandarin.

Vangie: So they only spoke Mandarin or some of them only spoke Cantonese?

Rose: Well groups I knew, they all spoke Chi -- Cantonese.

Vangie: They all spoke Cantonese. So you understood them.

Rose: Mm-hm. 'Cause I think eventually the later ones spoke Mandarin.

Vangie: OK.

Rose: 'Cause they came from different areas in China.

Vangie: Uh-huh. And then how did you know that so many of the died when they went back? How did you hear the news?

Rose: I, I used to correspond with a couple of 'em. Until I lost contact, then that's how I knew that some of them were gone and some ...

Vangie: So you wrote, you wrote Chinese letters?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: Like, in Chinese?

Vangie: You wrote in Chinese to them then.

Rose: Some Chinese and some English.

Vangie: Wow. You remembered enough to write letters in Chinese.

Rose: Well at that time it was still kind of fresh. [laughter] You know when you drop it down, you just lose contact with it.

Vangie: So how long do you think it took mail to get from Phoenix to China.

Rose: That I don't know.

Vangie: It must have taken a while.

Rose: I think a lot of times the mail was censored, too.

Vangie: Censored?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Well how did you get that feeling?

Rose: Well. You just watch what you write.

Krystin: Like, when letters came over, was there like parts blacked-out? Or ...?

Rose: No. Because we didn't say much about the government. It was just about everyday life, you know.

Vangie: You didn't talk much about the war? Or, about the Japanese? Or ...?

Rose: Mm-mm, no.

Vangie: No. You were gone for a lot of your, from twelve to nineteen, so that would have been like your teenage years. Did you experience any discrimination?

Rose: In China?

Vangie: In Phoenix, in Phoenix.

Rose: No, oh, in Phoenix.

Vangie: Yeah. Did you experience any discrimination do you think?

Rose: Not with us. In fact, when I went to school, to Phoenix Union, the first year I was there, there was a Japanese girl that was in my homeroom. And she got to liking me. And at that time there were about five or six girls who had lunch together. And she hung around us and some of the Caucasian students would stare at her. And she says -- they're talking about her -- she says, "Why would you care if they're talking about you? You're staying with us, it doesn't bother you. It shouldn't bother you." So she's been a friend of mine up 'til this day.

Vangie: Now, was, I don't know if you were here during the war, when they took the Japanese away. You remember that time?

Rose: No, I...

Vangie: You were not here, you must have been...

Rose: I wasn't here then. I was already in New York.

Vangie: You were already in New York?

Rose: I was in New York at that time.

Vangie: OK, because some people said that they had to wear a badge saying they were Chinese, not Japanese.

Rose: I didn't have to.

Vangie: You didn't have to go through that.

Rose: Mm-mm, no.

Vangie: Do you know of anybody who did?

Rose: I sure don't -- I haven't. This is the first time I've heard that!

Vangie: Really?

Rose: Uh-huh.

Krystin: Wow.

Rose: I didn't know that.

Krystin: Yeah. Well, not even that they *had* to. Like, a lot of Chinese *wanted* to, just so that they wouldn't be confused. So ...

Rose: That could be. But you know...

Vangie: But somebody actually had a little badge that they wore.

Krystin: Yeah. Like, they had badges.

Rose: I didn't know that.

Vangie: They had, they made up little badges.

Rose: Well that probably the Chinese organization did it.

Vangie: Especially on the east coast, I mean the west coast.

Krystin: Everywhere.

Vangie: Because it was just the Japanese. Yeah, you know, because they put the Japanese away.

Krystin: Yeah. That instead of writing it, like, on their shirts, so as not to be confused.

Vangie: Yeah. But you didn't experience any of that? Or in New York, either.

Rose: I, I don't know. I was out on the farm and never mixed with any Chinese.

Krystin: So even as a kid, no discrimination? Like, no getting made fun of or anything?

Rose: No.

Krystin: That's good. Was your, were your classmates mostly Caucasian? Or ...?

Rose: In sch -- in grade school?

Krystin: Yeah.

Rose: Yeah, mostly Caucasian. And Mexicans. 'Cause the Blacks were all in a school of their own.

Krystin: Right.

Rose: We lived among a lot of Blacks, too, on Washington Street.

Vangie: Black people, but they didn't go to the same school when you were little.

Rose: Mm-mm. No, uh-uh.

Vangie: They had their own schools to go to.

Rose: They had their own grade school and high school. Carter High School.

Vangie: Yeah. So they were your customers though?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: So do you think there's a difference between how you grew up, like, your growing up here among, like, mostly Caucasians? Like, did that completely alter, like ... I guess, were you more Americanized than you were Chinese? I guess.

Rose: Well, I would say I was half-and-half. I'm open-minded.

Krystin: What was the reaction when you went back to China? Like, did everyone think you were just completely Americanized?

Rose: Well, I was in boarding school. And were classified as "overseas Chinese." [inaudible].

Krystin: So did you get treated differently there, for being overseas Chinese? Or ...?

Rose: No, we got the same kind of education. But sometimes, when it came up, will be something about overseas Chinese. Especially when we were in middle school.

Krystin: Like what kind of stuff?

Rose: Well, the overseas group will get together more often than with the others.

Krystin: Were there a lot of people from overseas that were at the boarding school?

Rose: I would say that there was quite a bit at the school I went to.

Vangie: A lot of American-born Chinese there at your school?

Rose: There were, your, your brother John.

Vangie: My brother Johnny was there?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: And Jenny?

Rose: Mm-hm. I don't remember about Jenny in Hu Jing[?]. But John was at the boarding school.

Vangie: You knew he was there at the same time you were.

Rose: Mm-hm. But he was in a boys' school and I was in a girls' school.

Vangie: Were they close together, or not?

Rose: Well ...

Vangie: A block away? Or ...?

Rose: It was about a block away.

Vangie: Oh, OK, a block away. And you stayed in dormitories.

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: You stayed in dorms. And Johnny stayed in a dorm.

Rose: I think he was, I think he was boarding in boarding school too.

Krystin: So all the Americans sending their kids over to get the...

Vangie: A lot of Americans...

Krystin: Chinese experience?

Vangie: A lot of Americans sent their kids back to China then.

Rose: No. A lot of Chinese sent their kids back to China, yeah.

Vangie: That's what I mean, a lot of Chinese sent their kids back.

Rose: For the same reason that they wanted us to learn Chinese.

Vangie: Were you there with your cousins? Like, Robert Ong and Frank Ong and them.

Rose: Yeah, they went there. And two years before I was there.

Vangie: Oh you went, oh they ...

Rose: They left here in '28.

Vangie: I see.

Rose: And that's who I was staying with. When I get to come home, I'd stay with them. During the summer months, vacation, I would stay with them. And then when school started I was back in the dormitory.

Krystin: Where was the school at? Canton? Or ...?

Rose: Well, it was in, in Dong San[?]. Straight translation it says "north mountain." [laughter].

Krystin: Where was that in relation to, like ...

Vangie: And to outside of the city? Near the city?

Rose: This was, more like that we lived in Phoenix and it was in Tempe. Like that.

Krystin: OK. So not too far.

Rose: No, not too far. You'd take the bus.

Vangie: They had buses then?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Krystin: Do you have a lot of friends from the school still? Like, do you still keep in contact?

Rose: Well...

Krystin: Other ...

Rose: What friends I've had, some of them are all gone. [laughter] Yeah. They're either too old, or dea -- can't hear, or ...

Vangie: You're in great shape, Rose. You're in great shape!

Rose: Well, I can't complain.

Vangie: Yeah. Do you exercise? Or what do you do to stay in shape? Or is it just, that's how you were born?

Rose: Well, I used to be very athletic, so I think that used to help me a lot in my ...

Vangie: What did you do?

Rose: I played mostly softball.

Krystin: In a league? Or ...?

Rose: Mm-hm. And then we played, I played basketball. I played tennis.

Vangie: This is in China.

Rose: Mm-hm. After I came back here, I had to work, I didn't get all that [inaudible].

Vangie: Yeah, that's right, that's right.

Rose: Mm-hm. And that, all that hard work in the store helped a lot, too. 'Cause we were all girls and there wasn't that many boys to help in the store.

Vangie: All the kids in school, they all played sports then?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Yeah, that's part of the school curriculum.

Rose: In the boarding school, yeah.

Vangie: The curriculum, that's part of the school curriculum. That was very good then.

Rose: In boarding school you play. And when you study, you have a study period at night.

Vangie: Did you know my mother in China? No.

Rose: No. I knew your other mother.

Vangie: My dad's first wife?

Rose: Mm-hm.

Vangie: Do you know where in China?

Rose: Well we knew them here before we went to China. That's how we knew John and Jenny.

Vangie: From Phoenix.

Rose: From Phoenix, yeah.

Vangie: And then you saw them again in China.

Rose: Mm-hm. 'Cause the Phoenicians always got together somehow. They knew where each one were living, you know.

Vangie: Oh, I see. That's great. I think we've covered a lot of things.

Krystin: Yeah. Anything else you want to cover?

Rose: That's enough. [laughter].

Vangie: Well thank you, that's great.

Rose: You can delete and add whatever you want. [laughter].

Vangie: That's fine, that's great, thank you.

Krystin: No, it's good. We really appreciate it, yeah.

[end of interview]

FRED AND KATHLEEN ONG

Interviewed by Vince Murray
2 March 2007

Vince: Ok lets get started. This is an interview with Fred Y. Ong on March 2nd at 9:35 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ong. My name is Vince Murray. For the record do we have your permission to audiotape your interview?

Fred: Yes.

Vince: Ok lets get started with this. Please state your name and how to spell it.

Fred: My name is Fred Y. Ong. The last name is O-N-G Ong.

Vince: And where were you born?

Fred: I was born in Phoenix, Arizona, third street and Buchanan, Phoenix, Arizona.

Vince: What year?

Fred: November 28th, 1920.

Vince: Ok and do also have a Chinese name?

Fred: My Chinese name is Ong Yue Yin. Y-U-E Y-I-N.

Vince: Y-U-E?

Fred: Y-U-E, that's what I use in Mandarin. That's the new words now. Mandarin on my passport I use Y-U-T. That's Cantonese.

Vince: Oh, Ok. That explains a lot.

Fred: Yes.

Vince: Ok, could you please state the names of your parents and provide the spelling as well.

Fred: My father's name is Henry Ong Sr. Henry Ong, O-N-G. And his um, he use his Chinese English name um lets see. What is the name that he use?

Kathleen: Kai Lung.

Fred: Yea Kai Lung, that's his married name, Kai Lung, Ong Kai Lung, but I don't think he used that at all in business here.

Vince: So that's Guy Lung?

Fred: Kai, K-A-I. Kai Lung.

Vince: L?

Fred: L-O, L-U-N-G, Lung. Lung that's the generation name, Lung. That distinguish what generation he is. He is 18th generation, we are 19th generation from China.

Vince: Cool. Is that where the middle name comes from? The Yue or Yut?

Fred: No no. That's my school name.

Vince: Oh OK.

Fred: My married name is Wu Sai. S-I-E or S-A-I, Sai. That's my generation name. So if I am Wu Sai, then the people would know what generation I am in. They call me the uncle or father or whatever may be. Very, very distinguished.

Vince: What was your mother's name?

Fred: My mother's name is Ma Lai Hing. M-A is Ma, horse. But her name is uh, Sophie, she used Sophie also.

Vince: So her English name was Sophie, but her Chinese name meant horse?

Fred: Ma Lai Hing, Ma is her first, uh surname.

Vince: Oh its her surname.

Fred: Its her surname, like I Ong.

Vince: Right.

Fred: So, but you Lai Hing Ong.

Vince: Lai Hing Ong. Ok and where was your father born?

Fred: My father's born in Canton China. Kai Ping.¹

Vince: And where was your mother born?

Fred: Toi San. Toi San, China.

Vince: Is that in Canton too?

Fred: Pretty close, yea. Canton. They're all province of Canton.

Vince: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Fred: I have four other brothers and two sisters. They, they, one's deceased already, the oldest one.

Vince: What were their English names and their Chinese names? I guess we can start with your oldest brother.

Fred: Ok let's go with my sister. My oldest sister is the oldest one.

Vince: Oh OK.

Fred: My oldest sister is Sophie. Sophie Ong.

Vince: So she was named after your mother then?

¹ Hoiping. Kai Ping is the Mandarin name of the village.

Fred: Yes. She's the oldest one.

Vince: And did she have a Chinese name?

Fred: Yes. Cow Chai. Cow, C-O-W. Chai, C-H-A-I. Cow Chai, its Sophie. She married a Yee family from Stockton. She was in New York and she passed away already.

Vince: Was she born in Phoenix as well?

Fred: Same thing, in Phoenix. Yes, we were all born here. Ok, and then my brother come next, Robert Ong. That's Yue Ngon. That's the Chinese name.

Vince: Ok, and how do spell it.

Fred: Yut Ngon. Y-U-T-N-G-O-N.

Vince: Is the G silent then?

Fred: Yea silent.

Vince: And you're next?

Fred: Then my name, I'm next in line, but I'm, according to the Chinese I'm number two son, but actually number three. We just count the male.

Vince: So you're number two son, but number three child.

Fred: Yes, correct. So I am, then I was born in Buchanan Street. They built a new store and then I was born in there. And in that area, that hospital.

Vince: So they had a store on Buchanan and you were born in the store?

Fred: No no no. He built a new store when I was born that year.

Vince: Oh OK.

Fred: I was born in Good Sam.

Vince: Oh Good Samaritan Hospital.

Fred: Then number four is Henry. That's number three Henry. The one that P. O. W.

Vince: Oh, Henry Jr.

Fred: Yea Henry Jr. Yut Tin. T-I-N. He was born in Phoenix also. And then, the other brother, Frank. Frank Ong, he was born also here in Phoenix. Yut Chung, C-H-A-N-G.

Vince: Its pronounced *Chuon*, but I would say *Chang*.

Fred: No Chung. C-H-A-U-N-G.

Vince: Oh U.

Fred: And then my younger brother, he is Joe. He was supposed to be in here too, but that's another story.

Vince: So is that all of them.

Fred: Then my sister Lily, the youngest sister Lily Ong, her married name is Lily Soe. S-O-E in Oakland.

Vince: What was her Chinese name?

Fred: Cow Gurn. Cow C-O-W G-U-A-N, G-U-R-N, G-U-R-N.

Vince: And Joe's?

Fred: Joe's Chinese name is Yut Lin. L-I-N. Y-U-T, L-I-N Joe. Joseph.

Vince: And you have one more sister?

Fred: No Lily, that's the last one.

Vince: Ok. Do you know what year your father moved to the United States?

Fred: Oh. Must be 18 uh 1808 probably, 1888. No wait a minute. 18 uh before statehood.

Vince: Ok.

Fred: 1808?

Vince: 1908?

Fred: Not 19 its in the 1800's.

Kathleen: No no, you couldn't be.

Fred: Let's see, statehood was 1912. Just before that.

Vince: Just before 1912?

Fred: Yea 1800.

Vince: Ok. I also have Mrs. Ong here too. Since we've got her voice on the tape can you introduce yourself please?

Kathleen: Me? Oh. My name is Kathleen Ong. My Chinese, Lau Wai Wah.

Vince: And how do you spell that?

Kathleen: L-A-U that's my last name. Wai W-A-I W-A-H Wah.

Vince: And its Kathleen with a k or a c?

Kathleen: K.

Vince: With a K, OK. I should have mentioned that earlier in the interview. I wan to make sure we have that so as your voice is picked up when we're saying things they'll know who's talking or else they'll think its just me. So your father was just here prior to statehood and your mother came with him when he moved here or did he ...

Fred: He went back and got married.

Vince: Oh so he moved here first, started his business, went back, got married, came here and then started his family, so he was already here when he started his family. And your parents operated a store?

Fred: Sun Wah Choung. Sun S-U-N. Wah W-A-H. Choung C-H-O-U-N-G, I guess, Choung.

Vince: What does that mean?

Fred: Well new, Wah is China, Choung is flourish, so it's a good name.

Vince: Sun means new?

Fred: Yea.

Vince: And then Wah means China.

Fred: Yea, China.

Vince: And Choung means?

Fred: Choung means prosper.

Vince: Choung means prosper, oh OK. Interesting, that is a good name.

Fred: It is.

Vince: So did you grow up then at the store on Buchanan?

Fred: When I was born there in 1920, we always talked Spanish. We speak Spanish before we speak English. Here because the predominating uh um Mexican Spanish people. All our friends are Mexican. School.

Vince: And were most of the customers as the store workers probably Hispanic.

Fred: Yes, yes, yes.

Vince: So your parents then both were fluent in Spanish.

Fred: Yes they are. My mother speak Spanish, English and Indian. Indian too, 'cause we a lot of people come in every weekend to shop.

Vince: From the reservation?

Fred: Yes.

Vince: Oh really?

Fred: Across the street, they used to park the horses there and then they come in and do the shopping then go back.

Vince: They head back to the reservation? So she was actually fluent in English and ...

Fred: Yes, yes English and I don't know what language. Probably Navajo or something.

Vince: Well what about your father?

Fred: My father doesn't speak that much, but my mother does 'cause she used to stay in the store. My father do lotta social work. He was very active.

Vince: But must have spoke Chinese, Spanish and English as well.

Fred: Yes.

Vince: And what memories do you have of your father?

Fred: Oh he was a hard-working man. You can see we at that time, the Chinese cannot buy property for the reason of discrimination. So we got a good friend, a good friend of flour shop, uh, lets see what is it ...Southwest Flour? I can't remember the brand name.

Kathleen: Hayden.

Fred: Hayden Flour Mill, the manager become a good friend of my father it he was amazing. So many every time he just tell us, "Whenever you become of age twenty-one you join the mason ... Masonic lodge."

Vince: Was your father also a member of the Masonic lodge?

Fred: No he's not. But since he influenced my father quite a bit he knows of the mason history.

Vince: Your parents then have a store that you grew up in and lived out of the store over on 3rd Street and Buchanan.

Fred: Right behind the store.

Vince: But right by there, according to the records I have, your father built a warehouse. He actually built it in two phases, two buildings and our historic record has it based upon the permits which he applied for is the Ong Yut Geung warehouse, um, but with his name on the permits. And my understanding is that he put it in your brother's name because he couldn't own the property.

Fred: That is correct.

Vince: Where did he get the money to build this warehouse?

Fred: That really puzzles me. I just don't know what happened 'cause we worked, my father and mother work hard, but when you find nickel and dime, that's a lot of money to build a warehouse.

Vince: And that warehouse, the two of them jointly together cost over \$30,000 back in the twenties.

Fred: That's a lot of money. He probably has a loan from my friend Dick Irving. The one that um, the manager of the Hayden Flour Mill.

Vince: Dick Irving?

Fred: Dick Irving, yea.

Vince: So you think he probably got a loan from him.

Fred: Yes.

Vince: Now they didn't operation the warehouse, they leased the warehouse to others.

Fred: Leased it out. We left 1927 before we went back to China.

Vince: So that was some income he had coming in then from the warehouse as well as operating the store.

Fred: Yes, yes.

Vince: OK. So, you mentioned going back to China in 1927, so the whole family moved back to his place.

Fred: To Canton, we were lucky we board first class at that time. First class passage to China, whole family, so it took a lot of money.

Vince: And you left out of San Francisco then?

Fred: Yea we have to go to San Francisco.

Vince: Did you take the train to San Francisco?

Fred: I can not remember. Probably take the train to Frisco, then we stay in there for couple, three days and then we board the Dollar Steamship and we back to China.

Vince: And then first class passage all the way back to China.

Fred: All the way back.

Vince: And how long were you in China?

Fred: I was there in a, ten years, went to school ten years there.

Vince: 'Til 1937?

Fred: '37, uh huh.

Vince: And why did you move back?

Fred: Well, no. That's the plan. My father wanted us to come back at that time. My brother came back in uh '36. He came in ahead of time.

Vince: That was Robert.

Fred: Robert came back first. Then my sister and I come back next year. That's '37.

Vince: Oh so you guys came back uh separately.

Fred: Separately.

Vince: Then the other members of the family.

Fred: They come back in '39. The last boat from Hong Kong. They were lucky to come back because at that time when we went back, my father, my mother didn't expect to come back. So she didn't no papers. She didn't get no return passport, so we got Dick Irving is a good friend, partner of Senator Hayden, so manipulated and got the passes right away.

Vince: So she got back ...

Fred: Just before the Japanese took over Canton.

Vince: Wow.

Fred: It was very close in Hong Kong, uh huh.

Vince: Very close. So you went to school then ...

Fred: Went to school there and then all spend my youth there, so I don't know, I missed out all the, youth. Fixing car or bicycle. I am very poor at mechanical, I have no idea in China. We just go to school there and play. Nothing to do.

Vince: So the schooling you went to in China was basically learning the Chinese Language?

Fred: And English also.

Vince: They taught you English there, too?

Fred: Oh yea yea. This is the Dr. Sun Yat-sen University School, school system. One of the best in Canton.

Vince: Ok, OK.

Fred: See my father was Kuomintang and then this school that belonged to the Dr. Sun Yat-sen which is the head of the Kuomintang. So that's why we got in no problem.

Vince: So your father was a member, so that was part of the plan as well. Was to take you back there and culture within your Chinese Culture, but also make sure you learned English, so when you came back here you wouldn't be starting over.

Fred: That's right.

Vince: So you didn't attend Phoenix Union High school or anything like that?

Fred: Yea well I went through two years in there.

Vince: Oh you did.

Fred: Then I drop out 'cause I said hey I don't need to learn that, so I want to make some money at that time. Then the war's coming in the in between time.

Vince: So your brother came back first, Robert. What did he do once he came back? Did he start a store or ...

Fred: No, no, he worked in the store and then he got married. By fixed marriage, an arranged marriage to a girl from China Hong Kong. We got her back here, and got married in '39. So, then they worked in this store, the Farmer's Market.

Vince: The one on Buchanan.

Fred: No, no, no, the new store. We closed that store already. We let the store, uh, my cousin took over the store on 3rd Street. He took over the store, then we started another store, my father came back and started another store. Lee Jew 1501 East Washington. That store, he run that for some time. My uncle went back to China, see he took care of the store then my uncle Lee Jew

went back to China himself, the family. So he took over the store. Then when he come back, my dad bought this lot on McDowell, five acres, two and a half acres.

Vince: Two and a half acres and that was ...

Fred: McDowell and 20th Street.

Vince: That's the 2005.

Fred: Yea. Now it's a ramp. A highway freeway ramp. They took over that.

Vince: Where the 51 ...

Fred: No, no, no before 51. It's 20th Street.

Vince: Oh I see it. It's the onramp.

Fred: Yea and McDowell.

Vince: So your brother came back and operated that store.

Fred: We built the store. 50 that time, 50 by 50. Big store then, supermarket.

Vince: Now you came back then, right after he did and then did you also work in the store?

Fred: Yes uh huh. I work in the store and then so I found out that I can do better in store instead of going to school because my age group I'm right behind in the class. So I said I might as well just work in the store.

Vince: And then did you go to work in the same store.

Fred: Yea we have this new store on McDowell.

Vince: And then when your brother Henry Jr. came back, did he also work at the store.

Fred: Yea, we all work come back the same '39 we had build the store then my father build that store in '39.

Vince: Then you started your own store as well.

Fred: After we got married. That before, that's after the service.

Vince: Ok so I'll go back over this. All of you came back and then you all joined the service and went into the army.

Fred: When my brother Henry went back on October, then I went into November, one month apart to the service and then my brother Frank went the year after.

Vince: And this is 1941, 1942?

Fred: '42, '42. And then later on at the tail end of the World War II, Robert was drafted, so he went in there just about six months I think.

Vince: So all four of you were in the service.

Fred: Yes, at the same time. We are the only family in Phoenix here I guess have four sons in the service at the same time.

Vince: So kind of the Chinese version of the fighting Sullivans.

Fred: Yea, Sullivan. They would have five I guess.

Vince: So then after all of you came back from the war, Robert was already married and then you met your wife and ...

Fred: Then I came back '46 here to buy that store. Then I have the Everybody's Market then I change it to Farmer's Supermarket 'cause I want my dad's name there you see.

Vince: And the Farmer's Supermarket was the one from 20th Street.

Fred: 20th St. I used that name because we have sold that business already.

Vince: Oh so you already had that one.

Fred: Oh yea, somebody else rented that store before.

Vince: Well where did Robert work then after you sold it.

Fred: He bought another store.

Vince: And where was his store at?

Fred: Over 20th Street, East Madison. Robert's Market, you don't have it listed in there.

Vince: I know. If we don't have it on there, then we need to put it.

Fred: Yea that's Robert's Market he started that for making money.

Vince: And that would be around 1946?

Fred: Uh, '46 yea. After same time I came back.

Vince: Where did you meet your wife.

Fred: In L.A., she was working in Los Angeles and I so happened I just came back at that time from the service and her friend that's working for was my father's good friend. You know Kuomintang, very good friend close relative friend. We had just met her over there so.

Vince: So your marriage wasn't arranged?

Fred: Oh, no, no. She had already graduated from USC at that time.

Vince: Oh really?

Fred: She came over as a student in 1939 from Hong Kong. One of the rare one that stayed here and got a degree during a war time so she worked a couple of jobs to support herself.

Vince: And then you married and started a store, the Farmer's Supermarket.

Fred: Yea.

Vince: Which you purchased from ...

Fred: Lawrence, Mr. Lawrence.

Vince: It wasn't Guy Lawrence was it?

Fred: Oh no.

Vince: OK, its another Lawrence.

Fred: This Lawrence is uh, I don't even know his first name.

Vince: I know there's a Lawrence St. that ...

Fred: Lawrence Lane, ours is Lawrence Rd. Lawrence Lane is way up north.

Vince: Right and is that named after him do you know?

Fred: No, that's a different Lawrence.

Vince: Ok. I am familiar with Guy Lawrence as well which another person. Him and his son both have the name Guy and I wasn't sure if he was related to that one.

Fred: No, no, no.

Vince: So once you get the store going and you started a family and then raised your kids working at the store. Sent all of them to school here or did you send them back to China as well.

Fred: No, they stayed here. They stayed here, they never went back to China.

Vince: Where you store was located though up on North 19th Ave., there wasn't a lot out in 1946.

Fred: No, I was the only business there besides Westward Ho Dairy on 19th and Glendale Ave. We have the same phone, one phone line business line.

Vince: You shared with the dairy?

Fred: Yes. So its 4, 5 o'clock in the morning the phone would ring 'cause their business you see. And that's the only business line we have.

Vince: Who did you store serve then? Was it the farmers out in that area?

Fred: Oh yea. I have people come in from Glendale. All around, they come in and they shop. All over.

Vince: And then over time, it (the city) just expanded out to Chris-Town Mall I think was built.

Fred: Well, Chris-Town Mall come in, let's see, sixty (1960) something.

Vince: Wasn't that a dairy right where Christ-Town Mall was located?

Fred: No, no right on 19th Ave. Glendale Ave. Chris-Town is a farm before. But I'm on Lawrence there about half a block, six hundred feet from Glendale Avenue then the corner is Westward Ho Dairy. They supplied the milk to Westward Ho the hotel.

Vince: Oh, so it was part of that business down there. And you probably got a lot of the milk for your store from them as well probably.

Fred: Oh yea, we sell. We sell the store yea.

Vince: So your ...Tell us more about the Ko Mun Tang. You said your father was involved in that organization.

Kathleen: Kuomintang.

Vince: Or Kuomintang.

Fred: Kuomintang is revolution party. They are the one that Dr. Sun Yat-sen started to overthrow the Ming, the Manchu. Then become China. That's 1912.

Vince: The nationalist Chinese party.

Fred: Nationalist. Nationalist at that time all the nationalist Chinese belong to it. They used to be those Manchu used to have long hair and then chop it off in 1911.

Vince: The queues and pony tails in the back?

Fred: The queues yea. The Chinese pledge allegiance to the emperor way back long time story and then they after Dr. Sun Yat-sen overthrow the government they become China 1912.

Vince: So this was basically the nationalist party then. And that's the party that eventually ended up moving to Taiwan after the communists took over?

Fred: That start before after World War II. When it started. And then China that time, Chiang Kai-shek was in charge and then they say he was corrupted. Always his people, when you have enough people, something gonna happen. And they say he's corrupted they gotta have a new government. At that time the communists took over. They just work it over. At that time, the United States help the communists to push Chiang Kai-shek get away from the government because they want some new people take over there, but they didn't the communists were bad. So Chiang Kai-shek went to Taiwan.

Vince: OK.

Fred: In fact most of those Taiwanese people at that time 1949 all the people from Canton from China went to Taiwan to work for Chiang Kai-shek. And quite a few stayed with the new regime, the communists, but they never happy.

Vince: So do you still have family members there in Canton?

Fred: We have some people in the village, but we never see them at all. I've never been back to the village.

Vince: Well you also probably have family members then in Taiwan.

Fred: No. Just friends that's all. I have a lot of students that I during the war I was teaching the Chinese bombardier they came over and they went back to China.

Vince: And they were being trained at one of the air force bases.

Fred: Yea, yea.

Vince: Which air force base?

Fred: Uh, I was in Carlsbad, New Mexico, that's where I graduated from bombardier. That's where I got my commission, so I stayed there as an instructor. They probably new they were coming in because they won't let me go anyplace. I want to go to some of the place to get any from New Mexico. They say no you stay here.

Vince: So during the war then, you stayed pretty much in the country and just trained other people to go and that's where you met some of these gentlemen.

Fred: There were my students who came back and my old school mate from China came over too.

Vince: Tell us a little about the Ong Ko Met.

Fred: OK. Ong Ko Met is a person. He's a lord, warlord. He had helped the emperor to win a lot of battles. He was a young man, he was a bright young man and at age twenty-three, he got the confidence of the emperor, he said, "You be ... you're my right hand man. I'm gonna let you run the country under me." So at age twenty-three, he become a, the, all the generals' general. Like marshal. General of the generals.

Vince: Like a field marshal.

Fred: A field marshal. Master general. He was the top man.

Vince: And what year was this?

Fred: Oh that was like 6,000 years ago.

Vince: Oh that long?

Fred: Oh yea, we got a long history.

Vince: During, I guess the consolidation of one of the dynasties or something.

Fred: Oh yea that's way back.

Vince: How is the name used as the family association.

Fred: Because he was so famous, then he had thirteen sons and then thirteen you know how they multiply. Every one of them was loyal to the emperor so they got good job, so they just spread all around the country.

Vince: So then, you're distantly related then to this general through your name.

Fred: My name and Don Sho-ping the one that communist guy he was our cousin way back.

Vince: And the Ong Ko Met name then is just used for the family association.

Fred: It's a person actually existed.

Vince: Actually named after a person. The George Washington of Chinese history or Alexander the Great or something along that line.

Fred: That's correct.

Vince: And this association includes not just the Ongs, but its also the Tangs.

Fred: Well the Ongs, the Tangs, the Dengs, the Dong, the Teng. They all the same name. Same written Chinese name, only pronunciation different from different location.

Vince: So from different villages within Canton?

Fred: That's right. They're different pronunciation, but the written thing is Ong. The same writing. The name is the same, but the sound pronunciation is different.

Vince: So that's why your cousins might have the name Tang or Wong or something like that. Is Wong included in this?

Fred: No, no Wong. Its Dong, Dan, D-A-N, Dung, D-U-N-G, Ong, D-E-N-G, Deng, and then in Philippines they use Oh, O-H. That's the Ong, yea. That's a dialect. Different dialect you see. O-H, Ong. See that Oh is from the village, they call it Four Village, like Tempe, Mesa, Gilbert all those four village have a different dialect. So different tone.

Vince: But all of them are from Canton.

Fred: All the same, all from Canton.

Vince: So tell us a little bit about your work in the store and growing up in the store, what we kind of talked about and you being a kid. I know you moved to China and spent some time there, but as a young child before you moved to China, which you would have been, how old were you?

Fred: I was six years old.

Vince: Did you recall being in the store and when you were in school?

Fred: I use to work in the store all the time and just new routine. They think you eat a lot of thing because it's free. We don't even touch if it is candy. You know it's so funny its there, but we don't indulge.

Vince: So there weren't any real fringe benefits.

Fred: No, no, no. Its just there, that's all.

Vince: But your parents had to work some long hours.

Fred: Oh yea, we always, they open from early in the morning, seven o'clock, to night, eight o'clock.

Vince: And that was seven days a week?

Fred: Seven days a week.

Vince: What about holidays?

Fred: Holidays, we would open also. See this is what happened when after A.J. Bayless got hold of, you know, see he was feeling the heat from all the Chinese store opening holidays. They said, "Hey these Chinese people, they get the money and send it back to back to China. And OK lets boycott the Chinese merchants." For a while it was very bad. That's where we started the association to, Chamber of Commerce, to better our image.

Vince: That's the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Fred: Chinese Chamber of Commerce that started in 1939 when we were opening the new store. They said let's have an association so we can combat this thing.

Vince: So your family had pretty much just moved back from China and you were already feeling this economic boycott put through by A.J. Bayless.

Fred: Yup, he was the one because he was hurting bad, because he got so many store and Sunday he closed, here the Chinese people, that's the day they really make a killing.

Vince: So you then the boycott and the decrease in business during that time period until you got the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Fred: Oh yea. Sunday we never get to go places, 'cause we have to work in the store. That's the busiest day.

Vince: And so your father was instrumental then in founding the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Fred: Yea, all those people yea. 'Cause this is where they get together at this place, this is our house. We have the big two-bedroom house, four-bedroom house over here.

Vince: And this close you had a house located. [inaudible]

Fred: Here, here, here, here, here's the front store and the, this one here, see.

Vince: Was it one structure or was it two structures?

Fred: Yea one structure. There were two structures. At that time, we were the Chinese people, the only one to have a big store, big house and then Judge Tang has a house on 17th St. and this is 20th St. We just neighborhoods apart.

Vince: So you had Harry Yen.

Fred: Lee Jew.

Vince: Lee Jew or Jew Lee, Henry Ong, your father,.

Fred: and then Yoon Loung, that's the one on the second street there and Jefferson.

Vince: From second street?

Fred: Yea this is the one have the restaurant, Mandarin Restaurant.

Vince: That's Ong Si Long, so he had the Mandarin Restaurant.

Fred: Yea and this is the one that have the grocery store in Chinatown, Chinese grocery.

Vince: Chinese grocery in Chinatown. We have Bok Sai Ong and then Wing F. Ong.

Fred: This is Wing F. Ong, then this is Ying Ong that have a store on 10th St. and Roosevelt.

Vince: 10th St. and Roosevelt was Ying Ong, OK.

Fred: See this is all the pioneer, all the immediate family and then every Sunday, they come to our place ...

Vince: So you're all related.

Fred: All related, yea. All father or grandfather related. Second cousins.

Vince: All your grandfathers were second cousins.

Fred: Yea, yea. See this is big (can't understand) from Wing Ong. That's the one.

Vince: I think I have this picture, if not, I'll take that with me.

Fred: Yea, you can have it. I got a copy, extra copy.

Vince: So you get the store, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce started and then at that point you decided to start taking some holidays off as well. Which holidays?

Fred: Well, just holiday Christmas, New Years, that's all and that's the biggest one.

Vince: Christmas, New Years, what about Thanksgiving?

Fred: Thanksgiving, yea.

Vince: Fourth of July?

Fred: Fourth of July, that a big one.

Vince: Fourth of July was a big one. Isn't that the ... the Chinese Chamber of Commerce still has a Fourth of July celebration.

Fred: Well, we really gave that to the United Association right now because its getting too big. No more Chinese stores, they're all diminishing, all going out of business.

Vince: Back then it was ...

Fred: Yea, everything we do before was the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. That represents the whole clan and this all our family controlling it. Wing F. Ong was really the backbone of the association. He was a lawyer.

Vince: He was ...he was a lawyer and he was also involved in politics.

Fred: Yea, at that time, that's what happened. And this is the, I use to show this, this is all the people, they all behind the Chinese people. They started the church, the Baptist church started from here. They have a meeting here.

Vince: So the Chinese Chamber of Commerce also led then to the creation the Chinese Baptist Church?

Fred: No, but that's the same group of people.

Vince: That started the church.

Fred: Yea.

Vince: Oh, OK.

Fred: The same bunch of people.

Vince: Well did you go to the Chinese Baptist Church?

Fred: I never go, but my father started that. My brother Henry is very active in it.

Vince: But your brother Henry was real active and now I know they purchased the, it was a former Jewish synagogue over there on Culver from ... when the Temple Beth Israel moved out of there, that became the Phoenix Chinese Baptist church.

Fred: I don't remember that.

Vince: 1957 was around the time that they did that, but you weren't involved in that so you probably wouldn't have remembered.

Fred: No.

Vince: Did you go to church then?

Fred: No, I worked like a dog, so I don't have time to go to church.

Vince: There wasn't a Buddhist temple or anything like that your family was involved in.

Fred: No, no, no, no.

Vince: When did your family get rid of the warehouse? They had that warehouse they were renting.

Fred: Well it got to so bad, when things didn't work right, they have to repair, it costs too much money. So we figured its about time to get rid of it now. You know when you build it, too old, and repair it costs too much. So we just sold the [expletive] thing.

Vince: I know, I was looking at the some permits and there was a fire at one point.

Fred: Yea, they're very bad there, that area.

Vince: So there was more than one fire then at that warehouse and that was probably part of that then.

Fred: Well you have Smart and Final, United Grocery, United Grocer and warehouse that Lightning I think.

Vince: They shipping company utilized that as a warehouse as well.

Fred: Yea, so it's a good location a lot of room.

Vince: The United Grocer, that was ...

Fred: Something like Associate Grocer before, but they moved. They didn't, at that time, it was too new for them, for the Chinese people to join, you know they just didn't work it out that right.

Vince: So the celebrations and the holidays, were these times the whole family would get together?

Fred: Oh yea, everybody would close the store and go down there, we used to get everything, donations from all the grocers, so it doesn't cost us anything. All it costs us is our time.

Vince: Oh, OK.

Fred: We used to do that you know, delegate so many people. You go get this, go get a hundred loaf of bread and get milk from Westward Ho or Carnations, Wholesome, everybody donate it. They willing to give it to you.

Vince: Really?

Fred: So it didn't cost us anything.

Vince: It didn't cost you anything.

Fred: Wholesome bakery use to give us a lot of things, Charlie Baker.

Vince: Your wife also worked at the store?

Fred: Oh yea, she's there. She usually go to the bank because she can't drive at that time, she take bus get a grocery bag get to or three thousand dollars, get change and come back. You can't do it right, they crack you over the head. But at that time you know in 1947 ...

Vince: There was actually a bus that went out there?

Fred: Yea.

Kathleen: Every hour.

Vince: Every hour there was bus running up there. Wow.

Fred: She haven't droven, I think when Terry was ...

Kathleen: After Terry was born, then I ...

Vince: So you weren't driving?

Fred: She learned.

Kathleen: No, I lived in Los Angeles, I was student. There's no cars.

Vince: Back then, there wasn't any cars in Los Angeles.

Fred: So when I bought her an Oldsmobile, boy was there talk in the area. Ahh, Fred Ong got a new car. They got so jealous, they scratched my car.

Kathleen: We got the car and its second hand and is Oldsmobile and you know, when I was pregnant, the wheel, you know, was too hard to turn. So, he went to bought a new car.

Fred: \$4,000 at that time.

Vince: Wow.

Fred: New car.

Vince: And you said were jealous and they scratched your car.

Fred: Yup.

Vince: That's terrible.

Fred: It happens, yea.

Vince: And that was the locals out there?

Fred: Uh, the kids probably, so yea you know, you can ...we went through a lot of turmoil, but they never bother my kids. That's one good thing.

Vince: Well that's good. So you were actively involved then in the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and you were also the founders of the Four A.

Fred: Yea it was right after we closed the store. I was active in the PTA, school PTA Maryland school, grammar school. They always say, "Fred c'mon, we need you, we need some help." So I said, "ok." So I'm just a yes man all the time, so I do anything.

Kathleen: Mostly are farmers.

Fred: Yea most of the people at that time were just ...

Kathleen: Mexican people here. We are the one that is more educated.

Vince: Oh, so you were pretty much the commercial operation out there and everywhere was agricultural and primarily just farmers and Mexicans?

Fred: That street across where Christ-Town was, it was nothing there, it was farmland. Called by John, Mr. Johns.

Vince: What year did you close down the store.

Fred: Oh, 1962.

Vince: Really.

Fred: That's when the Big Lucky Store first opened up on Bethany Home Rd. 19th Ave., boy when they opened up, they just took a lot of my customers away because you don't blame them, they're cheaper. But when they need help, credit, they come see Fred. You see, so.

Vince: What did you do after you closed the store.

Fred: Well that's a long story. When I was, when I talk about it, I said this business is not good, so I better do something. I either go sell real estate and insurance and need to have the two licenses and I have to close the store because she [Kathleen] cannot run it by herself. So I decided that. I decided to get my real estate license first and then the insurance license. Within two weeks, I got both of them. I studied hard everyday to get my license.

Vince: So how long did you have to study to get those?

Fred: A month.

Vince: For real estate and insurance, you studied for a month and took the two tests two weeks apart?

Fred: Two weeks apart, I got it right away, so whenever I got that thing, by the time I was gonna close the store, this guy who I used to know, he used to sell me milk from the other dairy. Webster's Dairy. Do you remember Webster's Dairy on Glendale Ave? Where the armory used to be in Glendale and Grand Ave. Right now it's now a Ford dealer, Sanderson Ford. Right there, right behind there. That guy used to deliver milk to me on the other store before the war. He used

to be just a junky driver, but now he was a supervisor. Because Beatrice Foods had just bought Webster's Dairy, they had Meadow Gold (brand of dairy products). So I talking to him and I say, "Hey you should hire me to work for the company to take care of all the Chinese stores." He said, "Hey good idea." He said, "My boss, I just got a new boss, maybe I go talk to him." So it just makes to advertise otherwise, so I talk to him and a couple of weeks later, I got a phone call and he said, "Hey Fred, I wanna see you and everything." I thought he was going to buy insurance and so I said, "Come on down!".

Vince: So you were selling wholesale to Chinese stores while you were also selling insurance and real estate.

Fred: That's what I told the guy. I said, "Now you know me, I just got my license. If I work for you, I'm gonna keep my license and do business on my side." He said, "Oh yea, you can do whatever you want and I don't mind." In fact, no problems. So I cleared it with them first. Said, "I worked hard for it, I'm going to keep it." So they said, "Ok, you can work for us then." So that's how I started with Meadow Gold there. I work for them for eleven years.

Vince: And then you retired from that.

Fred: Yea, then they sold it to some other company. Then they sold it to Shamrock after I work with them for one year. But I learned, that's where I got to know everybody in the state because I calling all the state as a sales rep. After that, then I went to work for Associate Grocer. You know the big grocery, the co-op. I work for them for eleven years also.

Vince: So eleven years for the first company and eleven years the next company? You basically retired then in '85?

Fred: '85, yea.

Vince: Well you stayed pretty busy through all that time.

Fred: Oh yea, I was busy selling insurance because I pick up a lot of these people. You know they all, "C'mon I need some more." So as I go, I just pick it up.

Vince: Did you also sell real estate too?

Fred: Yea, yea.

Vince: So at the same time you're selling real estate, insurance, and you're also making these deals for the various wholesalers to grocery stores?

Fred: Yea, yea.

Vince: That's very impressive.

Fred: Well they know, they know that I'm selling that. Because I told them, "Hey, I got it."

Vince: Here we go. So as we were saying, you had the three businesses going at once. What was going on with the store though? I mean did you still own the store?

Fred: She kept it for a little while and then we finally decide we just gonna close it up.

Vince: Did you sell it then?

Fred: No, we just sold the equipment and everything, inventory just have an auction and just get my money back.

Vince: What about the building itself?

Fred: I still own the building.

Vince: You still own the building?

Fred: This is the one that Metro just saw me last week that they gonna buy ...they will buy forty feet from my lot.

Vince: So this is the light rail.

Fred: Light rail right now. This is the extension from Metro going to Chris-town going to Metro.

Vince: But the store itself isn't a store anymore.

Fred: The building is still there.

Vince: The building's still there.

Fred: But I have an upholstery shop there and a tire shop, the garage there.

Vince: Did you have a house in the back of the store?

Fred: No, I used to live there. Fifteen feet back in the add-on.

Vince: Off the back of the store was where you lived while you were there.

Fred: In the store, that's my dad build that for me, so lived there for many years.

Vince: Ok, until you had all your children there too?

Fred: I still lived there, had all my children there. She [Kathleen] used the shopping cart pushed them up there in the front. Put them in there and then work.

Vince: Did the kids also work in the store?

Fred: Oh yea, they worked there. Whenever they come back, they got to watch the store and sell candy to the kids and do the homework in the front.

Vince: So really three generations of store-keepers in the sense of ...

Fred: That's reason why they're not afraid when they see people. See they were grown up with them coming.

Vince: So also, they developed a social skills in the process. Well that's good.

Fred: That's what I told all these other people. Said, "The Chinese people in Phoenix, young and old, they're not afraid to see American people. Where as in San Francisco, they see that many American people, they're afraid to talk to them, but we are not, we're just used to it." So we're way ahead of everybody else.

Vince: Well we're up to closing remarks here.

Kathleen: What about the bowling alley?

Fred: Uh huh, the bowling alley, that's another thing.

Vince: The bowling alley, yes. I'm glad you brought that up because that was something that was new, so and knowing that you were doing all these other things, I certainly had skipped over that. Thank you for very much for bringing that up. So you also started a bowling alley. And where was the bowling alley located?

Fred: 7th Avenue and Maryland.

Kathleen: You know where the curve is? The Melrose across the street.

Vince: And what was the address?

Fred: 4220 North 7th Ave.

Vince: And OK, so when you were operating the bowling alley, you were also running the store at the same time. So Mrs. Ong was running the store while you were over running the bowling alley.

Fred: That's the time.

Vince: And after you closed down the store, you continued to operate the bowling alley?

Fred: Yes, we did financially, we were young at that time, don't even know how to utilize a bank. So we say we were going to pay cash for everything which was a mistake.

Vince: Why is that a mistake?

Fred: Well, your reserve, when you need some money, you never have any in the reserve to use. The bank won't lend you anything because all you have is just ...

Vince: So when did you close down the bowling alley then?

Fred: Oh, I think after five years.

Vince: So you only had it open for five years? From 1952 to 1957? That was about the same time you were closing down the store.

Fred: Yea.

Vince: Ok.

Kathleen: His brother run it.

Fred: We run the whole thing, yea.

Vince: Your brother, which brother?

Kathleen: Robert.

Fred: Robert was the one that there all the time.

Vince: Over at the bowling alley?

Fred: Then I pitch in the work at the same time.

Vince: So was Robert operating his store?

Fred: No, he sold his store already.

Vince: So his store. That was the one on McDowell.

Fred: No, 20th Street. My brother have a shopping bag in the old store, Farmer's Supermarket. He opened a Shopping Bag there. You don't have that listed.

Vince: Where was the Shopping Bag located at?

Fred: 20th Street and McDowell. The old Farmer's Supermarket.

Vince: 2005 and that was Robert's store.

Fred: No, that's Henry.

Vince: That's Henry Ong Sr.

Fred: Shopping Bag they call it.

Vince: They called it the Shopping Bag.

Fred: Very nice store he opened up.

Vince: Ok so I have to go back through this again. Your father closed down the store on Buchanan and then opened up a store and built a house on 20th Street and McDowell.

Fred: The house was there already.

Vince: Oh, the house was already there, so he just built a store.

Fred: Just put the store in the front.

Vince: In the front, OK. So after he built the store, then it became Robert's store or Henry's store?

Fred: No it become vacant because we had to go through the service and my mother don't wanna work.

Vince: And your father had passed away by then?

Fred: No, he just said with all the kids gone, there's too much stress. So we rent it out to somebody else.

Vince: And then when you came back from the service ...

Fred: When we come back then he for a while, Henry worked for my store. He helped me, then when this guy left, he just took the store over. And rebuilt that Farmer's Supermarket on McDowell.

Vince: They built another store on McDowell?

Fred: No, no, he bought it from this other guy renter, that have the original store my father built on McDowell.

Vince: Ok, so Henry took that store over then.

Fred: Then Robert had bought another store in the mean time in '46 on 20th Street and Madison.

Vince: Oh that was the one on Madison.

Fred: Robert's Market.

Vince: Was Robert operating Robert's Market the same time he was working at the bowling alley?

Fred: No, no, no. He had sold the store then run.

Vince: Sold that store and then moved to the bowling alley.

Fred: yea.

Vince: Ok, wow. You can see you've had a lot of business enterprises living around here. It's not easy to track, but it's important to ...

Kathleen: In 1946, we got married. They didn't buy the store, we have the store.

Fred: Yea.

Kathleen: We bought the store first on 19th Ave.

Vince: The 19th Ave. store, yes.

Kathleen: Then Robert bought the store after us on 20th Street and Madison.

Vince: Is that still there?

Fred: Yea.

Vince: That store's still there.

Kathleen: They sold it though.

Fred: They sold it already.

Vince: Right, but the building's still there.

Fred: The building's still there, yea.

Vince: Was that on our list?

Fred: No.

Vince: I'm gonna have to go over and look at that now, so you keep me busy when come up with these addresses. I'm gonna have to go with my camera to see if the building is still there.

Fred: There used to be a garage next to the store. After you hit 20th Street just go right.

Vince: And how long did Robert operate the store there?

Fred: Oh he's been there for some time.

Vince: So until '57 he sold that and moved over to the bowling alley.

Fred: And then during the war, Robert worked for air research. So he was busy for a while.

Vince: So he was working for a research and running the store or his wife was probably running the store?

Kathleen: No, no, that's before. They didn't buy the store until he come back. He worked for the Air Research before he got drafted.

Vince: Oh before he got drafted, during the war he was working for the research company. OK, and then he got drafted. When he came back was he still working for Air Research then?

Fred: No.

Kathleen: He was working for the cousins' grocery store for a while and then he bought the store.

Vince: Then you had the bowling alley until 1962 and then did you sell that?

Fred: Yea, we sold it to the Ricks family in Mesa.

Kathleen: No, we had bowling before '62.

Vince: Yes, you sold it in '62. Sold it to the Ricks family in Mesa and then you didn't buy any other buildings or anything like that?

Kathleen: We bought a house.

Fred: We bought a house on 39th Ave. and Glendale. I bought that house.

Kathleen: And two year, we moved here because the school won't let my children go back to Washington High School.

Vince: You wanted your children to go to Washington High School?

Fred: Different districts.

Vince: So you moved into this district.

Fred: Some family came and said, "Hey, how come the Ongs can go to Washington, but my family can not?" You know they complain.

Kathleen: The dividing line you know Glendale Ave. and our corner, I don't know why, they have to go to Alhambra.

Vince: Well back then, the school districts had the taxpayers funds go to the respective schools. Its not like that anymore though, you can pretty much go to any school now.

Kathleen: My children are too active in school. All the parents come get us because they watch our children come from the store go to school and instead we on 39th Ave. and Glendale.

Vince: So you were originally living in the store though and then you bought the house on 39th Ave. and Glendale and you just lived there for a couple of years and the just bought this house here. So they could go back to school, because that's where they've been going anyhow. That was nice, that didn't break them up.

Kathleen: Well we sacrificed quite a bit.

Vince: Sure and then you've lived here ever since?

Fred: We've been here forty years now.

Vince: Well terrific. We're going to wrap up the interview here. Are there any closing remarks that you would want your grandchildren or great grandchildren to know about you? Because with this interview, we're going to be housing it at Arizona State University for the future research part of the project, so we hope some of the information from the interview can be used by other researchers for other purposes. Is there some type of thing you would like to mention for people in the future who might read the transcripts or hear the tapes.

Fred: You know that the problem here with the Chinese here is that they all pretty clannish. And then a lot of times they don't wanna let you know what they're doing. The Chinese are like that. Not like me, I'm an American and I've been in the service so I know how hard it is, so anything I don't like, I tell them. You know you have to express your view. So the thing is, the Chinese have to learn to accept America as it is. If you have to do it, do it right. Don't be afraid to sound up. If you're right, you're right, if you're wrong, you're wrong. You make a lot of enemies, but in the long run you gonna come out ahead.

Vince: And Mrs. Ong, any comments you'd like to make in closing?

Kathleen: Well, I want my children to know how hard we worked to bring them up. They all graduate from college and then, we still watch them and then their children are already well-educated. Now, as the great grandchildren coming, I hope it will keep going like what we did. Get a better life.

[end of interview]

JEAN ONG

Interviewed by Christina Wong
12 March 2007

*Note: all words spoken in Chinese are italicized.

Christina: This is an interview with Jean Ong on March 12, 2007 at Jean Ong's Home, by Christina Wong. Can I record this interview?

Jean: What?

Christina: Can I record it?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: Ok, what's your name?

Jean: *I'm from China.*

Christina: No, what's your name?

Jean: Jean Ong.

Christina: Yeah, what your Chinese name?

Jean: Jean too.

Christina: Your Chinese name?

Jean: Same as Jean Ong, Ham Lan? Ham Lan is Chinese name.

Christina: When were you born, do you remember what year?

Jean: *When I came to America?*

Christina: No, what year were you born.

Jean: *Oh, in China?*

Christina: Yeah.

Jean: I don't know, I born in China, how I know. I'm ninety-three.

Christina: When did you move to the Philippines, do you remember how old?

Jean: seven.

Christina: Seven, and then how long did you stay in the Philippines.

Jean: Come back fourteen.

Christina: To China?

Jean: I come back China fourteen years old.

Christina: Where in China?

Jean: Canton.

Christina: And then you went to school in Shanghai?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: How old were you when you went to school in Shanghai?

Jean: Maybe seventeen years old I guess.

Christina: And then how old were you when you came to America?

Jean: 1939, 1939 I think.

Christina: And when did you marry Uncle, Uncle Roland.

Jean: I marry Uncle Roland one month after I go to Shanghai.

Christina: So when you were 17? And then when did Uncle Roland come to America?

Jean: 1933 I think, or '32, I don't know. 1933 I think.

Christina: Did he come to Phoenix?

Jean: huh?

Christina: He came to Phoenix?

Jean: What you mean?

Christina: Did Uncle Roland come to Phoenix.

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: How come he came to Phoenix?

Jean: Because his father had business in Phoenix.

Christina: Oh, what's Uncle Roland's dad's name?

Jean: Ah Gee, Ah Gee.

Christina: Did he have a grocery store?

Jean: yeah.

Christina: Is it the same one as Uncle Roland's grocery store?

Jean: His father's had the little store and we come Phoenix, but one year we bought his store.

Christina: Where is the store?

Jean: 15th Street and Van Buren, no, 14th and Van Buren or 15th, between 15th and 14th.

Christina: Where did you live when you came to Phoenix?

Jean: Huh?

Christina: Where did you live?

Jean: Live?

Christina: Uh huh.

Jean: Behind the store, the apartments.

Christina: Do you remember the address?

Jean: Hm?

Christina: Do you remember the address?

Jean: What you mean?

Christina: The address.

Jean: No.

Christina: And then when did you move to this house, on Culver?

Jean: 1959, I think.

Christina: So then when you came to America, how did you get here?

Jean: I bought the passport; I just bought somebody else's passport.

Christina: In China? And then did you take a boat here?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: And you stopped in Hawaii?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: And then from Hawaii where did you go? L.A.?

Jean: Huh?

Christina: Did you go from Hawaii did you go to L.A. or San Francisco?

Jean: L.A., from Hawaiian come to L.A. from L.A. come to Phoenix.

Christina: How did you get to Phoenix? Did you take a train?

Jean: Let's see, airplane, I think. At the time they had airplanes don't it?

Christina: From L.A. to Phoenix?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: Did Uncle come pick you up in L.A.?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: And then you both flew in an airplane to Phoenix?

Jean: What?

Christina: You and Uncle together flew on an airplane to Phoenix?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: And then you had to work at the grocery store?

Jean: Yeah, because I came to Phoenix two weeks I go work to the grocery store, cashier. *Cashier* [restates "cashier" in Chinese for emphasis].

Christina: What kind of food did you sell at the grocery store?

Jean: American food, I don't know, all kinds of canned food, meat, vegetables, you know.

Christina: So what did Uncle Roland do at the grocery store if you were the cashier?

Jean: He and the butcher worked at the meat department?

Christina: What's the butcher's name do you remember?

Jean: What?

Christina: The butcher's name.

Jean: Who?

Christina: The butcher.

Jean: I don't know, I can't remember.

Christina: When did you and Uncle Roland retire?

Jean: When retire?

Christina: Retire.

Jean: Retire? [Sighs] I can't remember, when we sixty-five we retire, can't remember.

Christina: Do you remember how many years you worked at the grocery store?

Jean: Maybe fifty years.

Christina: What happened to the grocery store after you retired?

Jean: We rent to the people.

Christina: What kind of customers did you have at the grocery store?

Jean: Black people, Mexican, white people, Chinese, [laughs] Thailand, all kinds.

Christina: And you sold Chinese food at the grocery store too right?

Jean: Yeah, we add some Chinese food.

Christina: When did you add the Chinese food?

Jean: Few years before we retire.

Christina: A few years before you retired? Do you remember around what year? 1960? 1970?

Jean: No, I don't care about the year.

Christina: What about during World War II?

Jean: We still workin', still workin' at the store.

Christina: Did people think you were Japanese?

Jean: Hm?

Christina: Did people confuse you with the Japanese people?

Jean: No, they know I'm Chinese.

Christina: Did you sell food to the Japanese people during World War II?

Jean: I don't think have Japanese trade at the store to much.

Christina: When you first came to America did you know any of the other Chinese people in Phoenix?

Jean: No, not many; a few.

Christina: Where there other people, other Chinese people who owned grocery stores that you knew.

Jean: No, I can't remember anyways, not many. The time not many Chinese people in Phoenix.

Christina: How did you get to work every day? Did you learn how to drive?

Jean: yeah, I worked in the store few years then Uncle teach me to drive.

Christina: What kind of car did you drive?

Jean: I don't know, can't remember.

Christina: What about Lana, your daughter?

Jean: yeah six, five or six years before Lana born.

Christina: after you came to America?

Jean: mhmm.

Christina: Where did Lana go to school?

Jean: Longfellow I think, kindergarten. Do you know Longfellow? Same street.

Christina: And then what about High School?

Jean: High School? Phoenix.

Christina: She went to Phoenix High School?

Jean: Mhmm.

Christina: Who took care of Lana since you and Uncle Roland were working at the store?

Jean: Grandma.

Christina: Uncle Roland's mom?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: so then both of Uncle Roland's parents were here in Phoenix.

Jean: Yeah, what?

Christina: Both of Uncle Roland's parents were here in Phoenix.

Jean: Parents?

Christina: Because you said Uncle Roland's dad had the grocery store.

Jean: Roland's father dead a few years before Lana born.

Christina: So then when did Lana's grandma come to Phoenix?

Jean: One year I come here, then she come.

Christina: What other Chinese people did you talk to or know in Phoenix?

Jean: Relatives, nieces and nephews, mother in law, people like that.

Christina: What about the Ong association?

Jean: Roland's brother and wife that's all.

Christina: What was Uncle Roland's brother's name?

Jean: Jim Ong.

Christina: Do you remember the Ong Association, you know the Ong Association dinner?

Jean: I don't know the people.

Christina: Did you go to the Ong Association dinner?

Jean: Not much, one or two times I can't remember. What the city wanna know all those junk? Crazy.

Christina: Do you remember the Kuo Min Tang? The Nationalist Chinese in the 1930 and 1940?

Jean: I don't know, even if, I can't remember anyways. I been in Phoenix too long over sixty-five, sixty-eight years.

Christina: But this was in Phoenix.

Jean: What you mean?

Christina: The Kuo Min Tang?

Jean: I don't know, I can't remember nobody. I don't go with them.

Christina: Do you remember Chinatown in Phoenix?

Jean: Chinese town?

Christina: Downtown.

Jean: yeah, downtown, yeah I know.

Christina: what was there?

Jean: In Chinatown that's all? I don't know the streets.

Christina: Do you remember what kind of buildings were there, what kind of stores?

Jean: I don't know. I don't go there too much. Just stores that's all, I don't know.

Christina: Did Lana go to Chinese school?

Jean: American school?

Christina: Only American school? Did she work at the store after school?

Jean: No, she never work at the store, she don't like work at the store.

Christina: What about your son Kai?

Jean: Yeah, Kai work at the store.

Christina: When did Kai come to America?

Jean: I can't remember anyways.

Christina: Did he come with you?

Jean: No.

Christina: He came after you?

Jean: A few years after World War II I think.

Christina: Kai came after World War II?

Jean: Mhmm.

Christina: How old was Kai when he came here?

Jean: Fourteen or fifteen something like that.

Christina: So he went to High School here?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: Did he go to Phoenix High School too just like Lana?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: How long did Kai work at the store before he moved away?

Jean: Few years I think, few years.

Christina: What did Kai do at the store?

Jean: Cashier, everything.

Christina: Where did you get the food from the store to sell?

Jean: Hmm?

Christina: Where did you get the food to sell at the store?

Jean: What you mean?

Christina: you know how you have to sell food at the store, but where did you get it from?

Jean: Oh, from the wholesaler, they deliver to us.

Christina: what about the Chinese food? Where did you get the Chinese food?

Jean: No, we don't sell Chinese food. Only a few years before we sold the business, know had a lot of Chinese people trade our store, we started selling Chinese food, before we don't sell Chinese food, all American food.

Christina: Where did you get the Chinese food to sell it?

Jean: From Chinese wholesaler I guess.

Christina: Where was the Chinese wholesaler, were they in California?

Jean: Downtown somewhere.

Christina: Downtown Phoenix? Did other people sell Chinese food too or was it just you?

Jean: Some of them.

Christina: Some of them.

Jean: What the city wanna know all these things. They're crazy.

Christina: Were there a lot of people where you lived in Phoenix, or did it look like a farm.

Jean: No, we just lived in Van Buren Street; you know the store, behind there. 1959 we bought that house we moved here. 1959 that's all.

Christina: How is Phoenix different when you first came to America till now?

Jean: Now yeah, lots of new buildings, it's different, before all the old buildings.

Christina: What about the people?

Jean: I don't know the people; I don't go out mess them around.

Christina: Did you cook Chinese food at home?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: How did you find the food to cook Chinese food if it was all American food?

Jean: I just cook that's all, I don't know what they call Chinese or American, you know. We eat steak or stew or somethin'.

Christina: How many hours did you work at the grocery store every day?

Jean: All day, more than ten hours.

Christina: How many days was the grocery store open?

Jean: seven days a week.

Christina: So you worked ten hours for seven days?

Jean: No holiday for me.

Christina: Did you get paid to work at the store?

Jean: Huh?

Christina: Did you get paid to work at the store?

Jean: No.

Christina: So you just work for Uncle Roland?

Jean: I work for me, I work for Uncle Roland; we both owned the store. Two people owned the store.

Christina: But he didn't pay you?

Jean: No, you know when I get retirement money. Roland got \$800 I only got \$200, I ask that woman, "How come I worked harder than him, how come he gets that much? How come I get that little" that woman said, "Because you never paid the tax." I said, "I don't get paid where I get the money to pay the tax." She said oh we only take 20 percent from Roland's money give it to me, \$200, that's all I got.

Christina: What about the customers? Did the customers like you?

Jean: All the customers like me, black ones, all kinds. They said without me they don't wanna walk in the store.

Christina: Why?

Jean: Because I'm good for them.

Christina: Did you help them?

Jean: Not help them; I'm just good, nice, talk to you. You know, I never barred the people out. Never fight with nobody, always friendly, you know. They all like me. But Roland different, he always barred customers out, run the customers out of the store almost.

Christina: Did the customers come back?

Jean: Nah, customers all like me, black people all kinds of people like me.

Christina: What other people helped you run the store and work for you?

Jean: Mexican, colored people, white people, some Chinese too.

Christina: What did they do?

Jean: Do all kinda work in the store, grocery store.

Christina: Who were the Chinese people who help you work at the store?

Jean: Chinese?

Christina: Yeah.

Jean: Vegetables and meat department, that's all.

Christina: Who were they?

Jean: Huh?

Christina: Who were the people who helped you at store?

Jean: Mexican, colored people ...

Christina: No, who were the Chinese people that helped you?

Jean: I don't know their name, can't remember.

Christina: What about my dad [Peter Wong, Jean Ong's nephew] when he came to work at the store?

Jean: You daddy?

Christina: Yeah, Peter.

Jean: He a crazy boy. He worked in the produce and cashier, one time Uncle said Peter. The Spinach, *bo-choy* ["Spinach" in Chinese], put the fresh ones in the bottom, put the old ones on top. And you daddy say they take it out anyways, I don't like to work here anymore, give me the check. That's all, he quit, that crazy guy.

Christina: Did he come back?

Jean: Heck no! *Ne-a* ["Your" in Chinese] daddy crazy. You know, *you have to put the old ones on bottom, no the new ones on bottom.*

Christina: You put the new one in the bottom.

Jean: yeah, you put the new one on the bottom, so you Uncle tell him, he get mad. And your grandpa [Mon Wei, Jean's younger brother], he's a cashier.

Christina: My grandpa?

Jean: I teach him how to make change, he never know how to make change. He's smart, *college student. He didn't know.*

Christina: But my grandpa's good at math.

Jean: *He's a cashier, your grandpa; he didn't know how to make change.* After a few days, he quit.

Christina: Did he get mad then quit?

Jean: I guess, *how stupid, He doesn't even know how to make change! When I came, after two weeks I started working at a cashier. He was a college graduate and he didn't know how.*

Christina: What about my grandma [Po-Chu, Jean's sister-in-law]? Did she work at the store?

Jean: *Ne-a* ["Your" in Chinese] grandma worked at the meat department.

Christina: What did she do at the meat department?

Jean: *Package* meat.

Christina: She package the meat?

Jean: *Package* lunch meat.

Christina: Lunch meat?

Jean: Hamburger, *stuff like that.*

Christina: Oh.

Jean: *She did not know English.*

Christina: Yeah.

Jean: *Later on, there were more people as cashiers, she had one drawer and I had one drawer. She would calculate the bills of the Chinese and I would calculate the bills of the English speaking.*

Christina: So then you started selling Chinese food after my dad came to Phoenix?

Jean: After you ma-ma, you grandma.

Christina: After my grandma came to Phoenix? Then you started selling Chinese food?

Jean: *Back then there weren't Chinese people to buy groceries, then there were Chinese people to buy thing, so I sell Chinese products. Sell, roast duck, soy sauce chicken, that was from Los Angeles.*

Christina: The food came from L.A.?

Jean: The meat.

Christina: So then how did you get the meat from L.A. to Phoenix?

Jean: They send to the downtown grocery store, Chinese grocery store.

Christina: Do you remember the name of the grocery store?

Jean: No.

Christina: But from L.A. they send it to the grocery store.

Jean: *A Chinese one.*

Christina: Then from the grocery store you pick it up for your store?

Jean: Yeah, we go pick it up.

Christina: Who would go pick it up?

Jean: *We did, Uncle would give some workers to go maybe. I don't even remember these things.*

Christina: What do you remember about the store?

Jean: What store?

Christina: Your grocery store, what do you remember?

Jean: *Ours?*

Christina: Yeah.

Jean: Roland Market.

Christina: Yeah.

Jean: That's all I know. Wah-Kew.

Christina: Is that what they call it in Chinese?

Jean: *Chinese Wah-Kew, grocery store.*

Christina: That's the name in Chinese?

Jean: Is that is? Is there anymore more?

Christina: Do you remember anything else about your grocery store?

Jean: *sell meat, Chinese products, Chinese cooked meats and Chinese canned foods, and things to make soup.* I don't know what the heck. *Ga-zee, chung-choy* [Chinese products that you put in soup].

Christina: How big was the store?

Jean: *fifty feet wide, one hundred feet long.*

Christina: Was it big; was it as big as some of the other store? Or was it bigger than the other stores?

Jean: *No, now there are lots of big ones.*

Christina: What about the Chinese grocery stores a long time ago?

Jean: A long time ago they were all small.

Christina: Were they smaller than you store?

Jean: *Yeah, our store was a Safeway.*

Christina: Safeway opened it?

Jean: Safeway use to own it.

Christina: Then Uncle Roland bought it from Safeway?

Jean: Yeah we bought it.

Christina: What about Uncle Roland's dad's store?

Jean: Little tiny one [laughs], same size as here.

Christina: Where was it?

Jean: Our Roland's Market on 15th, and his daddy's store between 14th and 15th.

Christina: So it was very close to your store?

Jean: ½ block.

Christina: What happened to his store?

Jean: His father dead.

Christina: So then did they sell it?

Jean: Sell it to us.

Christina: And then what did you do with it?

Jean: We rent to the American people who fixed cars for a few years and now we sold it to them. *Mih* ["Sold" in Chinese].

Christina: After you sold it to them?

Jean: They own it that's all, I don't know.

Christina: Do you remember when you sold it to them?

Jean: I don't know the year; I don't know I don't keep up the year. I don't know what year. What the city wanna know all this junk?

Christina: If there's no air conditioning how do you keep the vegetables cold and all the meat cold at the grocery store?

Jean: Oh, they Frigidaire, you know, they keep it cold. No not a Frigidaire, *the meat inside they had some cold air, the meat bin had cold air.*

Christina: Even when you first opened the store?

Jean: Opened the store at first I don't know, but when we run the store the meat case had cold are. *If no the meat would be rotten.*

Christina: Did anyone ever rob your grocery store?

Jean: a few times.

Christina: So what happened?

Jean: Give him, you know, *if I had a few hundred in my drawer, I put it in an envelope. Hide, Hide it somewhere. When he came, I'd open the drawer for him. There just some change no big money.*

Christina: How did you know he was coming to rob you?

Jean: *If my drawer had a few hundred dollars I would not know that he was going to rob me, I would still put it away. Just in case someone came.*

Christina: So then after they rob you, do they just leave?

Jean: After they rob you, that's all. I say "you see, that's all in the cash register, that's all I had." *And then they would leave.*

Christina: Did you call the police?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: What did the police say?

Jean: What they can say, they rob you, rob you. *But the money I hide somewhere, you know. If there was more money, a few hundred dollars then I'd put away the big bills, the twenties, with a few hundred dollars I put it in an envelope. Hide it somewhere, then when they come, however much is in the cash register that's how much they'd take. I did this just in case.*

Christina: Didn't you say you use to give credit to people who don't have the money; they say they would come back and pay you later?

Jean: What?

Christina: The customers.

Jean: The customers, *if they didn't have money then they'd charge it*, charge \$15 or \$20 dollars ...or more. Uncle would brawl me up.

Christina: why?

Jean: "I told you, don't give nobody charge." *I'd say they bought a big basket of groceries, if you don't let them charge. What you do with the groceries? You put it back?*

Christina: Did they pay you back?

Jean: Some of them, but not all.

Christina: What happens to the people who don't pay you back?

Jean: You lose; *you lose it, that's it.*

Christina: Do they ever come back to the store?

Jean: No, 'cause *they don't have money. Now when you do business no charge, but before you have to give them charge, before, people poor. I don't like having a grocery store.*

Christina: Why?

Jean: Too much work! *Working for other people is better. I told Kai, when you graduate from college, don't ever open your own business. Kai said, you worked so hard at your own business, you don't even make money. I'm not going to open my own business. I want to work for other people. I said you smart that way, working for other people, work a full eight hours; you get the [expletive] out of the store. You open your own business; you have long hours and no money. If you have no business then you are in trouble, if you have lots of business then you work 'til your head is spinning. I said don't open your own business. Never run your business! So Kai worked for other people. Working for other people the government ...when he didn't work at the store, Uncle got mad at him. Don't give him a penny to go to school. Then Kai, at night, he worked at restaurants for other people mopping the floor, washing the dishes. He got some money, pay the groceries, pay the apartment. He rented an apartment with his friends.*

Christina: Where?

Jean: Washington, one the Washingtons C.D., one of the Washingtons what's that? *There are two Washingtons.*

Christina: Washington State?

Jean: State? *What other names are there?*

Christina: There's Washington D.C. right, where Lana lives?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: Did Kai live in Washington D.C. too?

Jean: No, another Washington.

Christina: Washington State.

Jean: State, with two or three of his friends rent an apartment. Back then, apartments were very cheap.

Christina: Yeah.

Jean: *So he had to do work to get apartment money. When Kai went to school, pretty smart, he got a scholarship. Scholarship you don't have to give tuition. But he had to eat and live so he get out of school, go to restaurants, you know do the clean up, at restaurants, mop the floor, wash dishes and got some money. Now that he's retired, the government has given back \$600 for working back then mopping floors and washing dishes. But his company now gives him \$4,000 or \$5,000. You know, so he has \$5,000 some a month now.*

Christina: So then did Uncle Roland get mad at Kai for not working?

Jean: Yeah, because he want to go to school in another state, he don't help him in the grocery store. That's why he got mad at him, don't give him a penny, and I had no money to give it to him.

Christina: How come Kai didn't go to school at ASU?

Jean: Because to close to the store, Kai said, I don't need to do no homework, High School's OK. But I go to college, I gotta do the homework, you know. College had lots of work you gotta do, you know. So he said if I go to ASU I hadda come to school every night, I had no time to do my homework.

Christina: Yeah, What about Lana? She went to ASU.

Jean: Yeah, Lana, Lana's different. She never worked at the store. Never! Not a one day!

Christina: How come Uncle Roland didn't make Lana work at the store?

Jean: I said "Lana, why not go to store cashier." She said "I'm not gonna go your stupid store! [Laughs] All those crazy drunk guys" you know. She never worked in the store one day.

Christina: Were there a lot of drunk people who came to your store?

Jean: Lana don't like those kinda people, you know.

Christina: So then what did Lana do? Did Uncle still pay for her tuition even though she didn't work at the store?

Jean: Huh?

Christina: Did Uncle Roland still pay for her tuition even though she doesn't work at the store?

Jean: No, Uncle make her pay nothing. I pay Lana some expense money and go to college. Go to school.

Christina: Did Lana live at home when she went to school?

Jean: Yeah, Lana went to Oregon one year. She said too cold over there; go to college, one year, Oregon. Then she come back go to ASU. Hey, where the two kids?

Christina: They're over there, watching TV. So then after the store closed what did you do?

Jean: Who?

Christina: You.

Jean: After what?

Christina: After you closed the store and retired, what did you do?

Jean: Stay here, just like now. I still drive the car, except last year, I never drive the car. Go grocery store shopping, go ...

Christina: Did you get your groceries from the store? When you first ...

Jean: Where?

Christina: Did you get your groceries to make dinner from your store?

Jean: Now?

Christina: No.

Jean: I go to grocery store, now I'm not driving you mean?

Christina: No, when you had the grocery store.

Jean: Oh, we buy from the wholesaler. We buy groceries from the wholesaler. They deliver too.

Christina: Did you deliver groceries?

Jean: The boys, the people working in the store did it. No we don't deliver no more, lately, just a long time ago deliver. After that we don't deliver no more. Too much trouble deliver.

Christina: Who delivered it? Who drove the car to deliver the groceries?

Jean: Before, the people working in the store, the *Lo-Fan [white people]*, working in the store. We don't deliver in a long time, long time. Long time ago.

Christina: Did the grocery store change during World War II? Were there less people?

Jean: There's a lot of Chinese people, they all come from China, you know.

Christina: After World War II? What about during the war?

Jean: I don't think anybody can come.

Christina: Were there less people who came to buy at the grocery store?

Jean: A lot of Chinese.

Christina: After the war right?

Jean: Yeah.

Christina: What about your customers during the war?

Jean: Same thing, when they need they come to the store.

Christina: But there wasn't less customers?

Jean: No, not too many, the people no money.

Christina: What do you do when there's no money, 'cause you need money too?

Jean: Hm?

Christina: But you need money too?

Jean: Well we can make it, it's out store, we don't have to pay no rent, you know. Kai said, you know he don't like working in store either.

Christina: Is there anything else you want to say? No?

Jean: What they do? The city wants all those?

Christina: Yeah, OK is that it?

Jean: That's all.

[end of interview]

JIM AND GEORGE ONG

Interviewed by Krystin Yee
7 October 2006

Krystin: This is an interview with Jim Ong and George Ong. You guys are brothers, right?

Jim and George: Yes, Correct.

Krystin: Can you guys state your name and how to spell it?

Jim: Yes, my name is Jim Ong Junior, I guess J-I-M O-N-G J-R.

George: My name is George Ong, G-E-O-R-G-E O-N-G.

Krystin: Do you guys have Chinese names?

Jim: Yes we do.

George: Yes.

Jim: Ong Xiao Lei.

Krystin: Is that in Toisan?

Jim: That's in um ...

Krystin: Cantonese?

Jim: Cantonese; right.

George: My name is Zhong Ling. Ong Zhong Ling.

Krystin: Where were you guys born?

Jim: Phoenix, Arizona.

George: Same here.

Krystin: In a hospital or at a house?

Jim: That's a good question.

George: If I remember, not remember, but as I know it, we were born at home.

Krystin: Really?

Jim: I believe so. You are probably correct there. I think.

Krystin: Which one is older?

Jim: I am.

George: Jim. Jim is the older one.

Krystin: All right. If you guys don't mind, when were you born?

Jim: Oh boy, I was born in 1929.

George: 1931.

Krystin: Wow. So two years apart. Do you guys have any other siblings?

Jim: Yes, I have my son Jeffrey that you just met, and that's the only sibling I have.

Krystin: What about brothers and sisters?

George: Oh yes, no uh, there were two boys and four girls in our family.

Krystin: Wow. Who's the oldest?

Jim: Uh, Rose is the oldest.

Krystin: Rose?

Jim: Yeah and then there's Helen, then Ellen, and then myself and George and then the baby is Jessie.

Krystin: All right. Do they all still live here too?

Jim: Uh no. Rose is the only one who still living in Phoenix. The rest are in California.

Krystin: Oh. From what country did your family originate from?

Jim: My parents originated from China.

Krystin: Do you know what their ...

Jim: Canton, China, probably.

Krystin: Canton ... Do you guys know like the village or ...?

Jim: That's a good question.

George: Ming Hing Lee.

Jim: Yeah Toi San ...Ming Hing Lee.

George: Where ever that is.

Krystin: You guys haven't been back yet?

George: I hope to go back sometime.

Jim: Yeah we have been back to the village, a couple of times.

Krystin: Who came over here first?

Jim: My dad came over first.

Krystin: Your dad. Why did he come over?

Jim: Well he came over to work with my grandfather and I guess when he came over... I guess originally I don't believe my grandfather had a store at the time. They worked in a restaurant, I think, in mining towns of Globe and Superior, in that area.

Krystin: Did you guys start off in... did your dad start off in Globe then?

Jim: My dad I believe came over after my grandfather came over and a grocery store established and then he came over to help him.

Krystin: Do you know about what year that was?

Jim: Oh boy. That's probably ...

George: I think my dad came over from China at the turn of the century; the early part of 1900.

Krystin: And when did your mom come over?

Jim: I would say ... Oh boy. Good question. Probably ... maybe five or six years after that; after my grandfather came over. I don't know the exact dates when he came over.

Krystin: Were they married before he left? Or did he go back and get married and then later she came over?

Jim: I believe he went back to China and got married, right.

Krystin: And then brought her over at that time?

Jim and George: No.

Jim: A little bit later, after he got established.

Krystin: In Phoenix or ...?

Jim: Probably in Phoenix. Yes.

Krystin: Do you know when they were married?

Jim: No, I don't know exactly on when the dates were on that.

Krystin: And they owned what kind of store?

Jim: They both ran a grocery store, Jim Ong's Market on East Washington Street.

Krystin: Washington and ...?

Jim: Eleventh Street and Washington; 1110 East Washington.

Krystin: How long did you guys have that store for?

Jim: Oh boy. I think we had that store ... How many years have we had that store? I would say ...

George: At least ... I was born there.

Krystin: You were born in the store?

George: I was born in the apartment next to the store. It's adjoining the store.

Jim: I would say at least ...

George: At least fifty years.

Jim: fifty years plus.

George: Interesting fact is that we found the blueprints to the store.

Krystin: Really?

George: Yes. My dad had the distinction of being the first Chinese store in Phoenix with a building permit. Now there were other Chinese stores in Phoenix prior to this, but his was the first Chinese store that applied for a building permit.

Krystin: What does that mean?

Jim: Well that means the first Chinese grocery or a store that was built by a Chinese. Instead of a random building or a lease building.

Krystin: So did he own it?

Jim: Oh yes.

Krystin: He built it and designed it?

Jim: In fact it's a historical site right now.

Krystin: Is it? Wow, didn't know that. Let's see. Do you know what your parents' first impression was of Phoenix, like the Phoenix area when they came here? What they thought of it?

George: Probably hot.

Krystin: Hot? Compared to China in the summer?

Jim: Oh yeah. I think so.

Krystin: And you guys lived in the apartment next to the store?

Jim: For quite a while. Right.

Krystin: Is that included in the historical site?

Jim and George: Yes, Yes.

George: Speaking of cooling. I think my dad told me years ago that my grandfather, when they moved to Phoenix, or when they were in Arizona rather, that was the days before air conditioning, even before swamp coolers, so what they use to do is in the bedroom they use to hang a clothesline half way across the room, wet some sheets, hang the sheets there, and put a fan on the other side, and we slept on the other side. Probably the means of cooling the [inaudible].

Krystin: Wow that's a good idea.

Jim: That was the start of the evaporative cooler.

George: And I remember ... first evaporative coolers were built out of wood rather than metal 'cause we had one at the store, which is, we use to collect the excelsior that came in with the fruit and vegetables. Saved that, and we packed it up and put a hose on the top and let it drip through. That was our make shift air conditioning.

Krystin: That's pretty creative. Did you guys come up with that? Or were other people doing it too?

George: I don't know who came up with it. We grew up and kind of experienced that.

Krystin: And it worked.

George: And worked, too.

Jim: Of course it was a lot less humid at the time and dryer air than it is right now, probably not as hot.

Krystin: You guys were lucky. How big was the store? Like what did you guys sell?

Jim: Oh I say the store was ... it selled maybe what maybe about forty feet by maybe seventy feet. It's smaller. It was a neighborhood mom and pop store.

Krystin: Did you guys sell groceries or ...?

Jim: Groceries and meats and we sold regular grocery [inaudible].

Krystin: Where did you guys get your groceries from, like wholesale?

Jim: They had I guess... later on they had Orange Empire and AG and ...

George: Sun Mercantile.

Jim: Yeah Sun Mercantile, yeah that an early one and Smart & Final, right. Yeah they were the earlier ones.

Krystin: Did you guys get stuff from like farmers too?

Jim: Oh yes. In fact, my dad use to go with Mr. Yun Lang to the market place which is on... where currently the basketball arena is now.

Krystin: What street was that?

Jim: That's on Madison and 2nd Street. Yeah into there and they use to buy from the farmers there and bring it back to the store to sell.

Krystin: What kind of demographic were your customers? Like mostly Chinese or...?

Jim: No, I think there...

Jim and George: Mexicans and blacks.

George: A lot of Mexican families.

Krystin: Did you guys learn Spanish at all? Did you guys work in the store?

Jim: Yeah, definitely.

George: Unfortunately...We learned the food items.

Jim: Yeah all the food items. We could converse.

George: Yeah we could converse a bit.

Jim: In fact, George is pretty fluent in Spanish.

George: Not too fluent.

Krystin: Modesty. Where did you guys go to school?

Jim: We went to Washington Elementary School and then Monroe School and then Phoenix Union High.

Krystin: Where were those located?

Jim: Let's see... Washington School was on about...

George: 9th and Washington.

Jim: 9th Street and Washington. Monroe was on 7th Street and near Van Buren there. And Phoenix Union was just a candy corner away from there. It was, it's still, fact that it's still there...Phoenix Union. In fact, Monroe School is still there on Washington Street, I mean, Van Buren Street and 7th Street on the Southeast corner, that big building.

George: I think it used by the city now.

Jim: Yeah, I think it's owned by the city now.

George: So after high school we went to Phoenix College for two years.

Jim: Then, Arizona State.

George: At least we did. My sisters went after Phoenix College they went to Southern Cal. One of them did and the other one went to...

Jim and George: University of Arizona.

Krystin: So you guys all went to college.

Jim and George: Yes, of course. Definitely.

Krystin: Did you guys walk to school? Like elementary, middle, high school?

Jim: Yeah we walked and ride bikes, sometimes rode a bike, the combination of everything.

George: The Grammar school and the high school were within ...

Jim: Walking distance ...

George: ...a mile. Three quarters of a mile from our store.

Krystin: So it wasn't too bad. What else was around that area? That you remember.

Jim: Well they had other Chinese stores around there.

Krystin: Like whose?

Jim: Like Republic Market on ...

George: Republic Market was on 11th and Jefferson.

Jim: 11th Street and Jefferson.

George: And Yen Mong Market ...

Jim: Yen Mong was just further west, on ...

George: 10th.

Jim: ...9th or 10th there. There were also stores east of us on Washington Street. There was a Lee Jew Market.

George: East Lake Market on Jefferson.

Jim: East Lake Market.

George: Wing F. Ong Market on 13th Street and Jefferson.

Jim: Mary's Store on 16th Street and Washington.

Krystin: The Mary store?

Jim: Mary store.

George: There use to be a Mary store around there.

Jim: What was the architect's name? John Sing Tang? He was a, I guess he was the son of Mary, the store owner.

George: I don't recall.

Jim: Yeah he was an architect.

Krystin: So that area was all Chinese?

Jim and George: A lot of Chinese stores.

Krystin: So were there a lot of other kids your age around that area that you could..?

Jim: Well yeah, it was a mixed neighborhood. In other words, we associated a lot with the people around it, which were Hispanics and blacks and whatever. It was a mixed neighborhood.

Krystin: So not just Chinese?

Jim: Oh no, no, no. Not just strictly Chinese. In fact, Chinese, they ran stores and the kids were working in the stores, so you didn't get much chance to really ...

George: You knew of them when you visited them and stuff like that, but as far as playmates, it's mostly the neighborhood kids were Hispanics and blacks.

Krystin: So you guys didn't have to work in the store that much?

Jim and George: Oh yeah yeah, definitely.

Jim: All the time.

George: We didn't close till ...

Jim and George: 9 o'clock at night.

George: We opened, I think, dad opened about 8 o'clock in the morning till 9 o'clock. That was 7 days a week.

Krystin: And you guys worked right when you got home from school?

Jim: Yeah, right. You got it.

Krystin: And then schoolwork? Chores?

Jim: Yeah.

George: Oh while we went to grammar school, we went to Chinese school also.

Krystin: Everyday?

George: Everyday except Sunday. All day Saturday. I think the regular days during the week it was about 5 o'clock till 8.

Jim: We've forgotten it all since then.

George: Yeah the school kind of went away when the teachers died. They had a hard time getting Chinese teachers over here and I think the last one I remembered, Low Wong¹, Mister Wong. He died and that was the end of our Chinese school. They had some more school, but we didn't attend.

Jim: We started going to high school and college.

George: Not enough time.

Krystin: How old were you when you stopped going to Chinese school?

Jim: Oh we were pretty young.

George: I guess I was about 5th grade in English school.

Jim: Yeah I was probably about 6th or 7th grade.

Krystin: Where was the Chinese school at?

Jim: Oh it was on... what street was that on?

George: 2nd Street?

Jim: 2nd Street in between.

¹ Low is "Old" in Chinese; it was a nickname.

Jim and George: Jefferson and Madison.

Jim: On the west side of the street.

Krystin: Was it a big school?

Jim: No it was a small school.

George: It was a one room schoolhouse.

Jim: I believed it was a stable at one time or another.

George: The teacher use to teach all classes, all grades, the grades were just one row and he would just assign the assignments to one and then teach a second one and go down the line so ...

Jim: It was the very beginning and then a little more advance, but really as far as the teaching, I don't think it was much higher than equivalent to 5th or 6th grade. It's very elementary because the time was so short to teach it.

Krystin: Well three hours a day. Six days a week. That's a lot.

Jim: Yeah, but they ...

George: Well they included recess though.

Krystin: How long was recess?

George: Oh I don't know. Maybe fifteen to twenty minutes.

Krystin: So, you guys should be fluent.

Jim: Maybe we were probably more fluent at that time ...

George: Time then we are now, that's for sure.

Jim: Because we don't use it. We speak English at home.

George: I remember as one of the assignments, we had to write a Chinese letter and I remember writing it. It probably wasn't very ...

Krystin: Do you remember what it said?

George: No, I don't remember what it said. I think I wrote it to mom or something like that.

Krystin: Did you send it off?

George: I don't remember. Probably I did.

Krystin: All in characters.

George: All in Chinese characters.

Krystin: That's pretty impressive for a 5th grader or 4th grader.

George: Probably a 5th grade level.

Krystin: That's still impressive. Chinese is hard. What else did you guys do beside work, school, and Chinese school? Time for anything else?

Jim: Well yeah we had time to... a little social life.

George: Mostly was family though.

Jim: Family. You get together with family mostly.

George: I remember Sunday was a social day. We had... we either went to visit other people or they came over and had dinner. It's always eating.

Krystin: That's a good thing. Did you guys have a car? You would all go over..?

Jim: Oh yeah my dad had a car.

Krystin: And it fit all of you guys in there?

Jim: Well we got in there somewhere.

George: I don't know how we got in there, but we did.

Jim: That's right. We had to try.

George: Blue Dodge.

Jim: A blue Dodge and a pick up truck, right? For delivering groceries.

Krystin: And you guys did that every Sunday?

Jim: Just about... we visited somebody or somebody came over and had dinner with us.

Krystin: Do you remember like which families you would go see?

Jim: Oh yeah.

Jim and George: The Sings.

George: Our aunt, uncle.

Jim: Yeah. You know Marianne Kwan?

Krystin: I've heard of her.

Jim: OK. Her mother and her husband. Of course they lived closed by. In fact they lived for a while; they lived across the street from the store. In fact, also, Sue... what's her name?

George. Sue Song.

Jim: Sue Song. The judge's mother.

Krystin: OK. Roxanne's mother.

Jim: Roxanne, right!

Krystin: Yeah. Did you guys play any sports or anything?

Jim: Not too much. No, I wouldn't say. You know just schoolyard type stuff.

George: No we did no organized sports. We didn't have time.

Krystin: Yeah you guy's schedule seems pretty busy.

George: We wanted to, but we were expected home.

Jim: We did attend some games.

Krystin: What was the difference between what you guys had to do and what your sisters had to do at home? Was there a difference?

Jim: Not really. I think they worked in the store also. Cashier and things like that everyday.

Krystin: So same expectations?

Jim: Yes, except I guess the boys, you know, the girls didn't do any butchering or anything. The boys learned how to butcher and worked in the butcher shop and stuff like that. Do the heavier stuff. I guess mainly the... my sisters cashier and wait on the customers.

Krystin: What about at the house? Chores? Cooking?

George: They did the dishwashing. I don't... my mother did the cooking. She did most of it, but they did the dishwashing.

Krystin: What did she cook? Like what was...

George: My dad cooked the heavy things, the roast, and the stews, and the turkey. And my mother did the delicate dishes, vegetable dishes and things like that.

Jim: Usually, the everyday dishes. My dad, he did, like the weekends, he was pretty good roasting chickens and stuff like that.

Krystin: So what was like a normal breakfast, lunch and dinner for you guys?

Jim: Very little breakfast.

George: We didn't eat breakfast.

Krystin: No breakfast?

George: Well we ate corn flakes and milk.

Krystin: Very American.

George: Coming home from lunch, we would always have a bowl of ham sandwiches and popsicles.

Jim: And soup.

Krystin: And your mom would make that for you?

Jim and George: Yeah.

George: When we came home, we came home every lunch because we lived very...

Jim: Close by.

George: She insists on hot. Something hot, so we had vegetable soup and boiled ham sandwiches.

Krystin: Was that good?

Jim: Well it was all right.

George: Better than nothing.

Krystin: Yeah that's true. What about for dinner?

George: Dinner we had after we close about... after coming from Chinese school really it would be around 9 o'clock after close, so the family would eat together. We had Chinese food.

Krystin: Like what?

Jim: Rice.

George: I remember steam salted egg custard.

Jim: Yeah.

Jim and George: Ham dan.

George: And ham mui, Salted fish we ate that. lap cherng, some kind of choy [vegetable]. In those days they could make ... they could feed a family of eight with a little piece of meat like that. They stretched a long way. We never had steaks and roast when we were growing up. It was always small portions.

Krystin: Lot's changed.

George: Yes they have.

Krystin: Let's see. What were some of your favorite places to like eat out? Do you guys go out to restaurants a lot?

Jim: As kids? Oh that's a good question.

George: As kids? I don't remember going out. The only restaurant... graduating from 8th grade ... my uncle Brownie, as a graduating gift, took me and some of my brothers and sisters to the American Kitchen. He was the grill cook there. He did the steaks there.

Krystin: His name was Brownie?

George: Yeah my Uncle Brownie and he cooked up some steaks for us. That was the first time I've ever had a steak. A whole piece and the first time I've ever had a salad. I always thought my sister always made slaw for salad, till ... but this was a different kind of salad. I think that was probably the first restaurant I was ever in 8th grade.

Krystin: American Kitchen. What street was that on?

Jim and George: Central.

Jim: Central Avenue and about... what?

George: It would be just a little bit north of Washington, between Washington and Adams, east side of Central.

Krystin: Were there any just regular sandwich shops that you guys went to like after school?

George: Well across the street from the grammar school we use to eat little hamburgers here and there and then when we went to high school if we didn't eat in the cafeteria, we ran across the street, there was a..

Jim: Do Drop Inn.

George: Do Drop Inn. They made some good greasy hamburgers.

Krystin: How much was that? How much did that go for, like hamburgers?

George: About a quarter, I think.

Jim: It was a quarter or fifteen cents.

George: It was rather cheap and the hamburgers were on the square bread. It was not a bun. I guess bread was cheaper and they use to serve hamburgers on just regular sandwich bread.

Krystin: That sounds good. Did your parents give you money or did you get paid for working?

George: No we never got paid.

Jim: No pay for work.

George: They just gave it to us as we needed it like for lunch or something like that, but we didn't get no salary.

Jim: No salary, they expected of you.

Krystin: So on Sundays the store was still open right?

Jim: Yes, we closed earlier on Sundays.

George: We closed about three or four.

Krystin: And then started the dinner and going over to people's houses?

Jim: Right, right.

Krystin: Did you guys go to church or anything?

Jim: Yeah the Chinese Baptist Church.

Krystin: First Chinese?

Jim: What was that on? What street was that on?

George: Well they use to come and pick us up for Sunday school. I guess the church was on Central?

Jim: Central, the first one, yeah. Central and about Earl Drive or somewhere right there, near the Palms Theater or somewhere in there.

George: They rented the... it was a Chinese mission. It was a Baptist church during regular time, but they rented it out to us as a mission.

Jim: Was that a Baptist church or a Jewish church?

George: That was the first Chinese Baptist Church on Central and then he bought a Jewish Church on Earl Drive somewhere and at that time we did not attend the second church that often. I guess we grew up and we had no interest I guess, but in early days we went to Sunday school.

Krystin: Who picked you up to go there?

Jim and George: Church bus.

Krystin: Were there other kids that got picked up? Like who else?

George: Mostly Chinese kids.

Jim: Chinese kids from different families; families around Phoenix.

Krystin: You knew mostly everyone? Was it like the only time you saw the other Chinese kids?

George: Yeah.

Jim: Mostly. They were working like we were.

George: I guess the only time we really got together was on the 4th of July you know. 4th of July every year use to throw a big picnic and that's when all the families use to get together.

Krystin: Where was the picnic at?

George: At different places. Sometimes they would rent a farm somewhere.

Jim: Well they've had it over at the Riverside Ballroom, even, way outside Central.

George: Even at the plantation on East Washington Street. Just wherever they could rent somewhere large and food was usually donated.

Jim: Right, because we had so many Chinese grocery stores and venders that donated their food and drinks and milk and stuff.

Krystin: How many people would go to that?

Jim: Oh I would say there were probably maybe at least three to five hundred people.

George: Yeah I think so.

Krystin: How many Chinese were there in Phoenix at that time?

Jim: Well it's not just only Chinese who attended.

Krystin: It was just a general ...?

Jim and George: It was open to the public.

George: But mostly Chinese though. I think they had different entertainment.

Krystin: Like what?

George: Singing, things like that. No modeling. Just in recent years they had the queen and things like that. Or they would show Chinese movies and when we were at war with Japan they would show war movies and things like that.

Krystin: And this was an all day event?

Jim and George: Practically all day.

Jim: Other entertainments I think we headed to the riverside, Broadway pool even. That's where the kids went swimming and stuff like that.

Krystin: You think that's better than it is now, than just the beauty pageant?

Jim: Well in a sense it was good because we got to... the kids got to mingle and stuff like that, but of course right now it's more of a set program where they have the beauty pageant.

George: I think the main difference is in recent years most grown ups and young people in those early days had a lot more kids.

Jim: Yeah that's true.

George: That's the difference.

Krystin: Who put that on? Do you know? Like who would organize it?

Jim: I think usually Chinese merchants. Other words, they had their Uncle, Madora, whatever they had, the business organization put it on because they were the ones who could get the vendors to donate the products.

Krystin: Were your parents involved in any of that?

Jim: They actually came for donations and stuff like that. They participated in the donations.

George: We went so they must have took us.

Krystin: Were they involved in anything else? Like any other organizations or anything?

George: Ying Ong. My dad was a member of Ying Ong and Ong Met.

Krystin: Are those family associations still around?

Jim and George: Oh yes.

Jim: They're still existed. They're not too active. They were more active before.

George: We're both members of Ying Ong, ...Ong Met rather.

Krystin: Does the organization do anything still?

Jim: Well they have scholarships. They provide annual scholarships to annual banquets and stuff like that.

Krystin: Do you guys help organize that.

George: We're members.

Jim: We're the workers.

Krystin: Your dad was in that? Did he go to the dinners?

Jim and George: Oh yeah.

Krystin: Did you guys ever get to go with him?

George: I don't remember going to the dinners.

Jim: No. I guess those were mostly for the adults. I don't think the kids attended those kind of dinners.

Krystin: Was it just your dad or did he take your mom too?

Jim: I think she went sometimes, most of the time she was at home taking care of the kids. Keep an eye on them.

Krystin: What was the year difference between you and your sisters? Like the difference in ages.

Jim: Or a couple of years, about two years apart basically.

Krystin: And there were five, six of you?

Jim: There was six of us all together.

Krystin: War time experiences if you guys don't want to talk about it... World War II.

Jim: Well we both served in the army and that's about the extent of it really.

Krystin: Where did you guys go?

Jim: I served in Germany during the Korean War and George was in Korea during the Korean War. Good thing it was peace time.

Krystin: Did the World War II, the stuff with the Japanese, did that affect you at all? Like any discrimination?

George: We were so young, it didn't affect us, but I do recall things that happened. I remember Pearl Harbor, hearing about it over the radio.

Krystin: What were you doing when you heard it?

George: I was in the store on Sunday morning. We were putting up a light fixture when we heard it over the radio. I remember that much.

Jim: Sometimes you might be mistaken for Japanese and then I think the Chinese people had little flags with the Chinese flag and a little United States flag.

George: And they came out with some signs that said "We are Chinese" and you would put them on your front window so people would know that you're Chinese and not Japanese or they might throw a rock through your window. They interned all the Japanese unfortunately, but the only Orientals in town were Chinese, but they still wanted the public to know that they were Chinese so they had a Chinese flags and some wordings that "We are Chinese" 'cause they were fearful that someone would throw a rock through their window or something like that.

Krystin: So did you guys have one of those in your store?

George: Yeah.

Jim: Yeah we did at that time we did.

George: I think most of the Chinese stores had some kind of sign. I don't recall any windows being broken though, but they still had the sign.

Krystin: Did that hinder your business at all?

Jim: I don't think so.

George: Well being that young we didn't know, but I never encountered any prejudice at school that I was aware of. I didn't encounter any ... nobody picked on us other than just the regular normal picking on you know ... a lot of people are bullies, you know, bullies and stuff like that.

Jim: Seems like Phoenix, I don't think there was any discrimination against Chinese, at least to my knowledge.

Krystin: At anytime or at that time?

Jim: Anytime really.

George: Well I don't recall anything at school either. I wasn't aware of it, let's put it that way. The only time I heard there was discrimination was when Joanne Poo on East Van Buren at one time would not allow Orientals to swim in their pool.

Jim: Oh really?

George: That's what I understand. We didn't go swimming that often. I never encountered that, but that was just hearsay, to that extent. All through my years in Phoenix, I have not encountered any prejudice that was aware of.

Krystin: That's good. When did you first realized that you were Asian American? That you were different from the other kids at school.

Jim: I'll tell you the first time I noticed the difference. When I went to San Francisco once I saw the guy sweeping the street and we were all Orientals. Prior to that, I just really didn't think about race I guess and intermingle with my friends. There was no difference I guess. At least I wasn't aware of any difference at that time.

Krystin: How old were you when that happened?

Jim: Oh I would say I was about fourteen, I guess.

Krystin: Oh really, fourteen was when you realized there was ...

Jim: But then it was just in reverse saying I never felt like I was a minority, but when I went to San Francisco I realized I was a majority.

Krystin: What about you George?

George: I can't honestly say. I just kind of assimilated into society. Like I said, I never experienced any prejudice. I, myself, was never prejudice against any other race either so I was just another body there, but like Jim said, I didn't experience that I was in a majority until I went to China. In China, everybody was Oriental there and I said hey. I was speaking [to] some of my Caucasian friends that we took the tour with so I connected with them and said "I know what you white people feel around me." I never felt that I'm here and you're there. I'm just part American that's all.

Krystin: How old were you when you went to China?

George: Oh we went there in 99'. Seven years ago.

Jim: You know I think maybe because we didn't feel like we were a minority or a majority because we came from a mixed neighborhood. We had all nationalities there, so we just fit in.

Krystin: Back to buildings and stuff. Is your house still there?

Jim and George: The store is still there. Yes.

Jim: It's a historical site.

Krystin: Is the apartment still there too?

Jim: Yes. They gutted it out and it was suppose to be a downtown clinic, but evidently that fell through with the doctors and now it's a dance studio. It's Footsteps.

Krystin: Is it just one building? Part of it is the apartment and part of it is the store?

Jim: Right. It actually is one complete building that had a partition wall, drywall.

Krystin: Just half a half?

Jim: No, it's probably maybe 2/3s or 1/3.

Krystin: And your dad designed it.

Jim: Yeah I think he more or less designed it because it had that sort of abridged-like thing on top, like a Chinese bridge.

George: But it was drawn up by an architect 'cause there was a blueprint. In fact, that blueprint I think my older sister had the blueprint.

Jim: In fact, I still have the contract.

Krystin: Really? That would be interesting to see.

George: You got the contract?

Jim: Yeah I got it in a picture frame up there.

George: Is there? I didn't know that. I know that my sister owns the blueprint.

Jim: Yeah I've never seen the blueprints.

Krystin: When did you guys find that? The blueprints?

George: After my dad pass away we started rummaging through the trunks and things like that and some of the things we thought were good to be saved and some of them, a lot of things rotted away. Some old clothes and things.

Jim: That was the time when we, they came to the store, the city bought it.

George: We had to move.

Jim: We had to clear out the store.

Krystin: When was that?

George: When the city bought it?

Krystin: Yeah.

Jim: I think eighties. Was it the eighties or when was it?

George: I don't recall. A good twenty years [inaudible].

Jim: So probably the 80s.

George: The city bought it as part of their redevelopment. It's still there.

Jim: The store is still there.

Krystin: How big was the entire building?

Jim: Oh the entire building? I would say maybe about sixty by ... the building itself? The whole building?

Krystin: Yeah.

George: The probably was very long.

Jim: The property was just the building itself was probably about ...

George: Maybe about 300 feet deep and maybe about seventy-five feet wide something like that.

Krystin: The building?

George: No, just the block.

Jim: The building was smaller than that; fifty by maybe sixty-five or seventy.

George: We had a tremendous long back yard.

Jim: The back yard was big.

Krystin: Did you guys do gardening or anything out there or just..?

Jim: No, not really.

Krystin: No use for anything?

Jim and George: No.

Krystin: And your dad designed a kind of Asian-esque ...?

Jim: Well just the front.

Krystin: Do you know if any changes were made over the years? Like if you guys do any remodeling?

Jim: That we do?

Krystin: Yeah or any additions that your parents ...

George: I think the only additions, there was the back porch, the sleeping quarters. We use to use the back porch for a sleeping quarters. It was constructed out of wood attached to the building and now I think the city tore that up because that was not the original building. Now because being a historical site, they cannot modify anything. Fact, the interesting thing was years after my dad sold the building, they called up and wanted to declare it as the historical site and we had a metal canopy in front there and they wanted to repaint it gold, but the original colours were green, brown, and pink and they wanted to know, had our permission to paint it could, and we thought it over and said well we decided no.

Jim: Well for being a historical site though they probably wanted the original colors, so they scraped some of the paint off and took ...

George: They had three or four coats of paint or more.

Jim: When they found out what the original colors were ...

George: I think they painted it pink. Isn't it pink?

Jim: I can't recall. I haven't been down there in a while.

George: I've attempted to go enter it, but every time I pass by it, it's closed. I can't get in. I would like to see it myself. Jim has been in it.

Jim: I've been in there when they were refurbishing it.

George: Yeah but it's closed now and I, myself, would like to walk through it, but they cleaned it up of course, and I think they sandblasted the brick.

Jim: Yeah, it's the original brick.

George: So, it looks nice.

Krystin: What's the neighborhood look like now compared to what it looked it then?

Jim: Well the front is the same. They didn't change anything; got the canopy and the red brick and everything else. There was no changes.

George: Some of the residential things are gone and they built businesses, so the neighborhood look itself looks very commercial-like, very nicely. They city architect did a nice job in that one

block neighborhood. They improved it. Use to be a lot of residential and the old houses and they tore them down.

Krystin: What kind of houses?

Jim: The residents.

George: The stucco and old brick houses.

Jim: Those are all gone now.

George: They build a... I think north of it they build a kind of an old age home.

Jim: A restaurant in there.

George: It looks nice. Yeah it does.

Krystin: Do you guys remember any other buildings around the area that might be of interest other than the schools, the Chinese schools, the church?

Jim: Let's see. I'm trying to think of any ... well I know my grandfather's store, that was on Washington though, I mean on Van Buren.

Krystin: What was that called?

Jim: That was about 14th Street and Washington.

George: Van Buren.

Jim: Van Buren rather.

George: That was my grandfather's store. That's where my dad first started helping him.

Krystin: What was that store called?

George: Ah Gee Market, his name was Ah Gee and he had a Ah Gee market. Right now it's ... I think they rented out; it's sold to a furniture store, a second hand store of some sort.

Jim: Yeah but it's still there.

George: I think it's still there. It's about 14th Street.

Krystin: Do you know what side of the street?

Jim and George: It's on the south side of the street.

George: East of the Hunter [inaudible] Pickle Company. Use to be a Hunter [inaudible] Pickle Company on the corner and they were east of that.

Jim: On the south side. They were there for the longest period of time.

Krystin: So did you have any other cousins around here or was it just your family?

George: We had Uncle Roland. He had a market on the next block. He was on 15th Street. I think it's still called Roland's Market, but I think he sold it. He's past away.

Jim: I think it's a Orientals.

George: It's an Oriental market of some sort, but I think they still kept the sign that says "Roland's Market" there. He doesn't own it. He's past away of course ... Lee Chu Market building is still there that's on 15th and ...

Jim: Yeah Lee Chu Market is still standing I think.

George: It's not Lee Chu Market anymore but the building is still there.

Krystin: Where is it at?

George: 15th and Washington.

Jim: On the South side of the street.

George: And Wing F. Ong Bock [Bock = Mister in Chinese] Store.

Jim: Jefferson.

George: On Jefferson and 13th.

Jim: The building is still there.

George: It's something else now, but the store is there.

Jim: I think there use to a United Market over there too. A Jimmy Dong Store.

George: Yeah I think it had been rebuilt. Yeah there use to be a United Market on 13th and Washington on the South side of the street.

Jim: So there's a Bene-save-its Market on 9th Street and Washington on the Southwest corner. See there were a lot of Chinese groceries around the area.

George: Consumer's market on Washington and 2nd Street.

Jim: Oh that's right.

George: Eddie Yue, he had that store there. So there were a lot of Chinese markets in that area. We just named about a dozen.

Krystin: Yeah it's like every block.

George: Yeah just about.

Jim: Yeah and then later on there was a Yun Lam Market that was... I guess he was bought out by the city or something and relocated on about Washington and between 7th Street and 8th Street. Yeah somewhere on the north side of the street, small grocery store.

George: There was a really small store on Monroe, just about a block from our place. Li Lan LiLan Market. I use to go in there and buy candy because we always had different kinds of candy than we had.

Krystin: Like what?

George: I don't know something with a prize in it. Things like that. He was just by himself. His wife was in China. He ran that store by himself. Did not talk too much because he was just local.

Jim: A real small store.

Krystin: Anything else you'd like to add? That's pretty much all my questions.

Jim: Well things were a lot different then than they are now. That's for sure.

George: Well there were good times and bad times.

Jim: But you know the grocery stores. One thing, I think the Chinese people they worked hard and they work very extremely hard. Never took vacations, but then the younger generation comes over and everyone wants their vacations. Never get out of the store, I don't know if there are any more Chinese stores in the Phoenix areas that are owned by Chinese. I don't believe there is or very few if any. Everybody goes into the professional fields now, you know.

Krystin: What did you guys end up doing?

Jim: George is a computer programmer with General Electric and Honeywell.

George: Yeah thirty years with them.

Jim: And I spent mine with electrical engineer. We got out of the grocery store business.

Krystin: Yeah I'll say. You guys did pretty well.

Jim: Well, we make a living. That's about it.

George: You know, thinking about it. A lot of the local Chinese boys that grew up in Phoenix remained in Phoenix; a lot of them. I wouldn't say all of them, but a majority of them. That we grew up and remained here and that's true. The girls moved, but the males mostly stay here.

Jim: Well you might have heard of P.C. Tang and all those guys. Of course he stayed in the grocery store business until he retired, but a lot of them ...

George: In our juvenile years we had a Chinese club here called Mei Wok Club?

Jim: Yeah Mei Wok Club.

Krystin: What is that?

George: It was high school and every college age Chinese kids.

Jim: I guess it's called more of a social club.

George: Which was what it was. And some of the activities on a Saturday night we would go to South Mountain and have a wiener roast. They get special permission to have the lake, 'cause they didn't get out till 9 o' clock at night so that's when we got started. Sometime we would have roller skating parties.

Jim: Yeah a lot of roller skating.

George: All on Northern I think. Somewhere there was a roller skating rink. It closed at twelve or eleven and we would guarantee them x amount of dollars and we would be over there. He closed

and he would let us and we would skate by ourselves with the Chinese club, the Mei Wok Club. We would skate there for a couple hours. Buy their refreshments and things like that.

Krystin: How did you guys get down to Northern?

Jim and George: We drove.

George: Like I said most of them were high school or young college kids.

Krystin: So everyone borrowed their parents' cars?

George: They had cars at that time. Oh, square dancing. There use to be a legion. We use to have a legion hall here in town on 7th Avenue and ...

Jim: It's where the senior citizens is right now.

George: It used to be a legion and they use to allow us to use the hall. We would hire a square dance instructor and his wife, they're elderly people and they had their records and we would have square dance there occasionally on Saturday evenings. We would charge maybe fifty cents per person. Then we would buy cakes and pop and paid off the square dancing instructors and that was a lot of fun. And then maybe Christmas time we would throw a dance at the Women's Club and we had a dance there. Then the Japanese Club in Glendale, they would throw a New Years dance, and they would attend ours and we would attend theirs.

Krystin: Sounds like you guys had a fun time.

George: Yeah we did. There were some good times and some bad times. A lot of hours working and going to school, but then we enjoyed on the weekends. Everything was late though. Everybody worked till 9 o'clock so all the activities were after 9.

Krystin: You guy didn't get much sleep, did you?

George: No. No.

Jim: That's for sure. Well like you say, you know, after you went to Chinese school, then you have to do your homework.

Krystin: For both.

George: That's right.

Jim: Usually, mainly, for the American school.

George: Chinese, we didn't have ...

Jim: I think we didn't have much homework really.

George: It was all done there.

Jim: After you had your meals, you sit down then maybe do your homework, take a shower, get to bed. That's it.

Krystin: Anything else you guys want to add.

Jim: Nope, I don't think so. I think you pretty well covered the field there, Krystin.

George: Such as our life.

Krystin: Sounds like good interesting lives.

Jim: Things are a lot different these days, aren't they?

Krystin: Yeah, sounds like it.

Jim: Well one thing I think, I don't know if it's good or bad, when our generations, the kids had the responsibilities at home. Now, the kids have more outside activities and social lives and so ... Well of course at that time, you never heard of any crimes or anything among the Chinese youth, but nowadays, once in occasion, not that there's a lot of it, but in cities in San Francisco, there's a lot of bad crimes going on. In fact, I remember in San Francisco before, a long time ago when we went to visit, you can walk through Chinatown at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. The restaurants would be open. You could have some Jook [congee], and uh and all that stuff. Now it's locked up. Things have changed.

George: See, a lot of gangs from China and from other Asian ...

Jim: Korea and ...

George: I don't think they are so much local. I think they are from other countries and I don't know, maybe their ideal of peaceful living is not the same as ours.

Jim: So everything, even the restricted hours for the youths of the past, I think they're telling them a lot of things. To appreciate the family and to appreciate working together because like you said, like what George said, there was no wages nowadays it's, "How much are you going to pay me?" You just did it. So you learn a lot of things that way.

George: It's different. Not saying that one thing is better than another. It's just that the world is not the same and you have to go along with what reality is, but I don't know. I'm glad we lived in that time.

Jim: I think it taught us a lot of values.

Krystin: Good deal.

Jim: OK.

Krystin: Thank you so much guys. That was a good interview.

[end of interview]

WESLEY ONG

Interviewed by Michael Pang with Brandon Ong and Beverley Ong
10 March 2007

Brandon: Are you getting the levels?

Michael: Yeah, it's showing up. I think so.

Brandon: Yeah.

Michael: Yeah. OK. This is an interview with Wesley Ong on March 10th -- is it? -- 2006 [2007], at ASU Downtown. It's about ten-after-ten A.M. Also present at this interview are Brandon Wong and Beverley Ong. My name is Michael Pang and I'll be conducting this interview. For the record, do we have your permission to audiotape and videotape your interview?

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: OK, thank you. Could you please state your name and its spelling?

Wesley: It's Wesley Ong. It's W-E-S-L-E-Y. And it's O-N-G.

Michael: Is this the name that you were given at birth?

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: Could you tell me where you were born?

Wesley: I was born here in Phoenix, Arizona.

Michael: And could you tell me when you were born as well?

Wesley: September 20, 1952.

Michael: What were the names of your parents?

Wesley: It's Warren and June.

Michael: Could you spell their names, too?

Wesley: W-A-R-R-E-N. And J-U-N-E.

Michael: And where was your father born?

Wesley: He was born in Canton, China.

Michael: And where was your mother born?

Wesley: Charles City, Iowa.

Michael: So when did your parents come to Phoenix?

Wesley: Oh, my mother was born here, in -- Oh, when they came to Phoenix.

Michael: Yeah.

Wesley: That's a good question. Let's see ...

Beverley: I think he had family there.

Wesley: They would have had to come at least by 1947. 'Cause that's when they had the first grocery store.

Michael: Mm-hm. So do you they had been there, been here for very long before then? Or ...?

Wesley: Let's see ... No it is 1947. 'Cause that's, that's the same year when they got married in Charles City. Then they came to Arizona 'cause of my grandfather. And then that's when they built, or that's when they leased George's Grocery, at that time, in November of 1947.

Michael: Oh, so it was right after they moved here then.

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: Or soon after.

Wesley: Yeah.

Michael: The next question is "How did they get here?"

Wesley: Through my grandfather. To Arizona?

Michael: Mm-hm.

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: Did they come by train? Or was it ... Do you know?

Wesley: I don't know that much.

Michael: All right, that's OK. You said they came here because of your grandfather? Or, 'cause he was over here?

Wesley: Yes. 'Cause my grandfather was born here in 1903, when Arizona was a territory at that time.

Michael: Was he just working here?

Wesley: He worked at the, the infamous Sun Mercantile.

Michael: So did he have a grocery store too? If he was working at, for the Sun Merc -- or he was just working for Sun Mercantile.

Wesley: It was, yeah. 'Cause he, his dad and Judge Tom Tang's dad, they both were at Sun Mercantile at that time. So, and then, that's how they ... 'Cause Judge Tang and my grandfather is first cousins.

Michael: Oh, OK, I see.

Beverley: And their dads are brothers.

Wesley: Yeah. They're, both dad, my grandfather's dad and Judge Tom Tang's dad are brothers.

Michael: Oh, OK. I get it now. So you said your grandfather was working for the Sun Mercantile buil -- for Sun Mercantile.

Wesley: For a little while, right. He's, he also used that as a residence ... What happened is I came across, back around 1930 -- I made a copy, I have the original -- is that he was taking electronics school and he used that -- also Judge Tom Tang's dad, at that time, as a close relative.

Michael: Oh, I see here. It says the address is the Sun Mercantile.

Wesley: Right.

Michael: So was there housing there, too? Or ...?

Wesley: I am not sure.

Michael: Oh. He just used -- OK, I see.

Wesley: He was using that as a ...

Michael: As his address.

Wesley: Mailing address, I guess. Yeah.

Michael: OK. And then when your father came here, he had a grocery store, right?

Wesley: Yes. Well, that's when ... Actually, it's like the old days. My grandfather lived with my parents. So they both ran the store.

Michael: Oh. And that was in ... you said it was November 1947.

Wesley: Correct.

Michael: And where was the store located?

Wesley: On 2648 West Glendale.

Michael: And what was the name of the store?

Wesley: George's Grocery.

Michael: And how long did they operate this location?

Wesley: They operated for about seven years. And then they opened another store on 32nd Street and Osborn in 1954, which is called The Village Market.

Michael: And how long were they at that location?

Wesley: They were there to about 1978. '77, '78 I think.

Michael: Oh, so it's a pretty long time then. So they were only at the first one seven years?

Wesley: Correct.

Michael: Let's see ... Well, you have a picture here. This one, it looks a lot bigger than the first one.

Wesley: Yeah. Bigger store. [laughter].

Michael: Yeah.

Wesley: And then they actually had it -- I had some other pictures, but I didn't bring 'em with me -- is that my grandfather had the foresight to take pictures when it was from the ground level, the construction and everything. So it was pretty neat. At that time, you could have a clear view, on the background there -- like I said, it's 32nd Street and Osborn -- so on the background you could see Camelback Mountain, in the back.

Michael: So do you know what the customers were like that they had at either of these stores? Like what the clientele was, the general ...

Wesley: General clientele I vaguely remember because in 1947 -- I was born in 1952 -- and I would have been a couple years old. At the older store I vaguely remember there what the clientele was. But at The Village Market it's always been Caucasian people.

Michael: So just people that lived nearby kind of thing?

Wesley: Yes. Actually, it was the only store in that vicinity and it was all residential.

Michael: Oh, OK. Let's see ... Did you parents, did they associate with other grocery store owners? You said this one was the only one in the area, right?

Wesley: Well, and then later on you had another one. The closest Chinese one would have been on 32nd Street just south of Thomas, near Oak, which is Northeast Market. That was run by Michael Wong.

Michael: And do you know about when they were running this grocery store? Were there any others nearby?

Wesley: Vaguely remember. At that time, down the road, which was later -- that's the reason why closed eventually, is because of that competition -- you had the Bashas'. And then what really killed 'em more was the Circle Ks. Because my parents would always be open 365 days a year. And it'd be like from eight in the morning 'til nine, ten o'clock at night.

Michael: Yeah, everyday of the week.

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: So it's pretty tough competition, I guess, if you have a Circle K nearby or something. OK. Do you have any sisters or brothers?

Wesley: I have one brother, which is the, he's the youngest. It's Wayne. And I have a middle -- I'm the oldest and then my sister is the middle of the siblings. And it's Beverley.

Michael: All right. So I guess we're moving on to questions more about you. Where did you grow up?

Wesley: Majority was, I like to say "North Phoenix," but it's 32nd Street and Osborn. And I went to the Creighton District, which was down the road on 36th Street and Osborne, which is Monte Vista. And high school I went to Camelback, which is 28th Street and Campbell. And I went to Phoenix College and I went to ASU.

Michael: And, where, where was the house that you grew up in?

Wesley: We were fortunate enough -- It used to be, behind the store there was a vacant lot there. And we would live behind the store for a while. And then later we built a house, which is still there, it's on the, just the northeast side of it.

Michael: And this is the, The Village Market?

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: The second one.

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: And how long did you live there for?

Wesley: Let's see, that would have been ... [laughter] See, the house was, when was the house built? Do you know, Bev? [laughter].

Beverley: Probably 1960, around there.

Wesley: No, it would have been later than that. I think. 'Cause I left the house in '76.

Beverley: We spent the majority of your years there, yeah.

Wesley: Right.

Michael: Well, so it was built, you said, later than 1960?

Wesley: Oh, the house?

Michael: Yeah. Or, you lived there until after 1960, is that ...

Wesley: I lived there 'til '76.

Michael: OK. And the house was built, was it built with, when they built the grocery store?

Wesley: It was afterwards.

Michael: Oh, right. So ...

Wesley: Let's see, I'm trying to think. It would have been built ... It might have been in the sixties.

Beverley: Yeah, it was. I would say 1960s.

Michael: OK. Well, could you describe the house? Like what it looked like, how many rooms, what the rooms were like.

Beverley: Ranch style.

Wesley: It was -- French door?

Beverley: Ranch style.

Wesley: Oh, Ranch style. Between ranching and, if you want to say, "contemporary." Because it was a custom home that was built. In fact, I remember that Peter K. Shields was the architect, the

developer. And we were, we had one of those shake roofs. And it's four bedroom. And then family room, dining, kitchen.

Michael: So did your family own the house and the land it was on?

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: And they owned the property that their grocery store was on, too?

Wesley: Correct.

Michael: Was it all one, like a lot?

Wesley: Yeah. It was, if you want to say, it was like two parcels there.

Michael: Right next to each other?

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: OK. What memories do you have of your mother? Any that stand out in particular or just generally day-to-day.

Wesley: Very family-oriented. Caring. Always family-goes-first and then business. She was always be at the store. In fact, she was our -- unfortunately because of our lifestyle of the grocery store -- she was also like a, sometimes like a dad, too. 'Cause she would always take us on vacations and stuff. And then my dad -- 'cause the store would always be open for everyday -- so he would always be at the store, and then same as my grandfather.

Michael: So what memories do you have of your father then?

Wesley: Very strict. Business-oriented. And then, unfortunately when I was growing up, like I said, he wasn't there for me in the sense as my mom was, because of the store. But then later, after he retired the store, then my, he took care of my sons the same as my mother, too. So, I dunno, it's like a cycle in a sense that it's like a payback. Or that now he has the time to do things he couldn't do before.

Michael: That's good. So could you tell me what it was like growing up in Phoenix?

Wesley: A lot different than it is now. Seen a lot of changes. Just like, at The Village Market on 32nd and Osborn, you see the growth. We used to have, at that time, like dirt road, canal banks, that type of thing. Now it's all leveled-off, street paved. Downtown Phoenix is changing dramatic. I used to work downtown at the Valley Bank. And now it's the Bank One Center. So I grew up on, on working, and the old buildings in downtown, lot of changes.

Michael: So what do you remember most about growing up in Phoenix?

Wesley: The downtown area. Used to go downtown there. They used to have what they called the Fox Theater. That was different. The first mall, or, if you want to call it a shopping center mall, was Park Central. Childhood, I never had any problems. It's, well adapt with the people from grade school to high school. In fact, we even had a, we were real close in our grade school that we had a reunion 'bout five years ago, just the grade school. And then when we had the reunion for the high school, we had the most support from our grade school that was there, too, so we had like two, three tables there. So it's, it was kind of a tight neighborhood, in a sense, where I grew up, so that was nice.

Michael: Could you tell me the names of the schools again that you went to?

Wesley: The grade school was Monte Vista. And then high school was Camelback High School. And then went to Phoenix College. And then ASU. And I also went to University of Phoenix.

Michael: Could you tell me what -- I guess it's like elementary, high school -- what school was like?

Wesley: It was, it was kinda neat for me, myself, having the store, because, because we were the neighborhood store and it's a four long block walking distance. But we also had, my parents' store would always have a field trip from the grade school. They would come down to the store and we would show 'em, at that time it was kinda neat that you know where the vegetables, the frozen food, the milk products, you show 'em that, and the meat. So, I guess you could it was like kids were envious about it 'cause, you know, your parents had a store. Like, they thought that everything was free, but it's not, so.

Michael: So, did you say it was four blocks away from school?

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: So did you walk to school everyday then?

Wesley: Either walked or rode a bicycle.

Michael: Oh, OK. What do you remember about your childhood friends?

Wesley: Close. I try to get together with at least about a handful. Like the reunion we had. I was real close to one, which was Jim Haley. And, in fact, his brother is a police commander in Phoenix. And, but he lives in, I think he may live in Alaska now. And that's the only time I was able to see him was the reunion. His parents were very influential. The mother, she used to work for the bank, and I think the dad might have been either a bank or a newspaper at that time. Other person that I remember was Steve Delaney. This was back to the John F Kennedy days. He was the first memorable one, I remember, my best friend. He was the first one that, it's one of those things that you remember. That time, when John F Kennedy got assassinated. It was during lunch, and he comes out, running, that the president got killed and no one believed him. So that was ...

Michael: So how old were you at that time?

Wesley: That was ... I would have been around fifth grade. '52, eleven years old.

Beverley: All your friends were Anglo, too. You were the only Chinese. In the whole neighborhood.

Wesley: Yeah. I was the only...

Beverley: In the neighborhood.

Wesley: Yeah, that's the thing. I dunno if it's because it's the uniqueness or the -- I was fortunate, I was never been discriminated or harassed. Like my sister said, all of my friends were Caucasian. At that time, growing up, there were maybe, well, like high school, there might have been -- Actually there was, if you look at minorities, we would have been the most minority, would have been like five, maybe, Chinese. And then you had maybe two Blacks. And then a couple Hispanics. But, majority of my life, growing up it has always been with Caucasian people.

Michael: And what kind of activities did you and your friends do when you were growing up?

Wesley: It was, during the grade school time was track and field and basketball. And, oh, baseball.

Michael: So was that just with a, like the school team? Or ...?

Wesley: School team, I was in the park track and field, and also basketball. And then I was in, at that time, you always had to be in, not the grade school I was at, but there was like a league. It's called -- baseball -- which was "little league." So you had different people that sponsor you and then you play, so.

Michael: So did, did you continue playing those sports through high school?

Wesley: High school, I tried out one time for basketball but I was too short.

Michael: Could you describe your interactions with people who were not Asian American? Such as teachers, neighbors, other people in your neighborhood while you were growing up.

Wesley: What was the first question?

Michael: Could you describe your interactions with people who were not Asian Americans?

Wesley: Oh, OK. They were very friendly. Caring. One that really sticks out was my second, second grade teacher, which was Mrs. Timpton. And then, like I said about the reunion we had outside from our high school, we had a grade school reunion that met at a house. And one of the, I think she was either fifth or sixth grade, teacher that showed up, which was nice, her name was Mrs. Stone. And you kind of keep track of your teachers, in a sense. Mrs. Stone, unfortunately, her husband was a, worked for the law enforcement. He was a sheriff and, at that time, where domestic problems happen, unfortunately he got killed on that, so.

Michael: And could you describe your parents' interactions with people who were not Asian Americans?

Wesley: Very friendly. In fact, we had a, at the store, there was, like I said, in the old days, it's, you would always give a -- especially in the neighborhood and some routine customers, returning customers -- we would, depending on who they are and how my grandfather and my dad feel, is that they'll give them, I guess if you wanna say, a line of credit. So like they'll come in, buy groceries, and they'll "charge" it in a sense. They'll write their name on the receipt. It's the old-fashioned way. And then, I think it's, like either, probably after a week, like the weekend or something, then they'll settle-up or pay for the groceries and stuff.

Michael: And I'm guessing most of the people could, were pretty timely on paying, paying the credit, if they were friendly.

Wesley: I remember, once in a while, you know, you go through hard times there. So then my parents were understanding. They'll let it slide for the next time or something. But I, I don't recollect any real bad, bad debts in a sense of, not, to customers. Because, like I said, most of 'em were neighborhood. And you know where they live. But it's, you know, it's one of those things that you, you try to give customer service and also, you know, it's the friendly neighborhood, so try to take care of that way.

Michael: OK. What language did your parents speak?

Wesley: My, which is very unusual, my grandfather, he spoke English all the time. And my dad, it was, I would say almost English all the time. And my mom, very seldom, which is unfortunate for myself, because I can understand Chinese but I don't speak it that much. And unfortunately I don't read and write it either, so.

Michael: So, did your, your parents never required that you learn Chinese when you were growing up? Or ...?

Wesley: We did. In fact it was Uncle George Tang and Anna. They're the ones that used to have a, I think they were the first ones that had a pharmacy over on 16th Street and Bethany. They would take time on, I think it was on the weekend. I think it's either Saturday or Sunday that, just, when I was younger, that, well, they'll teach maybe a dozen of kids Chinese, how to write characters and also read -- or speak.

Michael: So it was like a ...

Wesley: Like a mini Chinese school, if you wanna say that.

Michael: Where did they teach this at?

Wesley: I think it was either ...

Beverley: Was it at the church?

Wesley: At the church? Yeah it was at First Chi...

Beverley: On Culver.

Wesley: Oh, OK. It was at the original First Chinese Baptist Church, which was on Culver off of Central there.

Michael: OK. OK, the next part is questions about community life. And the first one is "During what occasions would you and your family and friends get together?"

Wesley: My family?

Michael: Yeah.

Wesley: Oh, OK. [laughter] I didn't if you were talking about my childhood or not. We try to get together, now, currently, is the, the hangout is -- I don't know if you want to call it a hangout -- is your Chinese Week at the cultural center. In the past, you try to get together on Fourth of July. And ... It was always a big thing on the old, in the past, 'cause you would meet at this, I think it was like a two-story with a house, on the farmland out there on the west side of town. And that was always a big thing with the Ongs, to participate in that, during the holidays and stuff. But, for community-wise it's basically, like I said, Chinese Week or else Fourth of July.

Michael: You said Fourth of July, was that the, the picnics that they had?

Wesley: A long time ago?

Michael: Yeah.

Wesley: Yes. Yeah. I guess that was, from what I heard, it was owned by Lily and William Ong. And, they would, I guess...

Beverley: His parents.

Wesley: Loan out -- oh, William's parents, I guess. They would loan out their property and everyone would gather there because, at that time, like I said, it's the days of the dirt road and everything. It's, it's, you still have large families there, but not as big now where, where Phoenix is

really spread out now to, from Gilbert to Mesa, Tempe, Scottsdale, north Phoenix. It used to be you would be centrally located and have this area there, but now everything's kinda spread out.

Michael: OK. The next question is "Did you attend language school?" You said that you went to classes on weekends, right, at the church?

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: Could you tell me what the, what that was like? What it was like going to learn Chinese then?

Wesley: It different. It was a way, also, of seeing some of your friends there. It was the same thing when you go to, when you're growing up, going to church. You go there for, religiously and also to catch up on some of your friends there, too. 'Cause you kinda grew up with them at that time, spiritually, so.

Michael: So these, the friends that you met at the, at Chinese school then, did they go to school with you, too?

Wesley: No. No, you know, it was like a central focal point where everyone would meet at. Because, most of the Chinese at that time, I would say, it's probably like on the, a little spread out, from the south to east and west, so. That would be, like I said, either you see them there or else you go to their house to visit. 'Cause going to school and everything, you're practically like a handful, in a sense you area a minority in the different schools.

Michael: OK. So how long did you take these, or, yeah, how long did you go to Chinese school? Like, what, how many years?

Wesley: I think it might have been one or two years. Not long enough. [laughter] It's, now, I guess, you speak, see, mines the old Chinese, Cantonese, old style. But then now they're, I guess, they teach you in -- especially when you go to China now -- it's all Mandarin. 'Cause, like last year, we were fortunate enough, I was able, I have three boys, in fact we have a small group, my mom's sister and then close friends and some ... yeah, close friends. We had a group of about sixteen people that went to China last year. And it was a little difficult to understand unless you know Mandarin over there. But then you feel more comfortable once you hit Hong Kong, 'cause they still speak Cantonese over there a lot.

Michael: So did you know enough from your one or two years of language school to get around in Hong Kong?

Wesley: No, I had, I do the nodding. [laughter] 'Cause like, for some reason I have difficulty speaking it. But I can, I pick up different bits. And besides the Chinese school, I think, I could say, I have to give credit to my grandmother, my mom's mother. 'Cause she would live with us for a while, and that's all she spoke was Chinese. In a sense, if you wanna say, in our environment, because she didn't understand English so we kind of like fed off each other. She'll pick up bits of English and I'll pick up bits of Chinese, so.

Michael: OK. Did you go to church when you were growing up?

Wesley: Yes, it was the First Chinese Baptist Church.

Michael: Mm-hm. And where was that again?

Wesley: It's like, I think it's either first or second street of Culver, near Willetta there, south of McDowell.

Michael: And who else attended this church?

Wesley: It was, the majority was Chinese. And ours, the church was unique because we had a Caucasian minister and, which was G L Stanley. And he would have a, for the older, elderly Chinese people, he would have a interpreter which would interpret through using headphones or earphones, for them to understand what his sermon was.

Michael: So did your whole family go to this church then?

Wesley: Yes. It would be, routinely would be my brother and sister. Occasion would be my mother. Real, real occasion would be my dad, because, like I said, 'cause of the store.

Michael: OK. What other organizations or activities did your family participate in?

Wesley: In the Chinese community? Or ...?

Michael: Or even outside of the Chinese community, too.

Wesley: Right now, actively, my middle son, he's eighteen, and, Nicholas. And myself, I work for U.S. Airways, which used to be America West. And we get involved with community work. Like recently there's The Haven House. The shelter, we pick fruits out there on the side. And, when I, well, there's also Habitat.

Michael: OK. I don't even know if this -- OK, the question is "What do you know about the Ong Ko Met?" I don't, do you know what that is? Is that familiar to you?

Wesley: I think it's, basically it's the Ong Association.

Michael: Mm-hm.

Wesley: The Ong family. And it's just like, the different families you have. The Ong Ko Met is basically the Ong plus, there's a lot of relation with the Tangs, too. So almost the Tang is just like the Ong, too. So, I am a mem -- yeah, I am a member of the Ong Association. And they get together once in a while, just like back to community, I think it's monthly or semimonthly is, every other month, the Chinese Chamber gets together, too. And once in a while I'll attend some of their meeting, which is a civil service type, a community meeting. They'll have a speaker from the city or some business and let you know what's happening in the community, so.

Michael: Do you know when the Ong Ko Met was first formed? When it was created?

Wesley: No, I don't.

Michael: So was your family involved in the Kuo Min Tang? I'm guessing it's the, is it the Tang family thing?

Wesley: I'm not sure. They might be.

Michael: OK.

Wesley: You know, my parents, I'm not sure if they are involved in that or not.

Michael: OK. Let me see ... OK, there's some questions about World War II. So do you know where your, well, it says "Where did your family live after the war?" I'm guessing, do you know where your parents were at that time?

Wesley: At that time, let's see ... That was around '48?

Michael: It's like early to mid forties.

Wesley: I think my dad might have been still in China. And my mom was in Charles City, Iowa. And I wasn't born. [laughter].

Michael: OK. Hm. I guess that's all the questions here. It says, these are just the final questions on the questionnaire that they gave me. I'll just read it, it says "What would you want your grandchildren, your great-great-grandchildren, to know about you?" Or just your children in general, what would you like them to know about your history, your personal history in Arizona?

Wesley: I'm in, well actually my mom started it. It's an ongoing thing. She has a, we started a family tree. It's written in Chinese so it's kinda hard to interpret it. It's also, our assistance through Andrew Tang. Actually, before him was his father. And, so we're trying to, basically, show the tree of how long, to let, like my sons know where it all started, in a sense. So like it has my grandfather's father, and then my grandfather, and then my dad, and then myself, and then their's. And hopefully also we could do one for my mother's side, to show the breakout. My two sons, we're fortunate enough, well, actually, yeah, they were fortunate enough to see my grandfather. So in a sense we had four generations living at that time. Derek wasn't old enough -- or, he wasn't born then. "Wasn't old," he wasn't born then, so. But, to hopefully continue the family and also some of the Chinese traditions. Myself, I, I know it's not a religious concept, through the upbringing, is that I still go through some of the traditions because the way I was brought up is. Like you do everything in threes. And also, if you go to, when I go visit in the cemetery, I would do the incense. So it's more like a customary type thing.

Michael: And was that, were those cultural aspects something that your parents emphasized when you were growing up?

Wesley: Yes. Especially my mom. She tried to do some of the customary type. Especially like you, New Years, Chinese New Years. And then, some of the, sometimes we don't do, currently, the new generation, we won't do the old style of, like the, one of 'em, which I talked to a friend the other day, is, I guess certain times of the month or, the certain holidays and also when someone pass away, you're not supposed to wash your hair. But then, that's the old, old customs, so.

Michael: OK. After a lifetime of experiences, what would you consider to be the defining moments of your life that made you the person that you are today? [laughter] Hard questions.

Wesley: Well I though I was gonna, like I said, I used to work at Valley Bank, which was Bank One, now it's Chase. And I guess it was the upbringing, you think you would always stay with a company. Unfortunately, because of the merger, acquisition, everything, I worked for Valley Bank or Bank One for twenty-five years. And I've told myself I would never work at a company that long again. Now I'm working almost over eleven years at U.S. Airways. So it's, you, hopefully you try to improve yourself each time you make your move, on your life. So I would say, right now, if you asked me where I'm gonna be next year, I'm not sure. It's, hopefully it'll be still the next level up, in a sense, of my life and career.

Michael: OK. Well, is there anything else that you'd like to talk about before this interview is over?

Wesley: Do you have any other personal questions you wanna ask me? Besides the ...

Michael: Brandon, do you have anything to add?

Brandon: Um, not really. Oh, just to clarify, when you were, you mentioned earlier that your, the grocery was next, it was in competition with Mike Wong's.

Wesley: It wasn't in competition with Mike.

Brandon: Oh, I mean, it was next to? You're talking about Mike...

Wesley: Like, about a half-mile.

Brandon: You're talking about Mike Wong, Arlin and Mike's ...

Wesley: Dad's, correct. Yeah, that's the one.

Brandon: Oh, we just wanna know, they wanna know, like, relations between who Mike Wong -- I mean, they'd just like to clarify just different things on tape.

Wesley: Yeah, it, Mike Wong, his kids were Michael, Arlin, Tammy, Gail, Wendy. And ...

Beverley: Susie.

Wesley: No, and Susie, yeah. But it wasn't like the drastic competition because, in a sense, his, his clientele, which was, I that's why it kept him, his store more alive, was when he turned part of the store into a restaurant, a take-out. And plus also, he might, might've been one of the first that had a drive-through for groceries and liquor. So that helped him. The unfortunate thing for his store is that he would always, I think he was open 'til midnight. And because, after hours, that's where you make your money. It's, that's, it's your way of living. And I know, the kids there, they grew up in the store too, they were fortunate enough to have, they had the living quarters in back of the store there, too, so.

Brandon: Yeah, I was just clarifying who that was and stuff for the tape.

Wesley: Yeah, that's the one. The "Mike." [laughter].

Beverley: But they were down far enough so there wasn't a competition for customers.

Michael: Do you think there was competition, though, between those different grocery stores like that? If they were closer to each other?

Wesley: Like, you mean like Northeast Market and us?

Michael: Yeah.

Wesley: No. Because, like, our clientele was, if you wanna say, it was almost like, it's like regional or sectional in a sense, is that we're on 32nd Street and Osborn, they were south of Thomas. I would say, maybe, because of the residents and everything, you would have people maybe halfway down between Osborn and Thomas that would come to our store. And then north of us that would come to our store, just the same thing to the east and west. Well, east and west, there was hardly any stores around there at all, in a sense.

Beverley: So they were more neighborhood grocery stores. And then what happened is the larger stores like Bashas' is what took the business away.

Wesley: Well what took the business away, even though they were there, they would open at that time like ten to six or something. But then they, and they would always close on the holidays, and that's where your Asian markets would make their money, in a sense, is during the holidays, because they're the ones that's willing to work at that time. And then, you know, you always had these last minute shoppers that need things during the holidays and you were open then. But then, then the Bashas' started recognizing, "Hey, we need to get this market," so they started opening seven days a week. So then, that's where, like I said, back in the, I think it was like '77, 1977, 1978, that's when my parent's finally had to close the store because it wasn't ...

Beverley: Profitable.

Wesley: Working in the, in the black. It started getting to the, almost literally getting in the red because you're not selling your groceries.

Michael: Did you work in the grocery store when you were growing up?

Wesley: Yes.

Michael: For how long?

Wesley: would say to the, even up to, off and on, all the way up to the early seventies. In fact, I don't know if you know my brother Wayne. We're still on the tape here. He was the baby of the family, so, especially with my grandfather. So he hardly worked at the store at all. But then my, my only person that would always help me would be my sister. I'm, it's literally, if you, like in a regular grocery store, you're literally doing the clean-up, the stocking, the cash register, and, at that time, dusting. So it's, you're literally learning the whole facets of store, so the, store business.

Michael: When did you start working there? How old were you when you started working?

Wesley: I would say, probably when I was in grade school. Probably, probably more around seventh, eighth grade. When you're younger you kind of like hang in the store, but when you get older, then you start doing the work and stuff.

Michael: OK. Is there anything else, or, that you'd like to talk about?

Wesley: I'm gonna give you some items. It's pretty neat, it's a little history of my, besides that one of that, my grandfather taking that electronics school, I'm gonna give you a copy -- I gave Vince a couple copies, too -- is that, it's pretty neat, it show my grandfather on, when he was going back and forth as a immigrant to the ... Also, which is kinda neat, he had one of the greatest, I would say, handwriting in Chinese.

Beverley: Wesley, he's really not an immigrant, 'cause he was...

Wesley: Oh, not an immigrant, he was born here, yeah. But he was migrating back and forth, in a sense. And then in Chinese, he wrote that. I found a slip of paper that he wrote which was, had it translated. And you have to go from, like, I don't know if you know about the Chinese characters, you gotta go from right to left. And then, each of those categories, what he was doing in a sense, it's almost like a little diary of, he was going back and forth, he was naming the type of ships that he was taking. But then, I don't know if you know Lim Tang and John Tang. Their older brother, Hoover, which I didn't know that until the other day and I mentioned to Lim and John, is that how Hoover got his name was 'cause he was born on one of the ships that was...

Michael: Mm-hm.

Beverley: But then, they took him back to China to live for a while. Then he started coming back and forth beginning at age fifteen, is that correct, Wesley?

Wesley: I think, yeah.

Michael: So, so then your father was born, you said he was born in China, right?

Wesley: Right. It's kinda, it's kinda unique. 'Cause my grandfather was born here. My dad was born in China. And I was born here, in Arizona. Then, it was like a joke, like, OK, if I was gonna have my kids born in China. And my wife, which is interesting, she's, she's born in, from Macau.

So, in fact, when we went to China, she was basically our interpreter. But, like I said, everything's changed to Mandarin and she had difficulty even, even though she was a native born in Macau, which is off of Hong Kong there, is that she had a tough time understanding some of their dialects over there in China. But like I said, it's, I understand more, and she definitely understand more when we hit Hong Kong, so.

Beverley: Well if you look at the history, too, is the reason why they went back and forth because the Chinese females were not allowed to immigrate here to the United States. Correct? You guys probably know from your classes. So that's why they would have to go over there, get married. Then kids sometimes born there, or here, depending on what was going on with immigration at the time.

Michael: Mm-hm. So your mo -- was your mother born in the United States, too?

Wesley: Yeah. She was born in Iowa. That was the one that was born in Iowa.

Michael: Were her parents also born in the United States?

Wesley: No. Unfortunately I didn't get to -- No, they were born in China. My grandf -- my mom's dad, he passed away early when I think I was like about two. Same, unfortunately -- it was interesting, in a sense. Both my grandparents on both sides of my mom and dad's side, the both spouses passed away when I was at a young age. My grandfather's -- my dad's dad, his wife passed away early. And then my mom's dad passed away early.

Michael: OK, well ... I guess, if there's nothing else you'd like to talk about, I think we can draw this to a close then. Is that...

Wesley: That's fine.

Michael: That good?

Wesley: Yeah.

Michael: Well, thank you for coming out for this interview.

Wesley: Oh, thank you.

Michael: Yeah, this is, we really appreciate it. You coming out and taking your time to do this. But, yeah, this is, a lot of this stuff is really fascinating.

Wesley: It is a fascinating, yeah, you kinda take everything for granted, in a sense. And unfortunately, like my grandfather, a while back my cousin came from New York. And he wanted to know how did my grandfather got here and everything. And at that time -- I'm not sure if it was Alzheimer or not -- he, his memory was going back and forth, and it was kinda like too late to get all the facts or information, in a sense. 'Cause he always, my cousin's older than I am, and he always was the historian-type thing of wanting to know why. And it was, unfortunately for our sake, it was kinda a little late. But then now, current day right now, for, in Arizona, there's a lot of Asian people that, the elderly ones that unfortunately is no longer here with us. So it's kinda hard to recreate or know what really happened in the past, in a sense.

Michael: Yeah, that's why I think that project like this is so important. To get all this stuff on record. Yeah. Well thank you.

[end of interview]

ADELINE LEANIO PASARIBU

Interviewed by Adrienne Dudley with Isaac Manley
21 October 2006

Adrienne: This an interview with Adeline Leanio Pasaribu on October 21, 2006 at ASU downtown campus by Adrienne: Dudley also present at this interview is Isaac Manley who is my technical assistant. For the record do I have your permission to do this interview?

Adeline: Yes.

Adrienne: All right please state your name and its spelling.

Adeline: Adeline Leanio Pasaribu.

Adrienne: Uh, when were you born?

Adeline: August 11, 1937.

Adrienne: And where were you born?

Adeline: Ventura, California.

Adrienne: And when did you first come to Phoenix?

Adeline: 1941 ...I think.

Adrienne: From what country did your family originally to immigrate to the United States?

Adeline: My father from the Philippines -- Llocos Norte.

Adrienne: And your mother?

Adeline: My mother from Florence, Arizona.

Adrienne: And who were the first members of your family to come to the Phoenix area.

Adeline: My dad Bobby Leanio.

Adrienne: And when did he first arrive? Was the same time you all came?

Adeline: From what? Phoenix or United States?

Adrienne: To Phoenix.

Adeline: To Phoenix? We all ...OH! I believe he came in the early 30's, the 1930's.

Adrienne: And, let's see. Could you please provide the names of the members of your family who moved to the Phoenix area when you all moved here?

Adeline: Uh, my parents, my sisters. Flora, Helen Leanio, Bobby Leanio Jr., and David Leanio, Rebecca Leanio, and Richard Leanio.

Adrienne: And do you know when your father first came to the United States?

Adeline: The year?

Adrienne: Around.

Adeline: He might have come in 1933. I'm not sure. 'Cause him and my mom got married in 1936.

Adrienne: If you could recall, do you remember why they moved to Arizona?

Adeline: Farming, my father was a farmer.

Adrienne: And do you remember any their first impressions of Phoenix?

Adeline: It was kind of a small town then.

Adrienne: And your father you said was coming for farming and what did your mother do for a living?

Adeline: My mom was a housewife.

Adrienne: And where did they live? Do you remember the address?

Adeline: 2210 East Lincoln by Sky Harbor Airport, which the house isn't there. What that freeway 51 over there. And after that we moved to Glendale, Arizona for farming.

Adrienne: Could you please describe the house where you grew up in?

Adeline: Where I grew up in ...it was two bedroom, kitchen, living room, one bath. Had a garage 'cause that's where we kept the chickens and a big front yard. And there was a nice park in front of our house where we used to go play all the time.

Adrienne: Were you parents able to own the house and land?

Adeline: Yes they did.

Adrienne: What memories do you have of your mother?

Adeline: Very good, very busy taking care of us especially when our dad was out on the farms we're always with her.

Adrienne: And then what memories do you have of your father?

Adeline: Very good memories, talked to me a lot. Sang, taught us songs, had a piano, taught us how to play the piano. He was a musician too. Good memories with both of them.

Adrienne: What do you remember most about growing up in Arizona?

Adeline: Arizona? Wow. All the different places I moved were small and not much houses around. Like now there are a lot of houses, but anyways especially my good memories were living in the farm. We had pigs and cows and goats, chickens and then we had, where my dad farmed the crops just stuff like that. We go on the tractors, ride with him, swim in the canals. That was our swimming pool then. Learned how to swim there too. We had a lot of chores, went to Cartwright school, when I started school. That was on 59th Ave. and Thomas. And then we came back into the city. And it seemed that when we came back to the city my mother would get stricter with us. And I went to Wilson school on 24th St. and Henshaw, but its now called Buckeye Rd. And of course that airport has taken over, Sky Harbor airport. Then we went back to the ranch again for farming. I loved it 'cause it seemed like we were more free there. There were very many restrictions, then we got back to the city again.

Adrienne: So when it was like time to go to the farm, you guys just packed up and moved there?

Adeline: Yea, we just moved back over there.

Adrienne: And you were talking about your schools, do you remember any of your favorite classes or teachers?

Adeline: Yea, I remember Ms. Duncan she was out third grade teacher. She was my favorite teacher, strict, but she was nice. Mr. Cheek was my math teacher who failed me in fifth grade 'cause I did bad on my math. Of course my dad got mad at that 'cause he was good at math. Wilson school was a neat school.

Adrienne: What do you remember about your child hood friends.

Adeline: A lot I know and would ya believe I see a lot of them now. And one of them I have lunch with her every two months. Since fifth grade I've known her and that's when I went to Rio Vista School; when we moved to Phoenix south Broadway. And another friend that went to Wilson school that I knew in third grade became my neighbor years later where I live now. Her kids and my kids grew up together. And there is like a whole close-knit of that neighborhood that everybody grew up together. Of course everybody moved away now and I'm the only one family there. But we get together every once in a while which we're trying to plan now to get the neighborhood kids bad together again. And sometimes they come and visit so you know growing up and raising kids too that was neat.

Adrienne: Do you remember your friends back in school? Were they mainly Japanese-Americans or Chinese-Americans?

Adeline: I never paid attention to that really.

Adrienne: Do you remember any reactions from any people in your neighborhood that weren't Filipino-American.

Adeline: It was predominantly Mexican and we were the *mestizos* there. And uh we were called yellow-skin, slant-eyes. My dad was Catholic and my mom was raised Catholic and she decided to change her religion and we went down the street to this Baptist church and of course the neighborhood kids called us um ...something to do with the Bible. You know, Bible carrying people, something like that. But because my dad was a different nationality that's why they called us names. My dad would talk to us and tell us you know you're just as them, don't pay attention to it ignore it and which is always taught me all through my life.

Adrienne: Do you remember your parents having any kind of interactions like that with people their age.

Adeline: Yes, especially when my dad from the Philippines, he said he was treated really badly like he didn't know anything and my mom too.

Adrienne: When you think about growing in Arizona, what type of food comes to mind?

Adeline: People food? Hahaha. It either we had Filipino food or Mexican food, but more so Filipino food. And you know it was a variety anyway 'cause my mother would cook, but gear toward Filipino food because we always had either pig being butchered or a goat being killed. But there was always like the beans and the tortillas and all that's what we learned. In my family we all learned how to cook all those foods 'cause we were in the kitchens all the time.

Adrienne: And then away from what you would eat at home, do you remember the first thing you tasted that was Filipino or Mexican.

Adeline: I don't think we had that 'cause we were used to all varieties of food 'cause my mom and dad had a lot of friends that were different nationalities as we were growing up it seemed like we always had a lot of family and friends gathering and everybody would bring something. To me to go taste something different that wasn't around because we were always exposed to different kinds of cookings and foods.

Adrienne: What were some of your favorite foods.

Adeline: *Adobo* and *dinardaraan*¹, which I can't eat. My doctor tells me I can't eat it because he's my Filipino doctor 'cause I have cancer and I'm on chemo. And I said, "Do you still eat that?" and he said, "Adeline you know I'm a blood doctor." That was my favorite, and of course rice. Even though I only had two kids and my husband and I, we would use 100-pound sacks of rice up every three months. And now I'm by myself I just buy the little bags of rice.

Adrienne: What kind of activities did you all do at home as a family?

Adeline: As a family? We went on a lot of picnics. My mom and dad were really good about taking us out to the country, taking us for long rides. We lived in Glendale. Coming into Phoenix was a long ride 'cause Grand Avenue there was a lot of fruit stands, a lot of farm stands along the way. We would come and they would take us around the Biltmore to go look at things. That's one good thing about my mom and dad. Everywhere we went and if we traveled they always would take us to a zoo or to the beach or salted sea or somewhere. 'Cause my mom, especially mom, always felt the need to expose us to more as we were growing up.

Adrienne: And what responsibilities at home did you and your brothers and sisters have?

Adeline: Well I was the oldest of the six, so you know how that happens there. I was responsible for all the other brothers and sisters so a lot was expected from me, but then as they got older, they pitched in too. We all had to do our chores when we came home from school. Either feed the animals or help in the house and we did help with cooking. We were you know taught to cook. I was more interested in playing and my dad would stop me. I'd go through the kitchen and I don't know why I wasn't smart enough to not go through the kitchen. I would go through the kitchen then he'd stop me how to slice like celery in a certain way so it would look nice and things like that. And then my mom with her cooking too we all were all of us all my brothers and sisters we learned how to cook.

Adrienne: Do you remember if any of the responsibilities in the house were different for your brothers and between you and your sisters?

Adeline: No, everybody if especially brothers and sisters got into arguments, "OK you go into the back yard and you go into the front yard and clean the yard." It didn't matter if it was a boy or a girl. The boys mopped the floors as well as the girls and the boys did dishes as well as the girls. They helped with washing and hanging clothes 'cause in those days we didn't have dryers. Lucky you guys. But we all did. Either boys or the girls, brother or sister, we all did whatever was given to us.

Adrienne: Was David the youngest one?

Adeline: No David's four. He's the fourth one.

Adrienne: I remember he said that when he was younger for a while he didn't have to do anything.

¹ A stew made with pork with a gravy made of pig blood, garlic, chili, and vinegar.

Adeline: He didn't. For a while they don't, the younger ones. I think my sister, the one after him, I think she was expected to do more because she was a girl, but still then later you know, David got older. They're only about a year and a half apart.

Adrienne: And then, when you all went to the farms did you take all of the siblings with you?

Adeline: Oh yes.

Adrienne: And how old were you when you were first let to go with your dad?

Adeline: Let's see. I went to Cartwright when I was in second grade, so I must have been about seven, eight years old. But I think we lived on the farm for maybe three years something like that.

Adrienne: What were your responsibilities there?

Adeline: Oh when we'd come home from school we you know, like I said, we would feed the pigs and goats and the chickens. Of course we had things to do, chores we had to do. Well there was only three of us then 'cause David and Bobby, my brother, are seven years apart so there was only myself and Flora and Bobby. It seemed like the older one kind of got in to doing because the younger ones were too young, but then after a while they all started. You know when they got old enough they did what they were supposed to do.

Adrienne: Now could you describe a typical work day on the farm?

Adeline: On the farm? Typical work day ...

Adrienne: Like when you didn't have to go to school.

Adeline: I was gonna say I didn't think it was work.

Adrienne: Seemed like in those days you know whatever was supposed to be done, you did, and it was expected of you, but somehow know it was expected you just knew you were supposed to do it. 'Cause that what you know, you were taught and grew up with. Like I say feeding the chickens and getting eggs in the mornings and stuff like that and helping with cooking and cleaning and washing. I remember hanging clothes.

Adrienne: What crops were on the farm?

Adeline: Carrots, cantaloupes, watermelon um ...now what was there. Carrots, I know the carrots were big. Lettuce? I think it was lettuce. I know he had, my dad had part of the field, which was a very long, long garden. It was like rows and rows of a garden, but then you know neighbors would come and get vegetables 'cause I remember trying to chase the people away and I said they weren't supposed to do that and they said oh your dad let us. My dad would tell us everybody would share whatever. I know that the Japanese farmer down the road, he had strawberries. And when our school bus would break down, we would go in his farm and go get strawberries. He would chase us away all these kids, chases us away. But those were the kind of crops that I remember.

Adrienne: So you family had actually owned like a farm.

Adeline: They leased it, my dad leased it.

Adrienne: Do you remember who he leased it from?

Adeline: No. To this day I would like to find out, but I don't. And I keep forgetting to ask my mom about that.

Adrienne: and when you all would help with the vegetables, do you remember if they sold the produce and how they would get it to the market or whatever?

Adeline: They would get like tractors and great big trailers to put the vegetables in, but I never knew then where it went. I'm sure a shed somewhere, and I believe it might have been on Grand Avenue and it was Bodeen's vegetable sheds on like 35th Avenue in that area. That might have been where it had gone. Or in Glendale somewhere 'cause that was you know all together all the farms were close together. 'Cause we used to go a lot with my dad. He'd take us, even at night, during the night, to irrigate we used to go with him and help him irrigate.

Adrienne: During what occasions would you and your family get together with other Japanese-Americans or Mexican families?

Adeline: Constantly. Seemed like there was always some gathering, some party, some baptismal or just to get together it seemed like it. A birthday, we all had birthdays and I noticed we used to get these big boxes of butterfinger candy boxes, the almond mounds ...what were the other ones I used to like ...um ...Babe Ruths. They would bring us boxes of them. Of course all my dad's Filipino friends would give us money because they were all our uncles. We more uncles, everybody was our uncle. But there was a lot of, you know, get-togethers. Singing, our dads would put the kids together you know which one I think I knew which kids from each family sang better than another. Our side, our Leanios we liked doing that. But it was fun, I enjoyed a lot of those get-togethers, family get-togethers.

Adrienne: Were there any differences for special events, holidays?

Adeline: Yea Christmas. I remember the Christmases a lot. We would go to the Prince Hall and they would have Christmas party with a Santa Clause. Some of the kids, some of us would get together at um, what was it, Ray Capono's on 35th avenue and Garfield. I believed that's where they lived. It's across the street from Carl Hayden High School. And they would take us there and we would practice singing Christmas songs and it was a song that came on. I think it was Santa Clause is Coming to Town. And I said I knew that song. "Well you can sing it"[says the teacher] and I thought "OK." I didn't realize I was gonna be in front of a whole lot of people. And I must have been about five or six years old. I went out and I saw all these people and I got scared I guess, but I did sing. That's you know for Christmases that was what they would do a lot. And that one place was on; I believe it was on Fifth Street and Jefferson. Or Fourth Street and Jefferson and it was called Prince Hall.

Adrienne: Now did they ever teach you songs in Filipino?

Adeline: Yes. There was some that my dad he would sing we would learn how to sing them. I found a Filipino CD last year and there was some of them in there that I recognize a lot. 'Cause you know a lot of the Filipinos are gone a lot of our parents have Adelinet away. You don't get around other people that you hear this, songs like that, so I was really glad I found that cd.

Adrienne: Did you also speak the language at home?

Adeline: Yea my dad you know, a lot of their friends did Tagalog, they would speak Tagalog. But they were Ilocanos. My dad was Ilocano. You know you hear it and you kind of pick up some words. My mother was very good at picking up the language and she could, and she could speak it. I've lost it through the years now.

Adrienne: You don't keep up?

Adeline: No, you don't hear it.

Adrienne: But they didn't make you take like language schools?

Adeline: No they didn't, but I wished they had.

Adrienne: What is your earliest memory of attending church?

Adeline: Earliest? I guess when I was very young. I don't know how old 'cause there was always baptisms and we were always going to those. There was always a party afterwards.

Adrienne: Did you have a regular church that you went to?

Adeline: Yes, we did, when we were in Glendale yes we did. We went to a church over there, and it was a Christian church, and when we moved to Phoenix we started going to the Baptist church here. But then you know, we still went to the Catholic Church too, so whatever was going. I think when my mom changed we started going to the Baptist church.

Adrienne: At the church in Glendale was it mostly Mexican?

Adeline: It was mostly Mexican, it was a Mexican church. 'Cause my mom's friends they invited her to go there, so she started going there.

Adrienne: And the Baptist church in Phoenix? Was it also predominately Mexican?

Adeline: It was more like predominantly Anglo.

Adrienne: And then your mom's friends were the ones who invited you to go to that church right?

Adeline: Yes.

Adrienne: Aside from school and church and working on the farm, did you have any group activities that you participated in like dance or sports?

Adeline: I did when I was in school. I liked you know all kinds of things, clubs.

Adrienne: Was there any clubs that your parents were in?

Adeline: Yes they did. They belonged to the Filipino clubs. My mom belonged to um, there was a church, it was a old church, I think its Monroe and Third Avenue. A lot of the women used to get together and make baby clothes. 'Cause I remember my dad, we would take my mom drop her off and I'd see her from a window and she'd wave at us and we would drop her off there. Now, I tell my kids that's where your grandma used to go there and do that. A lot of her friends would get together. Filipino wives, I think they had a lot of gatherings together to do things. I think that was like their club.

Adrienne: Did your mom participate in those Filipino wives clubs.

Adeline: Oh yea.

Adrienne: Because just the men were Filipino or the women were Filipino too?

Adeline: No 'cause all of them you know just decided among themselves that oh we're gonna do this. They'd get together for different things.

Adrienne: Where were you when you first heard about the bombing of the Pearl Harbor?

Adeline: I was living in the ranch and I've been hearing that, I think 'cause we would always have a radio going on and that's when I heard it then. My dad talked to us about it.

Adrienne: What did you think about it when you heard it?

Adeline: I just would be, that young, I just thought we were going to be bombed too. They're gonna come over here too.

Adrienne: Do you remember your parents' reaction?

Adeline: No, it seemed like they were very quiet about it you know, but I believe that when they would all get together, you could tell then they were discussing about Pearl Harbor. Then there were discussions altogether. But with my mom and dad it was they would talk about it, but it was very quiet you know.

Adrienne: and do you think the war between U.S. and Japan affected your everyday life.

Adeline: No.

Adrienne: Did you ever hear about the relocations of the Japanese-Americans?

Adeline: At that time? No. I learned later.

Adrienne: Do you remember if the war affected like your community life? Did things change around here?

Adeline: I don't think so.

Adrienne: Do you remember any memories of specific treatment positive or negative based on your being Filipino-American?

Adeline: Yea, when we lived in this one neighborhood. That was the only time.

Adrienne: Who was the other groups that were living there?

Adeline: You mean neighbors? There was um, Mexican you know uh Mexican families. My mom's family like I said lived in Florence and she had aunts and uncles and cousins there and my mom and my dad and we would go over there to go visit them, but my dad couldn't go in their houses 'cause he was Filipino and there was one of my mom's aunt, Carlota was her name and she like she was the head of the whole group and she was the one that make the decisions you know. She didn't want him there because he was a different nationality. My mom would go in and visit with them, but my dad, and uh there were three of us then, we would, the three older ones, we would go to the park or he would take us to a ice cream parlor 'cause I remember that name. It would say ice cream parlor and he would take us to get an ice cream and take us to the park. Then we would go pick up my mom. And then my mom decided, if they not gonna accept you know, her whole family, she didn't wanna go there any more. My dad always encouraged her to go and visit them. And its only not too far away. So she kinda has a resentment there with that. She says she doesn't, but I know she does. But actually those were the only times I remember growing up.

Adrienne: That you had to ever deal with something like that?

Adeline: mmhmm.

Adrienne: Can we go back and talk about the house that you lived in? And can I have the address again of the first one?

Adeline: 2010 East Lincoln.

Adrienne: And do you remember when it was built or was it already.

Adeline: It was there already.

Adrienne: You said its not there any more?

Adeline: No.

Adrienne: And do you remember what years you all lived there?

Adeline: I'm trying to think of that. I knew we moved from there when I was in fifth grade. Uh I think I only lived there til I was nine years old. Then we moved to 318 West Pueblo, which my mother still has that house there now. My sister lives in it.

Adrienne: Ok that ones still standing. Does it still look the way it was when your first moved to it on Pueblo.

Adeline: A little bit different, but it's the red brick houses 'cause all of those houses on Pueblo and Riverside where kinda like red brick houses were built and they were built like in the forties.

Adrienne: Do you remember any that your father had in the house that was specifically Filipino or Asian? Any decorations?

Adeline: No. Not really. I have for my collection. I got one right here. And I looked at the label and it says made in the Philippines. And my doctor noticed it when I used it the other day. He says "where did you go? You go to the Philippines?" I said no.

Adrienne: Can you describe the neighbor hood that the house was in.

Adeline: Uh it was. The neighborhood we had a Chinese family next to us and then there was Anglo family. It was a mixture. Mexican family and we were the mixture there. And then the one I told you about, the one I knew since fifth grade and we get together for lunch every two months now. We lived across the street and there were seven in her family and there was six of us.

Adrienne: So there was a lot of kids in your neighbor hood?

Adeline: There were a lot of kids in our neighborhood.

Adrienne: Do you have any more questions?

Isa: Was there any specific like places you guys used to go as far as like special places to eat or you know, was there any?

Adeline: When growing up, I don't think we went to a lot of restaurants in that time. With farming we were always busy, but and there was a lot of get-togethers and everybody provided. We traveled a lot. We'd go to New Mexico when my dad worked there. We went to California and come back to Arizona growing up. Even after I got married, then still my younger brothers and sisters would travel with my mom and dad to California to pick grapes. To Delano to Bakersfield, Fresno, I'm sure David remembers a lot of that. Um, but we did a lot of traveling. They took us every time we go somewhere they'd take us to places that parks or to see kinda to go and look at. David and I said I'm glad they did that. And pointed out things to us and you know in different states. It was neat when we traveled. It was hard in one car.

Adrienne: Six of you guys.

Adeline: I know and then one of your brothers wants to lay across the whole backseat sleep and no room. That was Bobby my brother.

Adrienne: Since your family did travel so much, why do you think they came back to Phoenix.

Adeline: It was their home, home ground or home base. We would go to New Mexico and they would rent houses there. I think we did that for ten years and I mean, my kids got older and I would go over there, my husband I, and take them 'cause my grandfather, he was Filipino too, and we would go visit him in New Mexico. And I'd point out to my kids well I lived in this house and that house this house and that. "Mom you lived everywhere." Well I said yea every time we go we'd live in a different house and in California we'd do that too. And it was neat 'cause we go to know a lot of neighbors and it was a small town then. This was before the uranium in New Mexico got big. Carrots that's what my dad would go work over there in the carrots.

Adrienne: And you grandfather, do you remember when he came?

Adeline: My grandfather Salvador, he I believe he might have came about same time my dad came in the thirties. And uh it was neat. In fact he adopted my mother when she was about twelve years old. 'Cause her parents, her mother died when she was twelve years old she was the oldest of five and there two sisters and three brothers. The aunts got the brothers and adopted out the sisters. And my grandfather which I'm glad he did he adopted, he was Filipino. Him and Mary adopted my mom.

Adrienne: So that might have been why she picked up the language.

Adeline: That's how she met my dad, 'cause my dad would go visit my grandfather. And uh that's how she met my dad.

Isa: Do you remember any stories? Did you father ever tell you about the Philippines?

Adeline: Yes, a lot. The Philippines, when the Japanese came, about how he grew up there and why he came over here because there was a lot of you know, not much for them going on for him to see like a future. And that's why a lot of them came over here 'cause it was you know, 'cause they were farmers. A lot of them and they came for that reason, they came for farming. In that book it tells you and that magazine tells you about that. Its so funny 'cause you're reading it and I thought this was all the stuff my dad was telling me.

Isa: Did he ever talk to you about his own childhood growing up?

Adeline: Yea, he had four sisters and was the only boy in the family, the only brother, so I don't now you know, who's left over there or if his sisters. They used to contact each other when my dad was here, but then I guess later years, you know you lose contact. But yea, it seemed his childhood was good, but as he got older you know into like working. There wasn't much for them to do. Then the Japanese came in 'cause he would tell me what the Japanese would do to the people. Torturing, and yes, like his aunt and an uncle, cut the ears off or the thumbs off they wanted to know where the young me were hiding. Wanted to know if they had ammunition, rifles and they'd go into villages you know.

Adrienne: Your father and your grandfather would you say they were really close.

Adeline: There might have been brothers that came, but my dad came with a lot of friends a lot of them I guess got together at that time and they were able through the government, they were able to come here. And a lot of them, if they were from the same villages or from the same towns, they seemed like those people got closer, but then you know everybody found out they were all coming from the same country.

Adrienne: What would you want your grandchildren and great grandchildren to know about you.

Adeline: Oh and I'm trying to write something now for them. Gotta get started I just thought about that. Like my kids ask my grandsons, you know, or my daughter will tell my grandson, 'cause I have grandsons only, no granddaughters, and uh one of them, the oldest is twenty-one and nineteen and the youngest is nine. And Lydia especially we'll tell them about when she was growing up, you know as she was growing up and things that I would tell her and then I'd tell them too, you know things about what I did then compared what we went through growing up compared to you what you have it so easy now. And compare then when I was growing up things were less expensive compared to now you know a house apartments weren't as expensive. We thought they were expensive, but now a house to rent an apartment is very high. My grandson, the 19 year old, asks me a lot of questions about that. But you know I wanna write something to leave with them about me growing up. I enjoyed it, I had fun. They were very strict though, but now I think it was OK, 'cause then I was strict with my kids too and my husband was too. And my daughter, especially my daughter, my son too, but Lydia she, "Yea grandma and grandpa were very strict."

Adrienne: What would you consider to be a defining moment in your life that made you who you are today?

Adeline: The way my mom grew up and what she had to go through and as a young person and then my dad always talking to us about life. Don't let things bother you as much. He'll always just go "you're just as the next person." 'Cause when people would treat us bad you know and he'd found out about it. He'd always sit us and talk to us about it because he went through the same thing they both did. Both parents you know went through the same thing. And they just tried to make it better for us and by talking to us about it, the situation actually. And I still do that with my kids and my kids do that with their kids. Or my daughter does, 'cause my son doesn't have kids. And they do too.

Adrienne: How would you like to be remembered?

Adeline: Well I am remember now 'cause I'm a former teacher and I have a lot of kids, students that remember me and a lot of these that are older, have kids they're my daughter's friends and their sons are my grandsons' friends. 'Cause they're you know, in high school and all And uh I think I'll be remembered in a lot of ways.

Adrienne: What school did you teach at?

Adeline: Roosevelt School District. I went to Rio Vista School fifth grade to eighth grade then went to South Mountain High school then went back to Rio Vista School to teach and it was the same principal that became my boss.

Adrienne: Can you think of any questions that we didn't answer or things you just want us to know?

Adeline: Life is good. To me life is good, it just depends on your attitude and everything. Its not because I got sick, but I've always had that from my parents, you know from both of them. What they went through and I'm thinking you just kinda think about it and analyze what they went through and what your life is at the time. And you think yours isn't so bad, but it could be better, its just how you take it every day. And my kids are like that too. Like I say my daughter especially with her boys.

Adrienne: I noticed that between interviewing and your brother David that your life like it may have been hard because you were working on a farm and everything, but the way you talk about it doesn't seem like it was hard.

Adeline: I gotta give my brother a hug. I love my brother. He comes and has coffee with me sometimes. These two days he hasn't been there so.

Adrienne: Yea he invited us to come to his house for dinner.

Adeline: Did you give him your phone numbers and all?

Adrienne: mmhmm.

Adeline: Oh good.

Adrienne: I guess at this point we're going to end the session and just like to thank you very much for sharing memories and thoughts with us.

[end of interview]

LEE SAKATA.

Interviewed by Krystin Yee
25 October 2006

Krystin: Can you state your name and do I have permission to audio and videotape this interview?

Lee: My name is Lee Sakata and Krystin has permission to video and audio, whatever.

Krystin: Where were you born?

Lee: Born in San Martin, California.

Krystin: And when did your family move to the United States?

Lee: My mom is born here in 1906. My dad was born in Hawaii in 1900 and moved back to Japan when he was about ten and when he was thirteen he came to the U.S.

Krystin: Where did he come into?

Lee: He came into Los Angeles.

Krystin: Did he have any problems getting back here?

Lee: No.

Krystin: Do you know when your grandparents came over?

Lee: No. I have no idea.

Krystin: When did your family come to Phoenix?

Lee: We came to camp during World War II in the summer of '42 and after the war was over we moved to Glendale, that was Sept. 6, 1945.

Krystin: Where in Glendale were you?

Lee: We moved to Tanita Farms. My dad worked for them.

Krystin: Do you know where that was located?

Lee: 43rd Avenue and Peoria.

Krystin: How old were you when you moved out here?

Lee: I was seven years old when I got to the camp. During the war we had to move after the war started, we had to move fifty miles inland because that was the boundary for all Japanese. We couldn't be near the coast, so we moved to Walnut Grove, California. After Walnut Grove, they finally told us we had to go to camp. And that's when we moved to Arizona.

Krystin: Did you have any choice?

Lee: No. We packed one bag and leave, that's all.

Krystin: How was that experience?

Lee: For me it was a lot of fun, because I was seven years old. Got to ride a train all the way to Arizona.

Krystin: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Lee: Yeah, I got three brothers and one sister.

Krystin: How old were they when this happened?

Lee: Gosh, I don't know. One brother is 6 years older, another brother is 7, my sister was about 9 years older than I am and I have one brother who is a year and a half younger.

Krystin: How did your parents feel?

Lee: They never talked about the war very much. They hardly said anything about it.

Krystin: How long were you in the camps?

Lee: '42 to '45.

Krystin: Where were the camps located?

Lee: Just south of Chandler, right off the I-10 Freeway.

Krystin: What made your family decide to go to Tanita Farm.

Lee: My brother was sick. He had kidney problems. We found a doctor who was with the 100th Battalion, he decided to take care of my brother. That's why we stayed here in Arizona.

Krystin: And you just never left after that?

Lee: Nope.

Krystin: How is growing up on the farm?

Lee: It was all right. Hated it. [laughs] Didn't like farming.

Krystin: What kind of farm was it?

Lee: Little truck farm. Dad used to work for Tanita, then he started farming on his own in 1950.

Krystin: What kind of products?

Lee: Green onions, radish, just various vegetables, little truck farming. I think he was one of the first ones to grow bok choy and ga-toy here in the valley and sell it at the market.

Krystin: Do you know what markets they sold to?

Lee: Williams Produce and Eddie Basha and Safeway and everybody down at the local market.

Krystin: How big was the farm?

Lee: Only had twenty acres.

Krystin: And then your dad bought some land?

Lee: [inaudible] All the brothers they left. Nobody wanted to farm.

Krystin: When did your dad take over?

Lee: Take over what?

Krystin: When did he start farming?

Lee: 1950, he started farming on his own.

Krystin: And you just stayed there and worked on the farm the whole time?

Lee: I stayed there until '55 then I went into the Marine Corp.

Krystin: What did you do on the farm? Like what were some chores?

Lee: Just helping, drive the tractor, go to the produce market and all that.

Krystin: And you went into the Marines in 1955?

Lee: Yeah, '55 to '59.

Krystin: What made you want to enroll?

Lee: I didn't want to farm. [laughs].

Krystin: That's a good reason.

Lee: I lost my wallet, so I had go and get a new draft card. So they were drafting people then, so I thought I'd just join the Marine Corp.

Krystin: What did you do when you got back?

Lee: I got out and stayed in California for a while.

Krystin: Where in California?

Lee: Los Angeles. Did landscaping work with my cousin. Got tired of that and came back here.

Krystin: What year did you come back?

Lee: I came back in '60. I stayed there a year. Got out in '59 and end of '60 I came back here. Then I started farming with another kid. We farmed about two, three years.

Krystin: In Glendale?

Lee: Yeah, we farmed in Glendale for a while.

Krystin: Do you know where that was?

Lee: On 43rd Avenue and Northern. Had a farm there.

Krystin: Going back to when you were younger -- where did you go to school?

Lee: Went to Washington Grammar School on 19th Avenue and Northern. That was in 1945.

Krystin: Where did you go to middle school or high school?

Lee: High school went to Glendale High School in 1948 to '52.

Krystin: Were there a lot of other Japanese there too?

Lee: There were about four kids the same age. They all farmed too. None of them liked farming either.

Krystin: But you went back to it after you came back.

Lee: Yeah, but I didn't like it.

Krystin: What did you farm when you came back?

Lee: Same thing, produce.

Krystin: Besides school when you were younger, did you do anything else beside farming and school?

Lee: No. Mostly about camp, I grew up in camp. It was a lot of fun in camp, because I was a kid. I just remember playing a lot.

Krystin: Did they have school in camp?

Lee: Oh yeah. I was in first grade when the war broke out. I went to 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade in camp.

Krystin: How many kids were in the school? Like how was the school set up?

Lee: In camp?

Krystin: Yes.

Lee: There was all Japanese. [laughs].

Krystin: Really.

Lee: But, I think it was in the home state, there were 33,000 Japanese in camp here. Two different camps. One in Poston, one in Gila. But it was nice. Most of the teachers were Caucasian.

Krystin: Was it like a real school house?

Lee: Oh yes. Regular school.

Krystin: So your grade had your own classroom and everything?

Lee: Oh yeah. 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade. They had everything -- high school.

Krystin: Same as outside?

Lee: Right.

Krystin: What else did you do in camp?

Lee: Just play, go to movies -- movies were 3 cents or 5 cents for a good movie. That was all just play everyday.

Krystin: What was a good movie?

Lee: Well all I remember is a lot of war movies they use to show us. [laughs] We used to root for - it's funny when I look back now -- I remember watching Wake Island -- maybe that was a five-cent movie. Wake Island everybody knows that the Japanese took Wake Island after while. When we were winning there for a while, all the kids would shout and yell, because the Americans were winning, but I guess all the old folks didn't figure that way. It's funny in the service in 1958 my engineering master sergeant was captured at Wake Island. He was a private then. And my commanding officer of my squad was captured at Wake Island also -- a major. It was just funny that most of them were captured at Wake Island. I just remembered that movie.

Krystin: What else?

Lee: In camp?

Krystin: Yes.

Lee: Playing that's all, having fun. Even after the war, my dad never talked about the camp, never.

Krystin: Was that just the older generation?

Lee: I think the older, but I don't know what it was, but he would never talk about the camp.

Krystin: Did you guys have organized sports there, teams?

Lee: Well, I remember my mother they used to have coffees about once a week. They'd go to different people's rooms. We lived in barracks. So they'd go to a different barrack and have coffee with somebody. About once a week. All the ladies. I guess a bunch of little old bags would come over and have coffee.

Krystin: And the kids were all running?

Lee: Yeah, we just running around. Had no place to go.

Krystin: Wasn't that really hot?

Lee: It was hot. It wasn't hard on us. Hard on the old folks. I never thought about the old folks.

Krystin: Was there a church there?

Lee: Yeah, church, Buddhist church, Christian church. They had all kinds of activities. They had regular sports and all the older people had sports. They had baseball. Baseball was real popular there.

Right now one of the wooden home plates that was in Butte Camp is on tour with the major league. I think they have a traveling exhibit and it's with the Major League Baseball Association, traveling around the United States.

Krystin: The home plate from your camp?

Lee: Wooden home plate.

Krystin: Did you go to church?

Lee: In camp? No. [laughs] Just after camp.

Krystin: What church did you go?

Lee: I went to the Methodist church. When we lived at Tanita Farms, Shig Tanita was real religious so he used to make us go to church.

Krystin: Where was the Methodist church?

Lee: Methodist church I think was on 43rd Avenue and Indian School.

Krystin: So everything right around ...

Lee: Right.

Krystin: Were there a lot of Japanese in that area?

Lee: No, not too many. The Japanese population wasn't that big here.

Krystin: So everyone kind of went back.

Lee: There was a group out in Mesa and Tempe, I think the west side in Glendale area. Everybody knew everybody then, not like now.

Krystin: What kind of stuff did you do after camp -- what kind of activities would you do with other Japanese or just in general? Like during school.

Lee: I just didn't do anything. Just went to school, hang out and go to a movie or something. Didn't do much.

Krystin: Did your parents do anything like Women's clubs?

Lee: No, they just mostly took care of the farm. There really were no clubs or anything in those days. The only thing there was was JACL. My brother was active in JACL, but not my folks, no.

Krystin: What's your brother's name?

Lee: John.

Krystin: Where were you when you first heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

Lee: I was in school. They made us go home. [laughs].

Krystin: What was your reaction?

Lee: My reaction, I really did have one. I was only what, six years old. They just told us to go home. I didn't know what happened.

Krystin: What did your parents say?

Lee: They were all worried. They just made us stay inside the house. A few days later one of our friends got shot. We all stayed home. Couldn't go to school anymore. When we first moved inland, when dad put us on a truck and moved to Walnut Grove and that was about sixty to seventy miles inland. Hauled our stuff on a truck and moved there. And like I said, we stayed

there until the order came that we had to move to camp. The dividing line was Grand Avenue out here. I guess you know where Grand Avenue is. That was the dividing line and everybody west of the Grand Avenue had to go to camp. People on this side didn't have to. Tanitas were on this side of Grand Avenue. But I had a bunch of friends who lived on the other side. They weren't too happy about it.

Krystin: How soon after Pearl Harbor did you guys move out to Walnut Grove?

Lee: Just about a little over a month.

Krystin: Was there a lot of prejudice toward you during that month? Like you said no school.

Lee: Oh yeah. We couldn't go to school anymore. My dad gave all his stuff to this one Caucasian family and just told him to keep it. If we get out, we'd get out, if we don't, we don't. He used to raise onion seed for [inaudible], he had a hundred-acre farm and we used to raise some strawberries too. So all his harvesting equipment and trucks, tractors, he just left. I think after the war he got about \$300 reimbursed. Then we got that \$20,000 I don't know what year it was, '80s or something like that from Reagan. Since they were dead, they got nothing. The only people who got the \$20,000 were survivors that's all.

Krystin: How did the war affect community life? Like in Walnut Grove -- how did your parents react within the community?

Lee: Like I said, I don't really know how my mother or father felt because they never, never talked about the war.

Krystin: About the bombing of Hiroshima and Nakasaki?

Lee: They never talked about that, never.

Krystin: Do you remember hearing about it?

Lee: I remember hearing about the bomb, but I learned later in school about the A-bomb. But when it actually happened, I don't know. All I know is September, they say we will leave. Then two days later I started grammar school out here. I went to Washington Grammar School.

Krystin: Was there any prejudice against you at Washington?

Lee: Just once. Somebody started making fun of me, but another Caucasian kid went over there and told him to shut up. I'll never forget his name -- George Peters. That was in 6th grade. I'll never forget his name.

Krystin: How old were you?

Lee: That was in 1945, I was ten years old.

Krystin: Do you have any other memories of being affected positively or negatively by being an Asian American?

Lee: No. [laughs]. I know there's prejudice. Even today a lot of Japanese, I think you could hit them in the face and they'll look the other way and say it never happened.

Krystin: Why do you think that is?

Lee: Because I see that all the time. I see it a lot.

Krystin: Why do you think they do that?

Lee: They're in denial. Even when my wife she went with another lady -- I think she worked for the city or something, I forgot, the housing -- to see if there was prejudice. And they would go and try to rent an apartment and some would accept them, some would say they are filled up. Things like that because they don't want them, even though they have a vacancy, they 'll just say they're filled. I was at a JAACL meeting and I was telling them. These ladies said "No, that doesn't happen." Even today to this day, a lot of the Japanese ladies there they don't believe it happens. I'm sure it happens in Chinese culture too or any Asian culture. I know a lot of people from abroad. They said, "There's no such thing as prejudice here." A lot of them don't understand what prejudice is.

Krystin: Do you think that your family, your friends or you were treated differently? Like maybe when you moved back or when you got out of the camps, people were like more gentle or walked on eggshells or anything?

Lee: No, I don't think so. I was still young yet. As you grow older, you look back and say, Yeah it happened. At that time you don't know because you're so [expletive] young.

Krystin: Looking back what do you think of, what stands out for you?

Lee: Well, you look at different things that happened. You say, "that guy is kind of prejudice toward you or things they say to you or whatever." You don't realize it at that time being so young.

Krystin: Can you described the first time that you recognized you were Asian American -- that you weren't like the same as everyone else?

Lee: I think I knew that right out of camp. [laughs] I knew. People didn't like us. I think I knew that right away. Even though I was young. That's one thing I knew. We were different.

Krystin: Did that make you act differently, do you think?

Lee: I don't think so, no. I was with my friends, three other kids of my own age. I don't think it bothered us.

Krystin: Race wasn't an issue?

Lee: No. We had this one Caucasian friend. We'd always go to his house. He was just like one of us.

Krystin: Did you guys have a house on the farm?

Lee: Yeah.

Krystin: Separate from the Tanitas?

Lee: Right.

Krystin: How big was it?

Lee: It wasn't that big, about three bedrooms.

Krystin: Your three brothers and sister were all living there?

Lee: No, my sister wasn't here. She was already married. She got married right after camp.

Krystin: Just you and your three brothers. Did the Tanitas build it or did you guys have it built?

Lee: No, the Tanitas had it built. It was there so we just lived there.

Krystin: Do you remember what it looked like at all?

Lee: Not anymore. Just a house.

Krystin: How long did you live there?

Lee: About four years, three and a half years and then we moved.

Krystin: Where did you move to?

Lee: Right on near Northern and 43rd Avenue. There was a little farm. Dad rented a farm there. When he started farming, then we moved.

Krystin: Did you have any trouble getting that place?

Lee: No.

Krystin: Did you rent or own it?

Lee: Rent.

Krystin: Did you guys own any other property?

Lee: No.

Krystin: Anything else you'd like to talk about?

Lee: No. [laughs].

Krystin: All right. Well thank you for doing the interview.

Lee: I just drive my wife around now, that's all. She does all the stuff.

Krystin: But people want to talk to you, too.

Lee: I didn't do anything.

[end of interview]

MADELINE ONG SAKATA

Interviewed by Krystin Yee
25 October 2006

Krystin: This is an interview with Madeline Sakata. Do I have your permission to tape your interview?

Madeline: Yes.

Krystin: Can you state your name and its spelling.

Madeline: My name is Madeline Ong- Sakata.

Krystin: When were you born?

Madeline: December 24, 1937.

Krystin: Where were you born?

Madeline: Phoenix, Arizona.

Krystin: Do you know when your parents came here? Or your grandparents, whoever came here first.

Madeline: My grandfather was in Hawaii. And then my father came to the United States I think in 1912, not sure, but I have documentation when he came. I can turn that in. He arrived at Angel Island in San Francisco and then he went to San Francisco and could not learn English and so they told him to come to Phoenix. That he could probably learn English in Phoenix, so he did. He came to Phoenix to learn English. Stayed with his uncle. Worked in his uncle's store. His uncle didn't want him to go to school, so he went to work for a laundry man. I don't know who it was, but it was in Chinatown, like where the Arena is, where the Phoenix Suns Arena is. He went to school and worked in the laundry and slept in the back room of the laundry mat.

Krystin: How old was he?

Madeline: He was, I'm trying to remember, I can only remember that he was eleven when he came here. I'm presuming that he got older before he went on his own and worked in the Laundromat, because he was going to Phoenix Union High School. He first went to Monroe School. You know where that is. It's still there. And I don't know where he was living then. I can only presume that he was living with his uncle because he was still young. And by the time he went to Phoenix Union he was living in the Laundromat. But he finished Phoenix Union in two years. He only went to Monroe School for a little while, because he was much older than the other kids. So he skipped grades. He always had a love of teachers and education. Because when he was in Monroe school, teachers took him in, and taught him English, and gave him special lessons -- tutoring. So he's always had a special place in his heart for ... This one teacher, Mrs. Sheldon, I remember when we were driving to Los Angeles, we had to stop in San Fernando Valley to visit her. So he always remembered her. Because she helped him a lot.

He graduated from Phoenix Union and he won an essay contest. I still have the essay too. And he didn't have a coat. You needed to have a jacket to wear. So the laundry man, the owner, lent him \$20. He was going to win \$20 gold piece that was the prize. And he told the Laundromat guy, "If you get me a coat, I'll give you my prize." So he did that. I still have his essay. And I still have the certificate that he won.

Krystin: What was the essay on?

Madeline: The essay was about -- even to this day, it's something about the "highways to the skies." Even today it's difficult subject. But I have it. What's amazing is that he wrote this essay in English of course and he didn't know any English when he came here and he won the essay for the state.

Krystin: How long after he came here did he win it?

Madeline: He was nineteen.

Krystin: And he came over when he was ...

Madeline: Like eleven or twelve, but he didn't know any English. So here he learned all that English ... He came here -- after high school he was houseboy to Governor Campbell. He needed a job. So Governor and Mrs. Campbell took my father in as a house boy. At that time he lived in Tucson, the governor lived in Tucson. Mrs. Campbell took my father under her wing and taught him English, better English and manners. And taught him American manners and taught him -- he used to read the newspaper to her to practice. She would quiz him on world affairs and things like that and so would the governor.

Krystin: How did he meet them?

Madeline: I don't know. It's a good question. I don't know he met them unless ... There was somebody in my father's life named Mr. and Mrs. Kent and I don't know if they were like neighbors or who they were, but I don't know how he met them. That's a good question. I never did ask him. He was always in our life. I always knew him. Governor Campbell died and his wife -- we use to go visit his wife. She was in a home. And then my father kept in touch with the children. I think they are all gone now.

Krystin: How long was he with the mayor?

Madeline: Then my father, he must have worked there because somewhere along the way he got married to my mother. So I don't know when he stopped working for the Campbells. But they were always in his life and then his auntie decided that he needed to get married. So she sent to China for a picture bride. And so my mother's uncle said there is a man we want you to meet. If you don't like him, you can come back. [laughs] So they sent my mother out here and she was sixteen. And she met my father and they got married. But with one promise -- they promised each other -- he promised that he would bring her sister and brother to the United States. And she promised that she would help him go to school. I don't know if he wanted to become a lawyer yet, but help him go to school, help them better their lives here. And so they promised each other that. It really did happen. By the time I was very young, my uncle was brought here, and my aunt was brought here. My mother worked in the grocery store. My father went to college. When he went to Phoenix College, I don't think he was married to my mother then. I don't remember that. He did go to Phoenix College and he did graduate from there. By then after that he was married to my mother. They owned a grocery store.

Krystin: What grocery store?

Madeline: It was a grocery store. The building is still there. It's one 13th Street and Jefferson.

Krystin: Do you know what corner?

Madeline: It's -- can you stop that a minute. I'm going to look at an address. You asked me about the essay. The essay was the "Relation of Chemistry to the Home."

Krystin: Hot topic.

Madeline: You asked me where my father's building was, it was 1244 East Jefferson. And here is a picture of his law office. That was right next to his grocery store -- same building.

Krystin: Did he build it or was it there?

Madeline: No, I think he bought it. That actually was their second or third property. Because they had a grocery store and parents had a grocery store someplace on Van Buren and then they moved again. The only one I knew was the one on 13th Street and Jefferson. And my father had a restaurant behind the grocery store. Behind the restaurant was where we lived. And by the time I grew up the restaurant -- there was no more restaurant and we lived behind the store until I was in third grade.

Krystin: So how big was the building or is the building?

Madeline: It was a pretty nice size building. As I remember it seemed pretty big. It was big enough for our home in the back, a kitchen and I remember hall way, a living room and I think two or three bedrooms. So it was a pretty good size.

Krystin: How big was the store in front?

Madeline: I guess is medium size compared to today, like a 7-11. But it was big enough to add a law office next door.

Krystin: So he split it up?

Madeline: No, they either added it on or maybe it was a storage. Actually it looks like it was part of that. My uncle was very handy. He was able to build. I always remember my uncle building things.

Krystin: The uncle that they brought over?

Madeline: Yes, my mother's brother.

Krystin: What was his name?

Madeline: His name was Benjamin Wong. He died about five years ago. He used to own the Jade Palace on 12th Street and Northern. It's called the Super Dragon now. That used to be my uncle. And my aunt is still alive. She lives in Casa Grande and she married one of the Don family. So she is still alive.

Krystin: Good to hear. So this building is still where his law office is?

Madeline: It's still there. I believe the outer part of the building is there, but I don't know -- at one time it was a church -- I don't think it's a grocery store anymore. I haven't been there for a long time.

Krystin: How did your dad buy it? Wasn't there restrictions ...

Madeline: Not then.

Krystin: What year was it?

Madeline: It must have been -- this was what -- 1943 -- that's when he graduated from law school in 1943 and he already had this store.

Krystin: He had no problem buying it?

Madeline: I guess not. I just remember -- for that particular time when they bought things, I don't think there were any restrictions, because I don't remember them talking about it. Later on certain properties had to be brought in other people's names and sold to you. I think restrictions were allowed. I think if a seller wanted to sell it to you, you could buy it. I think that is how it worked. But if somebody -- but you can check that out. Because I don't remember my father having any problems buying anything. I never heard him talk about it. I do know that when we were growing up and I was like a sophomore in high school and we were looking for a home, because my dad moved to San Francisco when I was in the 5th or 6th grade ...

Krystin: Just your dad?

Madeline: No, all of us. The whole family moved. We lived there for -- 6th grade until I was a senior in high school. And then we moved back here. My father ran for the senate when we moved back here. So he was looking for a home to buy. And I recall as a teenager, "Oh daddy, buy this one." I remember that he never told me why we couldn't buy anything in the Phoenix Country Club, because you couldn't. Because the deeds were restricted to just I think white people. Those were deed restrictions. It didn't matter whether the seller wanted to sell it to you, but it was actually the deed that you couldn't sell it to minorities. But I didn't know that. For some reason your parents want to protect you. I think if I had known that, I would have been like -- flabbergasted -- I don't know what I would have thought. I didn't know any of those kind of things. A lot of my friends said, "You didn't know that people didn't like us?" I said, "No, I didn't." Because I was very fortunate, I never had anybody make fun of me.

Krystin: Never faced any prejudice?

Madeline: No, isn't that weird. And I don't know why. I never thought about it and it never happened to me. Some people said you were kind of like sheltered. And I said I went to Emerson School, which is still there on 7th Street and Palm Lane. If you go down 7th street the school going south is on the left side above McDowell. It's called Emerson School.

Krystin: Was it a private school?

Madeline: No, it was a public school. The Goldwater children went there. All my father's friends, at that time my father was in the legislature, so we knew a lot of the Udalls, the Goldwaters, those were his colleagues and their children went there.

Krystin: So it was a nicer area?

Madeline: It was very nice. We lived right there on 7th Street and Windsor. It was called Orm Avenue at the time right on the corner. Right now it's a nursery, pre-school, day care school right now. We lived there and that's why I went to Emerson School and then I went to North High. I didn't know a lot of prejudice.

Anyway I didn't know that there was such a thing that we couldn't buy a house in the country club or certain places. I think that restriction lasted quite a long time. I don't think it was too long ago -- a lot of time has passed, maybe thirty years, I don't know. You can look in the history when they lifted all of that. When it was against the law to not sell to Asians.

Krystin: I wonder if they would actually have that like in public records.

Madeline: I think so. People know about that. You know who is a good one -- Doctor Uchinagasawa. He's a good one to ask. He studied all that stuff. He wrote my father's biography. And he wrote the book *Summer Wind*. He used to teach at ASU. He's retired now, but I think he's still around.

Krystin: What's your dad's biography called?

Madeline: *Summer Wind*. The reason Dr. Nagasawa called it *Summer Wind*, as he said, my father reminded him of those dust devils that come in Arizona and make a flurry. His life was like a flurry. He said that's what my father reminded him of. When he wrote the book, he interviewed all of the children and he went to all of the places, the state capital, he interviewed my father's friends. He took a sabbatical to write the book. So it had to be really factual, so he did a lot of research before he wrote it. So he knows a lot of things about my dad. He went through all my dad's papers. So he knows about this restriction thing. He interviewed me and said, "You didn't know that about your father."

"No, I didn't." But I do remember one thing about my father that I want everybody to know -- my father never said a derogatory word about any race. I never heard him say anything derogatory about any ethnic group. When I grew up, I didn't know the words for -- the bad words for other people. It wasn't until I was eighteen and we had a restaurant -- that I didn't know that some people didn't like Jews, some people didn't like Jewish people. I didn't know and why. And so when I look back, I think "wow, my father ..." And not a lot of people can say that. My father never said anything bad about anybody in that way -- about their race or culture. He never said anything like that. So we kind of grew up ... And of course, my mother, I mean she was so gentle, she never said anything about anybody. [laughs]

Growing up with my father in the political ... because my father was raised by Governor Campbell and then he became -- Governor Campbell was a republican, but my father was a democrat. And my father told Governor Campbell, "I'm going to be a democrat." And Governor Campbell said, "That's your choice." And he told him why. Well, you know why -- democrats are for the social etc. So we've always -- that's been the way of life. I always thought everybody knew about democrats and republicans and I thought everybody sat around the dinner table and licked envelopes and campaigned. I didn't know that other people didn't do that, because we grew up that way. We sat around the dinner table and folded letters that you send out. My dad used to walk the neighborhood and put out flyers. I thought everybody did that.

Even when we had children, my children used to put rubber bands on pot holders to put them on the door knobs. So we all grew up doing that. So I was always surprised after I grew up, I was surprised that other people didn't know about politics, didn't know about Republicans, Democrats, caucus, etc. So it was kind of a rude awakening, wow, I didn't know that we were, not different, that we grew up with politics always around and to understand it. Which, I think we're lucky that we were able to do that.

Krystin: Because not a lot of people probably did back then or even now.

Madeline: And another thing I learned was with the children, like after we moved to San Francisco and my father practiced federal law there and then we came back here and my father ran for the Senate. He lost the first time and he won the second time. And we all pitched in again to campaign. And then he got sick in '75, because he died in '77. He got sick and couldn't do anything, so he retired totally and went to San Francisco.

But we moved to San Francisco and came back here and my mother opened a restaurant. My father ran for the Senate, so they were pretty busy. And I finished my senior at North High. So Wing's Restaurant was just about three or four blocks from North High. It was 16th and Thomas. North High is on like 12th Street and Thomas. At lunch we used to walk -- I used to walk to lunch, sometimes.

It was really funny, and your dad knows Jack Wing. Jack Wing now is gone. He used to go to school with us too and he used to say, "Let's go to my dad's place." It was Wing's Restaurant right there.

In fact we would tell everybody that that's his dad. We would go to lunch there. It was a fun time. Because my mother opened the restaurant, opened Wing's restaurant, ran Wing's restaurant, my dad opened a law office on top of the restaurant again. This time they built it. They built it on property that my father had acquired for years. It took years to acquire this property on 16th and Thomas, he bought this property and I don't know when. I'm presuming it's around the '45s. I think that property had to be bought in somebody else's name and somebody had to sell it to my dad.

As time went on he added to it. He kept adding on until it became a city block. So he owned the whole block. And it's still there. There is a restaurant there and a Burger King and a shopping center.

Krystin: Do you guys still own it?

Madeline: My family still owns it.

Krystin: The whole block?

Madeline: Yeah, the whole block.

Krystin: From 16th

Madeline: It's 16th Street -- it's a block meaning there are apartments next door, but it's on this side on the 16th street side, so it's kind of a square.

Krystin: Because I lived right on 21st and Thomas.

Madeline: And you know where the [inaudible] is? It's like caddy corner from the [inaudible]. When we were young, we used to visit the property. There was nothing out there in those days, absolutely nothing. It was dirt. And we used to go out there and whenever you wanted to go for a ride, that's where we would go and look at daddy's property. It took a long time for him to acquire that.

Krystin: Why is that? Why did it take so long to acquire it?

Madeline: Because you're poor and work.

Krystin: But he always had that in mind.

Madeline: He had that one piece of property that he wanted to buy, even though some of his cousins and uncles would say, "Why would you want to do that?" and you know how that went. But he, thank goodness, was stubborn and he did it. A lot of the Chinese though did it.

Like the Toys bought the property on 16th and Camelback and the Tangs bought the property on 24th Street and Indian School. My dad had the 16th and Thomas. So a lot of people did that.

Krystin: But that was all like nothing back then?

Madeline: There was absolutely nothing. Especially on 16th and Camelback -- boy that was way out. McDowell was close in. [laughs].

Krystin: I can't even imagine that, nothing being there.

Madeline: Going back I know that's what you wanted to know, my father still had the grocery store on 13th and Jefferson and he ran for the House in 1937. I was only two years old then. But he

lost. So he said, "In order for me to make laws, maybe I should go to law school." He told my mother that he was going to law school. So my mother worked in the store while my father went to the University of Arizona, Tucson.

Krystin: Did he commute?

Madeline: No, he stayed down there and he would come back on weekends and sometimes my mother would go up there. Because I used to get to go with her. I was the brat of the family. I would cry and cry and cry until she had to take me with her. I remember my aunt used to say, "Don't leave Madeline home." So I got to go.

I remember going with my mom on the Greyhound Bus to visit my dad. Sometimes my dad would come home and we'd all go to the movies or something. And my uncle was always there to take my dad's place at the store. My aunt, uncle and my mom ran the store while my father went to law school.

And then my father graduated in '43. He opened the little office and then he ran for the House in '46 and he won. He won two terms. He won twice. I remember this too. East Lake Park is still there. Right? It's kind of scary part of town, but at that time it wasn't. And it was still there and I remember my father saying the neighborhood was all minorities. My father got a rally together at East Lake Park. He got some goodies from the grocery store and went to East Lake Park, and he had a rally, and he told all the minorities -- he said, "Why don't we have somebody like us representing our district?" Because at the time there was no minority in the House. There was only white people.

Krystin: Was it mostly Chinese?

Madeline: Where my father was -- it was black, Hispanic and a sprinkling of Chinese. Because the Chinese were kind of all over. The closest Chinese was I think Yen Lung was down Jefferson I think. Lee Jew, my daddy's uncle was down Washington and then Jim Ong, his building is still there. What street is that? It wasn't a lot of Chinese, but we were kind of sprinkled all over. But in my father's district it was mostly black and Hispanic. So he had this big old rally in East Lake Park.

You know, they talk about Jesse Jackson, being the Rainbow Coalition, I really think my father started something like that. Because he got all the blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and at that time we called them Orientals -- and said we have to get one of us to represent our district. And it was really funny because after that, Clovis Campbell who was very well known, was the first black. My father was the first Asian. Clovis Campbell was the first black. And I believe he represented my father's district after my father finished.

Then we moved, I was telling you, my dad said we couldn't buy a house here or there -- but we did find a really nice house on 32nd and Coolidge near Camelback. It was a big house. And from that house my father had to run for the senate. And that neighborhood is totally white. It was quite a coup and he lost the first time and the second time he won. So he won the Senate. Unfortunately, like I said then he got sick after that and had to retire.

Krystin: On 32nd and Coolidge that neighborhood ...

Madeline: Is still all white. [laughs].

Krystin: Can't even imagine back then ...

Madeline: Yeah it was something. The political parties my father had. They were just so fun. I grew up -- my friends could not believe -- my girlfriends especially, they'd say, "You know Judge Bernstein.", because Judge Bernstein was single.

Yeah." [laughs].

"They're going to your house. Let's go to your house for a party."

"I don't want to stay at my house." But my father and my mother, she was a real social, but your dad knew my mother. She was a real social lady. She used to give great parties for my dad, which is half of getting elected is how social you can be and always eating. What was really neat, was we had this restaurant, right, we could get all the food from the restaurant. In fact when my dad was in the legislature, my husband, Lee, he used to work at the restaurant and my dad would call Lee and says, "Bring eight dozen egg rolls, bring pans of chow mein, we're having a luncheon here." Lee would have to haul all this food over to the capitol and they would have a good old time.

But it was a lot of fun.

Krystin: How old were you when these parties were going on?

Madeline: I was single at one time. I was young married. In fact I met Judge Tang and Dr. Pearl Tang, they were at one of my dad's parties and I had just my second daughter, and I needed some godparents. So I went up to them, "Would you be godparents to my daughter?" [laughs].

Judge Tang says, "Oh sure. OK."

Krystin: Did you know them pretty well?

Madeline: My dad did -- I didn't know them that well. He is a bit older than I am. I thought this was a perfect time.

So what happened is that Judge Tang became my second daughter's godparents. His brother became my first daughter's godparents. And the younger brother became another set of godparents. So we had four of them from their family. What is really neat. We're going to baptize my grandson right after Christmas and so all the kids will get to meet them again, because Father Emory will baptize my little grandson. I'm hoping everybody will meet again because they only knew them when they were little. They haven't seen them. I see Pearl all the time and I say, "Missy here's and Missy is doing this." But she hasn't seen her for a long time. So that will be fun.

My father had the greatest parties while I was single and when I was young married. We have pictures of the parties. The home that my parents ended up buying was a house -- your dad has been there -- it was a real party house. And the back yard had a pool. It was a house really to entertain, so it was perfect.

Krystin: Did you ever live up there?

Madeline: Yeah, I did. I lived there when I was going to Phoenix College. I lived there and I didn't leave until I was about twenty.

Krystin: What did you do after Phoenix College?

Madeline: I got married. Which was really weird. I remember Mr. Bump was my English teacher. He said, "Just because you get married, it doesn't mean you have to quit school." In those days ... so I quit school and got married.

Krystin: What did you and Lee do?

Madeline: Lee always farmed for a while, and then he had his own landscape, and then he worked for my mom and dad. Pretty soon he became independent and worked for himself in the restaurant. And then he hurt his back and so he had -- couldn't do any of the heavy stuff, so he went to computer school. At that time computers were really big. And so he worked for Cigna. He went to school and worked for Cigna. He was a troubleshooter for Cigna until he had a stroke and had to retire.

Krystin: What about you?

Madeline: Me, I always stayed home. I became -- my father made me his campaign manager. I had babies galore at home. I had five babies at home. But I used to work at my dad's restaurant while I was married.

Krystin: At Wing's?

Madeline: Yes. Wing's. Lee used to cook and I used to waitress and I used to take my children upstairs to my dad's office. [laughs] And we had an intercom so we could hear them. We had a fine time. Your dad knows. We used to have a bar. Lee considered that we were wild people. Not half as wild as today. We had a pool table and a bar and everybody hung around there. Everybody knew Wing's. The bartender was an old friend of Rocky's and everybody and so in fact we were just talking the other day about how the cops used to stop us because the restaurant didn't close until 2:00. And we all would pile in the car and go home or go eat or something. The cops would stop us, "What are you doing and where are you going?"

"We just got off work."

We had a good time. We had a lot of fun.

Krystin: When did Wing's close?

Madeline: Wing's closed after my father died. My mother didn't have the courage to go on. Lee and my brother took it over. It was just too much. And then Lee was working back at Cigna. And so we just leased it out.

Krystin: Do you know what it is now?

Madeline: I think it's still a restaurant -- Mai Lee or something. I haven't been there for a long time. I don't pass by there that much. The original building is still there. My father's office is still up there. All the original building is up there.

Krystin: Do you guys still own it?

Madeline: Yes. The building that I think you were talking about was -- they torn it down and it's a parking lot now -- it's right across from the Phoenix Suns. It was Madison.

Krystin: Madison and what?

Madeline: Right on 2nd. You know the arena is here and the parking lot is right there, right across the street. Great parking you just walk across the street to the Phoenix Suns.

Krystin: Do you get free parking there?

Madeline: Oh no. Yeah, when we owned it. When we owned it, I leased it out to parking company and yeah we used to get pretty special treatment if we went there. It was quite lucrative for this person because they were charging like ten bucks at that time. Now it's twenty, isn't it? I think

since they sold that. It's empty. Building was torn down several years ago. But I do have pictures of the building.

Krystin: That would be great.

Madeline: I can turn in some stuff later on. Is there anything else you wanted to ask me about my dad?

Krystin: You and your dad. Anything else about you?

Madeline: You asked me what I did. OK, I raised my kids and then I worked at the restaurant and then I didn't -- after my mother died I didn't want to do anything. I was babysitting for a while, because I had -- my brother had a little daughter -- my kids were all grown up and I used to baby sit her all the time. Then somebody said, "You ought to baby sit, get some extra cash."

I thought that sounds like fun. So I started baby sitting. I baby sat for a while. Then my mother died. I just didn't feel like doing that anymore.

Then I start getting active. In fact I started getting active after my father died to help my mom. Because she was quite depressed. She got interested in the senior citizens and so she really gathered up those senior citizens and got them active and doing things. That's my mom. And everybody knows how my mom is. As a matter of fact, I used to say, "Boy, my mother is so bossy." Now I know you have to be bossy. She used to twirl them around and tell them what to do. Then they built the senior center. Unfortunately they built the senior center, my mother died before she saw it built, but she saw the zoning go through. Because they were giving them trouble on the zoning. They didn't want to build the senior housing.

Krystin: Do you think it was because it was Chinese?

Madeline: No, they just felt ... The senior center was there already ... Because they used to have the senior center gatherings on 7th Street and Osborn, you know that church on the corner, Nazarene anyway. We used to go there and I used to have to bake cakes because every month they would celebrate their birthdays. So I used to bake a cake, bake three or four cakes and take them down there. And then they moved to where they are now on Elm. When they were on Elm that's when they decided they are going to build this senior housing. And it was the senior housing that had the zoning problem. That's what it was. Because my mother was real active in getting the housing done. And the housing was really something, because at that time it was for Chinese senior center and at that time it was OK, because the other Asians were not participating. There were no other Asians except Chinese who wanted to do something. Now today you can't just say Chinese -- you have to say Asian, because other groups have come forward now and they want part -- they want to take part in the federal programs.

But at that time there was no problem. My mother, she got all of my dad's friends, she contacted all of my dad's friends in Washington. She knew all of them. And Willie Yee and John Yee they went over there to talk to them all. I made appointments for all of them to go to D.C. They went there and talked to them all. Because you had to put in a bid, like you had to have a budget, you had to have the money, you had to have the land, you had to have plans, so that's what they did - - my dad and her buddies, they all did that. And when it was all ready, then they had to submit it. You had to go lobby for it. So my mom had called all of my dad's friends, and John and Willie Yee went to talk to them, and they got the grant. That's how the senior citizen housing ...

But the only problem here was the zoning. And so Terry Goddard, he's so wonderful, he just said, "we're going to vote on the zoning, but you have to have the right time and the right people that's going to be there." So it's timing. We buried my mom the day the zoning passed. It hadn't passed yet. And all her friends came to the wake and told her -- "It passed Rose, it passed." Because it was one of the things that my mother really wanted.

And I don't feel too badly, because I know my mother knew that it was built. Later on Willie had me get a big picture of my mom to put up at the Senior Citizen Housing. And some of the little old ladies over there, "Ah yah, [inaudible] [laughs] So that's good.

And what was really wonderful about my mother doing the senior citizen housing was when they first started to do it, a lot of people didn't want it. Because they say Chinese take care of their own. Right? Buy my mother said, "No, no, no. We want to be able to take care of ourselves." And I know a lot of the Chinese ladies used to call my mother and tell my mother that they're scared. That they don't want to do. They're in an apartment by themselves. They don't want to live with their children or their children don't want them to live with them or whatever. So my mother would say, "No, we need this."

I think they're all glad that she did that.

What else do you want to know?

Krystin: Anything else you want to say?

Madeline: I don't know what else I could tell you. My own life. After my mother died, then I got really active. After my father died, I got really active with my mom and helped her and the senior citizens. She was really active in the center with the [inaudible] campaign and the Terry Goddard campaign. So I was right in there with her. When she died I continued to do a lot of civil rights and a lot of, I don't like to see Asians being prejudiced against, so we did a lot of civil rights stuff.

It was really hard because the only way we could do it was by telephoning each other, right? Somebody would call me up and say, so and so got pulled over because he's Asian and they started ching -- choning him or whatever, whatever and then I would have to call everybody up and we'd get together. So what happened was we were very active in Chinese chamber. A lot of my friends were active in Chinese chamber. Allan Dong was President, Tom Tang was President, Fred Ong were all Presidents, I was their secretary. And so it started to become that the other Asians were wanting to say, "We'd like to have a chamber of commerce." So we talked to the Chinese chamber and they say well you know Chinese chamber want to keep their identity. So we said we're just start the Asian chamber. That's how we started the Asian chamber. So we started the Asian chamber. What's really weird is Asian chamber does more civil rights than it ever does any business. People call me because they were discriminated against or somebody threw a rat in their back yard because they're Asian or something like that. So I always tell people Asian chamber is not just Asian chamber -- Asian chamber is also -- we don't have the luxury of just saying we just do business ...

Madeline: So we started Asian chamber and I actually didn't want to. Allan and his friend, Mike Wong, Allan Dong he was really the go-getter guy. And he convinced his friend Tom Tam, because Tom said he didn't want to do anything. I'm too tired. He convinced Tom and he convinced Mike Wong. And he convinced Rocky. So now he says to me, "I want you to help."

"I do not want to do any business." I said I'm civil rights, community activist.

He says, "Well, we're going to do a newspaper."

"You are?"

He said, "You can be the publisher and editor of the newspaper."

Now the wheels are turning. I'm thinking wow, I wouldn't have to get on the phone all the time. And when somebody is getting discriminated against, we can just write it up in the paper -- the power of the press. So I said, "OK." [laughs].

So reluctantly I said OK. If I can have the newspaper, I'll do it. So that's how Asian Sun -- it was Asian Americans Sun, I don't even hardly remember now -- I think it was Asian American Sun at the time and then we changed owners, we changed the board and everything, so we made it Asian Sun News.

Krystin: When did you start that?

Madeline: 1993.

Krystin: Almost fourteen years.

Madeline: It was May. Our Inaugural was wonderful. Because we invited the Mayor and everybody came. That was Allan's office on 6th Avenue and Indian School, right next to the Big Wong. He owned that property there. He was very generous. He opened all his offices and he had Asian Sun News office and he had the Asian chamber office and he had his own real estate office in there too.

For about a year we worked out of that office and it got to be very difficult. Because when you're working on a newspaper you go far into the night. And I didn't like being out that long. So then I started moving the paper over to home. The office was still there in the day time. And then of course, Allan died and Tom took over. We did pretty well. Then Tom retired and now Rocky. It's really hard to get somebody ... We don't change that often because it seems like it takes us forever to get what we need done. If you keep changing leadership, it just doesn't get done. And if it's not broke, why fix it?

Krystin: You guys have been lucky.

Madeline: We learned. It took a lot of learning and a lot of thought from Allan and who we wanted on the board. Because we knew that you go to get along. If you don't get along you're going to have trouble and then you're going to stop. And you can't progress.. We're so lucky. Everybody helps each other and we all get along. Nobody ever fights to be number one and so we're very lucky. We're very lucky organization. So Asian Sun News it is not easy all the time. Because doing a newspaper is very expensive.

Krystin: Every month.

Madeline: Yes, printing is expensive and distribution is expensive. I guess another thing is we're always called because we're the only one in the phone book and they call and ask me where is the Chinese Cultural Center.

I say, "Well, right over there on 44th Street."

"Oh, they're not there, there's no Chinese cultural center."

I say, "Are you blind?"

And they say, "Well no. But there's no culture center."

I say, "Oh, that's what they call it." They're looking for a museum. So I get about three calls every week on where is the Chinese cultural center.

Krystin: And you have to explain [inaudible] market?

Madeline: And I say, "Is it in the phone book?"

"No."

And I tell them over there, why don't you like put ...

Krystin: They're not even in the phone book?

Madeline: No, I think it's under COFCO. There's no Chinese culture center. But Asian Chamber is. We get calls, calls, calls.

Krystin: That's good because you're the core of the Asian community.

Madeline: Well, we hope to be. We hope not to exclude ... but it's difficult ...you can't get along forever, always. But we try, we try to do the best with whomever we come into contact with. Our big thing is students. I have an intern right now, I've had five, six interns. Jackson Cho.

Krystin: I just know Brandon from last year.

Madeline: Brandon -- the Caucasian ... yeah. I couldn't remember his name. I just took Jackson to the FBI recruiting range. He really liked that. I love to have an intern. I take my interns everywhere I can. Everywhere I go, I take my interns, because how else can you learn. And I think writing -- I tell my interns not to be afraid. Even if you're the worst writer in the world, I can fix it up for you. Because I'm an editor. I say, as long as I have your thoughts, I'll fix it.

Krystin: I can't write, but I can edit.

Madeline: As long as I have your thoughts ... The same with writing a letter. I say, OK, you write the letter, I'll edit it and ... [laughs] Yeah, that's Asian chamber and Asian chamber loves the students. Our Lunar New Year is our biggie. I hope you're going to be there this year.

Krystin: Yeah. When we're done, I have some ideas for doing some stuff with ACLU.

Madeline: And we're still doing Asian Pacific night at the Suns and the Diamondbacks. Our next one is going to be March 11th. Houston.

Krystin: They're playing Houston a couple of times because I saw their schedule.

Madeline: November they're playing Houston, but that was too soon for us. We didn't want to do it.

Krystin: I have some doubts about the basketball tournament too actually.

Madeline: Do you know that we're sponsoring a big basketball tournament?

Krystin: When.

Madeline: I don't know.

[end of interview]

EVANGELINE SONG

Interviewed by Krystin Yee

11 July 2006

Krystin: All right, um, can we start this interview by having your name and spelling? Your full name.

Evangeline: Yes my name is Evangeline Song, and it's spelled; E-v-a-n-g-e-l-i-n-e, S-o-n-g, I don't use a middle name.

Krystin: Ok, um, when and where were you born?

Evangeline: I was born in Phoenix, Arizona. Um, June 25, 1939.

Krystin: Um, did your parents come here from ...?

Evangeline: China.

Krystin: China?

Evangeline: Yes.

Krystin: Um,

Evangeline: My father was here first and, (Sighs), I still need to find out, I did never did ask him questions about when he came and how he started his life here, so. I wanted to go and um, look at the census records to see when he first appears. I'm guessing he must have come in the thirties, uh, I don't know exactly when, um. I, um, I'm the first child of the second wife. So, there were, there were, uh, three children born of the first wife, and um, (Clears throat). He sent the first wife back to China to build a home in the village, and while she was there, um, before she went back, the children had been sent back to China to learn the culture and the language, which was typical for a lot of the families here, in Arizona. And so, they were already back there, and the mother went back to oversee construction, and for whatever reason, she dies. Um, I don't know, see I don't know how long she was there, couldn't have been ...that long. But, in any case, um, she died, so my father asked some friends here, some friends who had knew people back home in the village, and they recommended that he look up my mom, so he did when he went back for the funeral and to, to get his children. And so he married my mother who was about twenty-two almost twenty-three years younger than he. So she wasn't much older than his children were they were, um, probably a teenagers, almost teenagers, because my youngest, no, the youngest of that family is fourteen years older than I am.

Krystin: Did you grow up with uh ...?

Evangeline: No, not really, well, not closely. Because after my, my father must have come back to America, well he had to of but, come back with my mother in '38; I think my mother came in '38. And I was born in '39, but the, the other children, the teenagers were not uh, living with us, because my father had, bought another store, by that time he had two stores.

Krystin: Oh, he was uh ...?

Evangeline: He, he had become a grocery-man.

Krystin: Ok.

Evangeline: I had heard through some other people that, and I did not, wasn't able to verify with my father but, I was told that initially he sold vegetables out of the truck, maybe for someone else here. You know a Chinese relative, or a friend or somebody, and evidently he, saved enough money to be able to buy his own store. Now the thing about this store, is I do remember the first store, it was on Second St. and Madison on the North-West corner, and um, when I was about three I'm guessing, um, I just remember that, that um, one day we were cross ... We were on the North side of the street, and then next thing is we move across the street. And I over heard some Japanese people talking at one time, and they were talking about the pool hall that used to be on Second and Madison. And so, I, I'm, myself, I'm surmising that maybe when the Japanese people were taken to the internment camp, that they left, and somehow my father connected with whoever had the authority to, um, get the store across the street, to get the building across the street.

Krystin: It used to be a pool hall?

Evangeline: Well, I'm not sure.

Krystin: Oh.

Evangeline: You see? I mean I, I overheard some people talking, about that. But, um, so then we moved across the street and my dad had a grocery store there, and of course we lived in the, in the, in the rear of the building. Um, I do remember that there was a Filipino, Filipino pool hall directly across, behind us. We were on Madison, and um, I think, Buchanan was the street, well whatever the street, I think its Buchanan the street that's behind us, they were facing the other street. Um, and I knew it was a Filipino pool hall, and I think it was probably weekends when they would have cock fights, and I was able to peer over the, I would hang on the fence, 'cause there was a fence dividing us, there was no alley right there. The alley began at the end of our building, and then there was an alley through the rest of the block, 'cause we were on the corner of the block and the Japanese, I mean, the Filipino pool hall was on the other corner, behind us on the block.

Krystin: Did you stay in that um ...?

Evangeline: We stayed there from the time I was three 'til, I was um, a sophomore in highschool. Junior and sophomore or Junior in High School, so that would have been three to fifteen, 'bout twelve years.

Krystin: You were fifteen, sixteen?

Evangeline: About twelve years, twelve or thirteen years we lived at that location.

Krystin: Did your ... were the only sibling?

Evangeline: I was the oldest of, uh, my mother had eight children.

Krystin: Eight children?

Evangeline: Hmmm.

Krystin: Wow! That must have been interesting.

Evangeline: Yeah, It was interesting. And um, because I was the oldest, I began helping my mom out, and by then my dad had acquired, um, heart problems. Um, he died of an enlarged heart; he had a heart attack. But he'd also, I remember when he was um, um, cut on the face, someone, one of the customers came and I don't know why, they must have been drunk, because, that was

something else in that neighborhood. Second and Madison was called the deuce, and didn't know what was called it, I mean I didn't hear the word deuce until I was in high ... past high school.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: But it was called the Deuce and it was a red-light district, which I was totally unaware of.

Krystin: OH, really?

Evangeline: yeah, across, the street from us on the, South-East corner was a two-story hotel, and evidently it was one of those flop-houses where prostitutes hang out, because um, I remember one day I heard sirens, and this woman jumps out the second story window and runs off. And so, you know it must have been a police raid or something. Have no idea what was going on there, I just saw these incidents that would happen and. At the time, when I was young, I don't know, I can't remember when, but Indians were not allowed to be sold liquor to, we couldn't sell to them, my dad had a liquor license, we just sold beer and wine. And so, there would be these guys, mostly Hispanic men that would come in and buy booze for the, the Indians, and so we would have people, drunk people that would, you know, line the streets down there.

Krystin: Uh, what, what prompted the, the move, when you became fifteen?

Evangeline: Yeah, when I was a teenager. Uh, my dad decided to retire, then because my mom had done most of the work all those twelve years.

Krystin: Oh, really?

Evangeline: Yeah, She did most, she did all of the physical labor, 'cause when she, she came when she was twenty-two, and uh, (adding years up), she must have been uh ...

Krystin: About thirty-two; thirty-three?

Evangeline: No, well let's see, twelve ... would have been thirty-five, no my, so my, that's possible that she was still in her thirties when we moved, let's see, twelve; thirty-five, thirty-six; she would have been, I can't remember now. But my dad bought a house on 40th St. and Oak. And retired and sold his store to another Chinese family. That was in 50 ...6, 7. '56 I think. That he sold his store and retired. Um, they were able to retire, you know he, by then he had bought um, he had bought some income property, or he had bought um, property on Buckeye Rd. which was um, it was a building that housed, a couple of businesses eventually he sold that property. They also had another, he bought another, property, I think at 16th Street and Broadway ...

Krystin: 16th Street and Broadway?

Evangeline: Yeah, and that, and then, um, another Chinese family ran a grocery store there, and I used to work there in the summers between high school, as a cashier. I think we had, he had three or four income properties. So he was able to retire.

Krystin: Um, what was your, like, general impressions of say like, school, or friends of like, of Phoenix while growing up?

Evangeline: Um, because we had the grocery store, and we opened, um, you know all, all day. In fact I can remember when my parents would open the store about 4:30, 5:00 in the morning. To catch the cotton pickers, because on our corner, people used to congregate there, and then buses would come and haul them out to the fields to pick cotton or pick fruit, and so they would congregate early in the morning, so my dad would open the store so they could buy Beanie-Weenie, and Twinkies cup-cakes, and things like that to take out to the field. And then he'd close

up, and we'd probably open up, I don't know, eight or nine, for the, there used to be some Hispanic families that lived down the block, and then they got moved out. There was ...

Krystin: Did you live mostly with Hispanics?

Evangeline: Yes, and then when I went to school, it was mostly Hispanic kids. Um, yeah, mostly Hispanic kids. Some ... a few black, because that area was the black neighborhood, and Hispanic neighborhood.

Krystin: Ok ...

Evangeline: Yeah.

Krystin: So, you, you, there wasn't, uh, like a Chinese community.

Evangeline: I didn't have, oh, when I was four, by the, uh, when I was four, the Chinese mission had been established at Central Baptist Church. It was a Southern Baptist Church. Um, all the Chinese people used to buy from uh, this wholesaler there, wholesale groceries from this, man, Mr. Henderson, and I guess he felt the need to, to ask his church to, form a mission, and so they did, and they used to go around to all the grocery stores and pick up Chinese children, and they had a mission, Chinese Mission for the Southern Baptist Church, at Central Baptist Church, um, it was on Central somewhere like Central and Virginia, and we would meet in the afternoon like 2 o'clock, we were totally separate congregation, it was called a mission at first, and then, I think it was in, I have a picture of when the church became a Chinese church, its own Chinese church. I have a, an initial photo ...

Krystin: Really?

Evangeline: of the congregation ... and yeah.

Krystin: That was a pretty big church wasn't it?

Evangeline: Um ... well, they eventually the old mission board bought us an old sinigag on 2nd St. and Carver which was torn away for the freeway I think, um, but. The family that my dad sold the property to, I don't know how many years they were there but then the city of Phoenix bought the whole block, and the whole block became a fire station. Which became eventually in the middle of the America West Arena, or USA Arena I guess it's called now. US Arena. So that's where my dad's grocery store was, right in the middle of where that arena is now.

Well the did, they did an archeological dig, but, um, they didn't find much, and I can remember that the old China ... the second Chinatown, in that are, was just mainly, um, single men, and I remember walking back in the you know, in the opposite corner there was like an inner court yard, when I was a kid, I don't know; five, six or something like that. And I would notice these men sitting around, smoking these glass; it was a long glass pipe with a big bulb on the end of it. Uh, and it would be bubbling, I don't know what they were smoking but whatever it was, must have been opium or something.

Krystin: Yeah, was it, it seems about that time or era, Opium was very ...

Evangeline: Yeah, and I remember when I first learned to re ... when I was seven it just dawned on me I could read, 'cause I was, I saw a newspaper, and I thought, wow, I can read this. And the headline was that one of the Chinese restaurant owners was arrested for selling opium.

Krystin: Oh, really?

Evangeline: And you know, a lot of those men I guess ...

Krystin: Was the red-light district very into ...?

Evangeline: uh huh, mum.

Krystin: Um, so how old, how old was your, well ...?

Evangeline: I didn't have any neighborhood friends, pers ... well I did, with the Mexican kids that were there for a few years. I did play some with them, but most of the time I was working, 'cause, even when we were little we had to watch the customers, or we would help um, get things, or stock the shelves, that kind of thing, and I remember doing that. So I would, we would close the store at 9 o'clock at night and then we'd have dinner, so my mom would cook dinner after that, and when I was I dunno; nine, ten, eleven, twelve; I was shopping for my mom, because we were on Madison, and then Jefferson, Washington, two blocks then the uh, JCPenney was on the corner of 2nd and Washington, an other stores, were, that was downtown then, so I could walk downtown, and I used to buy clothes for my brothers and sisters.

Krystin: Um, was higher education a priority for your parents, like ...?

Evangeline: Yeah, see because of my older, siblings.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: It was, it was like a given, I mean my dad never had to say you have to go to college, it was that um, my older half sister was in college as I remember when she got married. And then my brother, um, he, he was in the um, military, I guess it was the reserve, because when he would come home and visit he would be wearing a uniform, and he was like a dad to me, he was like my second dad, he was sixteen years older than I was. Of course when I was seven ...sixteen ...he was in his twenties then. And, I loved him because he was so great, he was friendly, and he played with me, and he brought me books, and he was the first one who enrolled me in school.

Krystin: Oh, really?

Evangeline: Yeah, he came home one day, I guess it must have been in maybe January, February, something like that, and he found I wasn't in school, so he took me and enrolled me in school. And, um, I was in school for just those few months, and then I was in the next grade, whatever it was. And I went to 1st grade I think. Um, then he was the 1st, he was the only one who ever took me to, it was the Fox Theater downtown on Washington, it was a *GORGEOUS* theater, bigger than the Orpheum.

Krystin: Really?

Evangeline: And it was more beautiful, more ornate than the Orpheum.

Krystin: Fox Theater?

Evangeline: Fox Theater, uh hah. It was the Fox Theater on um; it was east of 2nd Street Between 2nd and 1st Street on Washington. Uh, it didn't last of course, but it was really a beautiful old theater, and they had a big organ that they would play when they had the Silent. But when, the movie that he took, he took me to Saturday morning movie, for kids I guess it was. He took me and he left me there. And um, they had this, Dick Tracy, serial or something going on, and I didn't like it 'cause it was violent, so I just walked home. I didn't even get to watch cartoons, or whatever. He wanted me to, you know, enjoy the whole thing, but I didn't like what I was watching, so. And that's the only time I went to the movies at the Fox Theater.

Krystin: Really?

Evangeline: But they had, evidently, they had Saturday morning kids shows there.

Krystin: Like, just like they play on TV nowadays?

Evangeline: Yeah, yeah, yeah, in fact, later, as I grew older, Wayne Newton played there.

Krystin: Really?

Evangeline: Yeah, he, he was, he did the kids show there when he was a kid, when he was a teenager.

Krystin: When he was a teenager?

Evangeline: Yeah.

Krystin: WOW!

Evangeline: He played there at the Fox Theater. With some other kids.

Krystin: Um, did you go to ASU, or?

Evangeline: Well, um, when I was a Junior the summer of my Junior year, I went to this family friends wedding, and um, my fa, I guess my parents were invited by the grooms family, and um, I met my future husband there, because his sister married this young man, this person. So I met him there, the summer of my Junior year. So we dated, senior year, he was already uh, in law school at Tucson, so he was in Tucson, and I was up here. So then I would finish my high school year, and because he was the first one who told me he loved me, I thought, oh, this is the one, so I just made my plans to marry this person, and I knew that my dad expected me to go to college, so I just devised, I just figured out that I could go to college, get a degree in education in three years. Which is what I did, I planned it all, and I didn't want -- knowing that I was going to leave home -- I didn't want to cost my dad a lot of money. But I wanted the experience of going away to school.

So, I went to Phoenix College for the first year, and that summer, um, I took summer class, you know, two summer, two sessions of summer classes. And then I went to the U of A and I stayed in the honor dorm, 'cause I had to apply for that, it was an honor dorm, it was just a house for a women. Um, it housed, like between, up to thirty-five women. And um, we, we did duties and we had, um, chores to do, and it only cost us like \$1 a day for the food and the lodging. 'Cause you know, we did that, and we also ushered at the University Auditorium too, so I was in Tucson for two years, and then that summer at ASU. And I was able to graduate in two years; I got all my credits in. And then I got married the summer after I graduated. That was my goal; I just wanted to be a wife and a mom. I didn't really want to be a teacher, I mean it wasn't the burning desire; it was just, to me, an easy curriculum to get through. Easily, without a lot of work. Which it wasn't.

I forgot to say, my brother graduated I found out from Yale, he got a scholarship to Yale, and then he went, he got a fellowship, to UC Berkeley, and he got a Masters in Chemistry there at UC Berkeley. And my dad, um, took me to the graduation at UC Berkeley, we rode the train, that was a really big deal, turns out, that he had the highest going Grade Point Average of the whole school for that graduation, and I guess maybe that's why he was picked to be on that bomb project. The [inaudible] In you know, New Mexico? He was supposed to go work there. But he got married in the summer, and then he went on his honeymoon for a week, he came back to Phoenix, um, for the um, for our wedding dinner, because he got married in Sacramento and my dad wanted to have a wedding banquet here for him. And um, since most of the friends had businesses either restaurants or Chinese grocery stores, they chose Sunday night. That was a

night that usually, you know, they could close early, and have a banquet, but the problem was that he had to report for work, the following Monday in California. So, they came here after their honeymoon, I'm not sure where they went, um, had the dinner, and then after dinner, which woulda, I don't know woulda been, I don't know; eleven, twelve; something like that, that they started driving back to California, and then we got a call about five or six in the morning saying that they'd both been killed because they passed out at the ... she was driving, evidently he was trying to sleep so he could be fresh for work.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: And um, she passed on the curb and ran straight head on into a semi truck, and killed them both. So, so, my dad, you know he, my brother got this huge trophy, I thought it was three feet tall, but you know, probably a trophy this tall or something like that.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: He got the trophy for having the highest GPA of anybody in the class, and that was a Masters in science and he was cumla, whatever cum lada is.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: Summa cum laude, oh, I dunno, whatever the max is anyway, so I mean my dad, he made a case for the trophy, and he put it in the grocery store, you know in this neat case. It was a big deal, so mean, you got the message, he didn't have to say anything, you had to go to college so, so all of us did.

Krystin: I'm Sorry to hear that though. Um, but it seemed like he was a pretty smart guy.

Evangeline: Yeah, he was, he was really a smart, well terrific guy, personable, yeah. He wasn't just a nerdy guy.

Krystin: Um. Yeah, yeah, he had a personality.

Evangeline: Yeah, yeah.

Krystin: Well, Can I ask you about your husband? Did he graduate college?

Evangeline: Yeah, Yeah, he graduated from high school when he was sixteen, so he was in law school, and was, when are they, probably one of the earlier classes that graduated, that U of A had, U of A I think recently got their law school back. That would have been in the, we got married in '60 and he graduated in the '57 or 8, '58? Yeah, that was one of the earlier law schools that was established at the U of A. So, he, he um, he became ...

Krystin: Was he a lawyer?

Evangeline: ...he became a lawyer and he started working at the Maricopa County Attorneys office. I dunno know if he was a prosecutor, must have been, huh, that's what they do, [Laughs]. I think that's what they do; I don't think they defend people at Maricopa County Attorneys office. I don't know. No, they have people in the community defend people, and then they prosecute them, yeah. But in the meantime, because he, he was, um, he was the youngest of eight. And he and his brother next to him were both born in downtown Scottsdale. They were the um, only Chinese family there because um, initially they had, his father had gone to Chandler, but because there was another Chinese family there, the other Chinese families drove him out of town. And he was able to find a, a building in Scottsdale. And he moved to that building, in the 19, late 1920's, so they were, they were in Scottsdale, um, they have a date for that, for when he was in, in um, Scottsdale. I think it's 1929, they bought Johnny's pool hall, [Laughs], another pool hall, [Laughs].

Krystin: That was his father that ...?

Evangeline: That was his father, that had a grocery store there, and both of our families actually had, we had a lot of Indian um, Native American people that come to buy from us, and my dad, I know used to sell, like these 100-pound sacks of these beans, they were little white beans that they used to like to buy. And pinto beans. And um, different things like that. But they used to come and, we would have some people from the Navajo Reservation come to Phoenix too, because maybe when they brought their kids to the Indian School, they came and shopped, 'cause I'm thinking, why would they come that far, the only reason I can think of now is because they would probably drop, they probably dropped their kids off at the Indian School.

Krystin: Oh, there was an Indian School?

Evangeline: There was an Indian School. There was an Indian High School, It's now Steele Indian School Park, Steele Park on 3rd and Indian School. Central and Indian School used to be the Native American High School, and all over the state Na, Native American students used to go there for high school. They used to segregate them too. The blacks were segregated at Carver High School, and I can remember the year when they de-segregated, and then we had black kids come to, uh, graduate from Phoenix Union in 1957.

Krystin: So you went to school with, like, Hispanics and white people ... you, you guys weren't segregated but Indians and black people were?

Evangeline: yeah, well, but my husbands family, they were segregated initially in Scottsdale; they could only go to the Mexican school.

Krystin: Really?

Evangeline: And then later they changed to where they could go to the regular school. So they, they were segregated to the minority school. That is now the little old school house in Scottsdale. But that used to be just the school for Mexicans and their family.

Krystin: Speaking of, I guess, that, um, like area of life like, did you have to deal with um, racism, racism or anything like those lines of stuff?

Evangeline: I di, I di, my Personally, I, I didn't feel overt racism, um, but I, I think I segregated myself to some degree although, um, I remember when I was probably sophomore in high school, um, they started Any Town, and, they started letting Arizona kids go to Any Town, and the only Any Town that was available was in California.

Krystin: What was an Any Town?

Evangeline: Any Town, I don't know what it's called now, but um, it, I think it continues now, but it's called something else, and it was started by NCCJ, National, no, NCC, National Conference of Christians and Jews. It was an organization that tried to promote um, uh, diversity and racial acceptance. So they would get, you know, all kinds all the different families of children together, high school usually high school you went in Sophomore, Junior years, you went to this camp, and it was, again, consciousness raising about racial diversity, and acceptance.

Krystin: Really? Nah really?

Evangeline: Yes, oh yeah, that was in the 50's. That was Any Town, uh, I went to that, and so, when I came back, uh, by then, the blacks could come to our school. And I, this asked me to go to have a Coke, and I went, and he said that he was Puerto Rican, but he was a light-skinned black person. Boy, I heard about that. I mean, I heard about that from the community, you know

my family, and my only real social life was on Sunday, when I would see the Chinese families, you know, 'cause we would have church. Um, and that I, it was expected that you just went out with Chinese people, we segregated ourselves. But when I tried to, when I did go have a Coke, I forgot where we went, probably somewhere we could walk to. But it was pretty obvious, and it was, I mean I heard about it, so I didn't go out with him again.

Krystin: Oh, People ...

Evangeline: He was Puerto Rican you know, and that was to say, I'm not really black, I guess. You know, he was trying to say ... It felt like he was trying to say, "I'm not really black, I'm Puerto Rican." But, you know, to everybody else he was black, although he wasn't very dark, he was really light skinned.

Krystin: Just all over having a soda with each other.

Evangeline: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and then, when I was um, a, when I was at Phoenix College, this, this Caucasian guy asked me for a date, and I said I couldn't go, then I thought, you know? So, you know, I did that on my own, I wasn't really strong enough to say no, but by then I was going with my future husband too, and he was Chinese, but, oh that's another funny thing, I heard later that my dad objected to him because he was in Scottsdale, and there were no Chinese there and it was the word was around that he went out with Mexicans and you know Indian people, so he was like Taboo, you know [laughs]. Except that, you know, I graduated from college and he couldn't, you know, there was no reason, he couldn't just say, he never told me that he didn't like him because he, you know he had a reputation of going out with Mexicans and Indians (laughs).

Krystin: Um, can I ask you about the, where, the, um, about like WWI and World, were, were you, you were, you don't remember World War I at all or _____??

Evangeline: Uh, um, only, only that I would see these uh men in uniform, every once in awhile I would see them, and I remember seeing the war ration book. I have a, I have a war, a ration book, which still has one little coupon, people, people you know got these, I don't know how they were distributed, you must you must have gone to some center or something to get them, and you were allowed a coupon a week, for flour and sugar, an different commodities.

Krystin: yeah.

Evangeline: it was limited to what you could get. So, um, I remember, you know, I didn't have much. Um, I heard about the Japanese families, but I didn't really, they didn't come to my school, I didn't know very many of them, and I didn't know anybody personally that had been interred in the camps. I, I never knew anybody that, that happened to but, um.

Krystin: did the war um ...?

Evangeline: I don't have any real memories of the war other than my brother was involved with it, and some of the you know, other relatives, not relatives, but friends children, were in the war. They were very patriotic though. In fact, I think it was back then, in the 30's that they started, um, it must have been in the forties after, after we got some veterans, yeah, or after some of the young men had been to war. They um, they started a 4th of July celebration among the Chinese people. And every 4th of July ever since, they have been gathering and having a Chinese celebration, Chinese 4th of July celebration. Now it's turned into like a Miss China Town contest type thing.

Krystin: Oh really?

Evangeline: Yeah.

Krystin: well, that's interesting; at least the wars didn't really affect you too much.

Evangeline: it didn't affect us personally that I can remember.

Krystin: um, well, do you have any specific memories in your child hood and growing up that a big impact on you throughout your life?

Evangeline: Um, I think I, you know, I think I was pretty sheltered, I mean, not knowing that I lived in the red light district with prostitution around me, I knew there were drunks in the road, you know, but I didn't, I didn't had no idea what that was about. And um, uh. I think because I didn't date very many people and because we didn't um, we were not very vocal about our feelings, um, my husband and I, I'm sure he was the same, he didn't probably get much family guidance on relationships, because ultimately we ended up divorcing after um, sixteen years of marriage.

Krystin: Oh, really?

Evangeline: Yeah, and then he died um, sadly because he was city attorney, and then when the administration changed, you know, he loved the politicking and usually you were there at the he has to, whoever the city council is, usually it's friends or you know ask friends to be whatever, in different departments, still happens today, you know political favorites, you know. But, you know, so he was city attorney for a number of years. And then, and then they changed the city council enough to where, um, they probably, you know, somebody knew somebody else that they wanted to have as city attorney. So, so he, he lost that position and he started to do law on his own, but he hated it, he didn't like that. He liked the, he did all the improvement district work. Um, he, for the city, he did all the legal paper work to make the town of Scottsdale become the city of Scottsdale. Laid all the infrastructure all the, you know all the water lines, all that sorta thing, and um, it, those were the golden years of Scottsdale, and the 60's, this guy Ken McDonald, from California I guess because they were so, more progressive, um, we made plans and I was on the, I was on one of those step committees, those citizens committees, um, on landscaping, and soon we outlawed billboards in Scottsdale so, you know way back then the plans were made to make Scottsdale look totally different and it does. So, you know all the billboards were eventually phased out, and there were big signs, you know, above ground, they were all near or close to the ground, that type of thing.

Krystin: Did you have any children?

Evangeline: Yeah, I had four in four years. Got married in 1960 and by 1965 I had four kids.

Krystin: Um, I just ...

Evangeline: My kids were really a big deal to me. I loved it because that's what I wanted to do.

Krystin: yeah.

Evangeline: but the one thing that I had on my mind, but I never discussed it with anybody. I was hoping that I could have a family like uh, that could work together in whatever it was to earn our living, because that's what our parents did you know, everybody worked together. And I, I felt so left out of my husbands life, because he was an attorney, and he was not supposed to talk about his cases, so I just was, you know, I, I jus, we didn't really have very communicativ um, base together to build on, and so we just never did really bond, adequately, I feel.

Krystin: Well, uh, well with your children, did like Chinese culture, or like education, like were those important parts of like bringing them up? Or did you ...

Evangeline: Yeah, because I had my education classes, I think it really helped me to um, formulate my, what I thought was good for child rearing, and basically, I felt like I did uh, um, a

positive job, all though, I did, I'm finding now repercussions, my oldest son, is feeling um, is uh, not doing as well as I would want from him, he evidently is suffering from some of the divorce things that we never talked about. We never talked about it as a family. And it was, It was a mysterious thing, I think a lot the kids just didn't understand, because we, were not outwardly contentious, you know what I mean? But we didn't have, it wasn't, it wasn't a real close, uh, the, the children, I felt close enough to the children that um, I was willing to let him have a cust, custody initially, I let him have the house, I let him have everything, because it just was not working, Um. I mean, I knew for 8 years that it wasn't gonna work, we just had uh (sighs), bad time.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: He said in the fourth year of marriage, he said "You know, we have nothing in common but kids." That just really hurt, you know, it, nothing in common but kids (uncomfortable, melancholy laugh)? Um, he was a super guy, terrific guy, but I couldn't meet his needs, and he didn't know how to talk, he couldn't talk to me. Um, he was Catholic and I was Southern Baptist, and I remember as a kid, in grade school, the Catholic kids would tell me they couldn't play with me because I'm going to hell, only Catholics go to heaven, you know, Catholics are the chosen people, and they couldn't play with me, I mean, that was evidently taught at the time. All their families thought that and, so there was, there was this contention, and I had no idea he was Catholic when I met him. I went out with him, and I blurped out I can't be Catholic, and he never told me, it was like a couple of days later I find out he's Catholic. But that was a big conflict to, because I remember he would come home at two-three in the morning, and he'd wanna discuss relation, and he'd been drinking, and you know, I don't know if that transubstantiation is in the Catholic church, 'cause, he never asked me you know to take, we never discussed it, he just said, he just made jokes about it, on my death bed I'll just deny you, and I'll get absolution and I can go to heaven. But, I know, every once, you know, every, throughout the marriage, there were times when he would wanna talk religion, but we couldn't talk because he wasn't lucid for one thing, had know idea what he was talking about, because the vocabulary in the Catholic church, had know idea.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: So we couldn't talk, so I, but I know, eventually, you know that's a big thing, what you believe in and what your values are, make a lot, a difference in how you are.

Krystin: So, well, ...

Evangeline: So, we had these things against us, and I tried taking my kids to my church, but because it was a fundamentalist Christian, I, I'm not really a fundamentalist Christian. I mean, I went to the church, it served its purpose, and um, I learned about god through there, but I have my own sense of what god is now.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: Um, I'm going to a Fundamentalist Christian Church, which I'm going, "Why are you doing this?" but, um, you know, I, I like the people there, and basically um, I go along with what some of the stuff is, but I'm not totally sure that I'll stay there.

Krystin: So ...

Evangeline: So, that was one thing, we didn't learn, my parents didn't give us, you know our Chinese culture, the only thing is, I think that which permeated the Chinese culture totally was that the Buddhism, there festivals are so ingrained that my parents were following Buddhist festivals like the um, the one that honors the, the person who drowned because it was civil unrest, actually, I don't know that it's really Buddhist. It's in honor of this person who uh, was

trying to stick up for the collard people when it was against the authorities at the time and so he committed suicide (chuckle) in the river, and so now we, we make these Chinese Tamales, I guess, you know, that they threw in the river to feed his soul. And so there's an annual festival for that it's a certain time of year, um it's like a memorial day, and I know my, my mother used to serve this, um, this thing where she would (sighs) she would have some pictures, and then she would make, it was like a little alter type thing where she would set out like three sets of a bowl of rice, and chopstick, and a spoo ..., a Chinese soup spoon with some whiskey in it, and she'd set out, you know, the whole chicken, and stuff like that, and she, she'd burn incense and she'd say we'd bow three times, it must've been to the ancestors, or whoever that died before us. And that would be an annual thing to, so there were some, festival type things that we did like that. I know some other families observed the moon festival, or some other, but we didn't do that.

Krystin: Would you guys, would you say you, like, even though you were Chinese-American, like you were more American, and you, uh, do you think your children would ...

Evangeline: My children are more, more American than they are Chinese.

Krystin: They associate themselves more with America than ...

Evangeline: Yeah, I, I do, but because but because I don't look, I mean people expect me to be from China and not from, well the same thing happened to my daughter, you know. They asked [laughs] her where she was from, and she'd say, "Scottsdale!" and, no you know. [Laughs] your not from Scottsdale, she's was born there, but that's not where she's from.

Krystin: Oh.

Evangeline: and my daughter, my children ended up doing very well in school, all though lately, uh, my oldest one is feeling if, he feels like I left him out, but you know, just he was the oldest and I started him working early because we were divorced then, and I felt like it would help him to have a job, and so I got him a bus boy job at beni hanas Japanese restaurant where I was hostessing. Uh, after my divorce I had to get a job.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: And so, I did that briefly, and then I did different sales jobs, and then uh, means, before I got divorce I'd gotten, uh, a real estate license which I kinda put on hold, because to me that was a twenty-four-hour a day, seven-day a week job. And I, I couldn't do it with my children being young. And well, I'd gotten a teaching degree, and I considered that, but that first year I taught school in 1960 in Scottsdale, I hated it. I just couldn't stand it, and so.

Krystin: Was it, where, was it younger kids?

Evangeline: It was 6th graders, and some of them were almost as tall as I was, you know, and I had trouble disciplining the kids to make them listen, and it was such hard work, I just it was awful to me, it was a self contained classroom, I loved the kids, and I would like to have, you know, I just felt like I didn't have enough time to help the ones who really needed help. And um, I just didn't enjoy it, you know maybe if I had, if I had taught longer I might have en, I might have gotten to where, gotten over that, they say the first year is really tough sometimes. But anyway, um, I was pregnant ...

Evangeline: You know, I, I would say, I only went to Chinese school for I can't even say, months, I think it was less than a year.

Krystin: what do you know, um, what area in Phoenix?

Evangeline: Um, our Chinese school, was um, there was a building on 2nd and Madison, um, catty-corner from us was another Chinese restaurant called China Tea Garden on the um, that was 2nd and Madison Northeast corner, and um, just down the street, just further East on Madison was a building that they used briefly for a Chinese School. And it. Excuse me, it must have been after school, on, I don't remember if we went on weekends or not, but it was probably after regular school, after American school, that we went.

Krystin: Did you learn like the characters and how to speak ...?

Evangeline: Chinese school was conducted strictly by wrote, I mean we had little basic readers, little Chinese books, and they would be very simple, and you just, the teacher would read the lesson, and we would just repeat it, and we would just memorize the characters, and we had um, these uh, booklets, that had characters um, in red and we learned to use the Chinese brush, and we learned to just write over them in black. So that's how we learned penmanship, Chinese Characters. By tracing over Chinese books, so they were there were always these books of um, calligraphy that you traced over and you learned how to do the strokes. The teacher would just, so it was, it was basically just wrote learning, you know, there wasn't, you can't learn an alphabet, you can't learn character building because you just have to memorize the word. It's I can I learned as an adult that it's very, very conceptual how they would put words together, it's, it's not, uh, portions of words or how the words sound, but it's the idea. Like, um, very patriarchal, I see, because I noticed the, the characters for mom, big sister, little sister, always have the female character on the left hand side, and then there's another word that you learn that this is the mom word, this is the big sister word, this is the little sister word. But you're reminded they're all female, but the male words, father big brother, little brother, they're distinct, separate words, there's no connection, you know, they don't say I'm male, they are, they just are.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: Um, the word for mom, is, the female character plus horse, I mean you know, just the character by itself, "horse," and, and female, that's mom. So you know, you know, it doesn't sound like, you know, female horse, its mom. [Laughs]. Uh, but I'm thinking wow, that's really something, she's a female horse, that's mom. She's the hard work, you know, she's the one who used to work and. The dependable animal [Laughs]. And dad is just father you know, and then big brother and little brother; they have their individual words, um. The character for people, it's like a man's legs.

Krystin: Like this?

Evangeline: yeah, like that, and then when you put the bar across it, you know.

Krystin: Big?

Evangeline: yeah, so uh, and then of course, little and big, um, but uh, somebody notice that the word for ship is month and eight and mouth. And so they go, "wow that's almost like a Noah story, you know." eight mouths for a month, it's like that's what Noah was in his ship, you know [laughs].

Krystin: Did it look like ... that? Or?

Evangeline: Well, um, eight on top of the mouth, on top of mouth, and then beside it is the character for the month, you know, the um, I think it's yeah but uh, over hear, you know, that's the word for ship.

Krystin: OH!

Evangeline: That you know, those components are together, and then, and then, the word good is really basically the female character and the male character, or do, you know what the call, that's the, that's the word good. Female and male together.

Krystin: hmmm.

Evangeline: So you know it's conceptual more, it's an idea, they couldn't have done this hope with every single word, you know, but somebody had to spend a lot of time thinking these things through.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: you know number 1 to, to pick a character, and then to build characters off of it as you come along. I mean, that's that had to take 'em many, many years to do that. (Sighs then laughs).

Krystin: I think it did.

Evangeline: You know, but you, I'll find that there, that words are composed of ideas, you know, and together they make another concept.

Krystin: Can you read Chinese?

Evangeline: Not very well, you know, I'm really sad that I didn't learn enough.

Krystin: Yeah.

Evangeline: And then, um, because my, almost all the families in, well all the families in my time in Phoenix all spoke the same dialect. 'Cause we were all from one southern region of China. I would say everybody was practically.

Krystin: Was it Mandarin?

Evangeline: No, no, no, not Mandarin at all, in fact that's what, it makes it real big impediment to learn Mandarin, because we have our own dialect, which doesn't have the shh shh sound to it. They, they call our, our, I think I heard it; we're like hillbillies you know [Laughs]. You know, Appalachian hillbillies [Laughs].

Krystin: [Laughs] Yeah.

Evangeline: Um, 'cause we have, um, to them it's very harsh, hard sounds, and they cannot understand us, and I can't understand Mandarin. And it's an impediment for me because, I think like the word for fawn, or we say *hek fawn* eat rice, and they say, they say, *shh fawn* or something, I mean they say it totally different.

Krystin: shh ... I think..

Evangeline: Did you take Mandarin?

Krystin: No, I don't.

Evangeline: Ok, well anyway [Laughs], it's very difficult for me to learn Mandarin, it's much easier for me to learn another foreign language.

Krystin: [Laughs] That's what I've heard.

Evangeline: Yeah. You know.

Krystin: It's just compl ... The only thing really similar is just the characters.

Evangeline: Yeah, thankfully you know, there is that, and you know, a lot of the countries you know use, Korean, Japanese; they use a lot of the Chinese Characters. What's interesting is that they had to learn the concept obviously, because they still use the meaning, the Chinese meaning, but given it their own sound.

Krystin: hum mm, that's where I learned some of those, through Japanese.

Evangeline: Ahhh, Ok.

Krystin: Because, yeah, it's definitely pronounced the same, but it's the same character.

Evangeline: No, their, not pronounced the same, it's interesting how people have evolved, or come up, or how alike we are, obviously, we have the same ideas, or concepts, 'cause otherwise you couldn't communicate because every language has it's vocabulary. Some things you cannot interpret into the other language, but basically a lot of basic concepts are similar. I mean the Idea.

Krystin: Like Numbers ...?

Evangeline: Yeah. Feelings are similar right? I mean there's always a word for love, there's always a word, some, some languages may not have words for certain things, but uh.

Krystin: Yeah, It's pretty interesting, languages when you get into it, but. All right.

Evangeline: And then all these separated, isolated peoples come up with the same ideas.

Krystin: Yeah, I know. It's like um, good in general and stuff, it's very similars.

Evangeline: Yeah, pretty amazing. Yes, right, right.

Krystin: But, I would like to thank you very much for doing this, You've helped me out a lot, and it was pretty interesting hearing some of the stuff [Laughs] that you had to say. I wasn't uh, expecting to find out about a red-light district [Laughs].

Evangeline: [Laughs].

Krystin: But thank you.

Evangeline: Ok.

[end of interview]

JOE SUNIGA

Interviewed by Adrienne Dudley
28 October 2006.

Adrienne: ...I am interviewing Joe Suniga and I am with Adrienne Dudley. For the record do we have your permission to record this interview?

Joe: Yes, uh huh.

Adrienne: Could you state your name and spell it for the record?

Joe: Ok, my name is Joe Suniga, its S-U-N-I-G-A. Joe R. Suniga.

Adrienne: Ok, so what country did you family originate from?

Joe: My mother came from Agua Prieta, that's Douglas, close to Douglas. She was born on the other side of Agua Prieta, towards Douglas and Agua Prieta, so she was originally from Mexico. And, my father came from the Philippines, [inaudible] ...the Philippines I think that's what they call the area.

Adrienne: Right.

Joe: There about two hundred, three hundred miles from Manila. Actually, they lived ...they got volcanoes and jungle types [inaudible]. She came over, wanted to go up there because our father still had a ...now when my father got killed in '59 in a car accident she came over around the sixties, wanted us to go up there because one of the uncle that used to live here, my father's brother, he was the youngest, he went over and took over, and he wasn't there for the longest time, and the cousins were the ones taking care of the rice fields, and whatever, they had a lot of land. Actually, when my father came he was sixteen years old and that's what he used to tell me, and his father used to cry not to go, so he could stay there and work the fields. And, he said, "I am just going for awhile, just for a year just to make some money, so I can get something for my bride." He had a girlfriend. When he came over, and one of my uncles, the oldest, his name was Johnny. He used to live in San Francisco and he was, like a waiter, he worked for a big hotel. I don't know where the hotels were but they were in San Francisco and my father worked there almost a year, and he bought a wedding dress for his bride and all kind of materials. Stuff that he was going to take, and he was giving all the money to him to save it, his oldest brother. So, when he was ready to go back to get the money, that's all he came for, and his oldest brother was a gambler, so he was using his money to gamble and when it was time to go he said, "I want my money," and he bought a freight to go back, that's the only way they used to go on the bought, go back to the island. Next day he woke and everything was gone. I guess they drugged him or something, and they stole all his material, you know the trucks, all he had was his shorts and he called downstairs and they brought him a pair of pants. That's the story he told me then he got mad and came to Arizona. I think it was like '35.

Adrienne: So he came to the U.S. in like '34, stayed a year in San Francisco and then moved to Phoenix.

Joe: Yes, and then came to Phoenix. He came in a Model-T Ford I think. He said he turn over in the desert, left it there, I guess he got a ride back over here somewhere, and he came over here and was successful. He was crew boss; he had crews working for him. The lettuce, carrots, he was a labor contractor, and uh, he bought, I remember he bought like ten army trucks to haul the harvest. Because I used to, I was about nine years old and I used drive them, barely reach the pedals, those army trucks ...

Adrienne: So did he own those farms?

Joe: No, they had farmers, he just had crews, he had his people, and mostly they were all Filipinos and Mexicans. And he had to learn Mexican because my mother she couldn't speak English. So he speaks Spanish, just like us. He learned a little Japanese too he said ... Indian, he used to have a lot of Indians, Navajos, so he learned a lot of language from them too. He was pretty, you know he was only a fifth grade, uh, he only went to fifth grade or fourth grade, but he was real, you know, what he did here, we had new cars in 1948-49. From all the neighborhood around there, we had the new cars and pickups, because he made a lot of money, and plus he gambled a lot too. They had a pool hall on Second Street, that's where I was born second street and Madison, 1941, day after Pearl Harbor. My mother, I guess she said she got [inaudible] Pearl Harbor and she went to labor, I was born that night. I was almost a Pearl Harbor, but a day after, and I was born right there on second street and Madison. I think that arena's right there, they build it over now, everything's gone from there. And, they had a pool hall there, right behind a Chinese store there, there was a Chinese store in the corner.

Adrienne: And that's on ...

Joe: On Adams, Madison and Second Street.

Adrienne: So they were all on Madison.

Joe: Uh huh, were used to live in the back, almost on the railroad tracks by Jackson, and we had that pool hall. They had the pool tables on top and then you go in the back were the restroom was, you knock on the wall, a little peek hole, and then you walk, there was an empty room, they opened the door. They, they knew me you know, I used to go down there. You walk in an empty, and all of a sudden there was some stairways down there, you get all the smoke from cigars, and they had slot machines and they were playing poker. They played a game rummy, it was like those dominoes, and I don't know how they played, they throw the dice and each one, and you have to beat the banker, whoever was the banker. And, and I go up there and tell my dad, and he gave me a bag of nickels, that's what the slot machines, so I go up and entertain myself. They always raid that place, but he said they take us to jail because their running the place, he ordered a hamburger [in jail], that's what he like, hamburger. They bring him a hamburger, "I don't like that food from here," he said, "give me a hamburger." They already knew the judge and the lawyers and who gets to go up there, so, but they used to, I guess they want a little money or something so they raid the place just to make it look good.

And, there was, and that's, but we used to live here on 1st Street and Handley. I still got the lock there, the house burned down. It was a really pretty house, it was, it had picket fence in front, white picket fence, then it had a little sidewalk all the way to the house. It had a porch with two swings, a little porch, and it was like a two bedroom, but we slept there, we were nine in the family. We all slept all together, we piled up in the beds, and uh, and the Raros used to live there, there was another Filipino family on Second Street, then the Solanos and, there were about four Filipino families that used to live around there, and [inaudible] maybe about six of eight.

Adrienne: So, your father met your mother here in Phoenix?

Joe: Yes, uh huh.

Adrienne: Ok, and you said there are nine of you?

Joe: Yes, five brothers, four sisters.

Adrienne: And are you in the middle or the oldest?

Joe: I am the oldest of all of them.

Adrienne: Can you name your sisters and brothers for us?

Joe: Uh, my brother next to me is Lino, then Alan, Francis and then Yolanda, Ray then Rosie, and then Lawrence and Albert's the youngest.

Adrienne: Are any still here in Phoenix?

Joe: Yeah still here in Phoenix, they all live here in Phoenix, o no no, Rosie my sister lives in Oakland, she's been there for about, maybe fifteen years.

Adrienne: Did your parents ever tell you about when they first came here to Phoenix, what were there impressions of Phoenix, did they have any, did they every you about when they first came to Phoenix?

Joe: Uh, my mother's side, my grandfather and my grandmother they didn't speak English at all. They work out on the fields, and that time they didn't have none of that, what do you call it today, food stamps and all of that. So, they had to work to, to survive. And, I think they used to live around Glendale, and I can't remember if he ever told me how he met my father and mother. Probably through the work, were they were working, my father probably met her, 'cause he used to run the crews. I used to, when I was a kid, I used travel with him, he would go to the fields and check on the crew, and we would drive to another one, and then he started, I guess that's were they met and got married. I think they got married in, what's the border of New Mexico and Arizona? That town there ...Lordsberg, no, something like that. That's were they got married, I guess that's were everybody used to go get married, married there I don't know why.

Adrienne: Did your mother parents have any objections to your father being Filipino?

Joe: Yes, they didn't like him. That's what he used to tell me then, and my mom but every time they needed something he would go buys groceries, take her this. If they sick, had to go to doctor he would pay for it, because he was making money, he was one of the top guys around here running crews. Like I said he had trucks, he bought a bunch of army trucks, and he had a pool hall, running gambling there. But he was real, he'd buy a pig or a goat or something and barbecue it he'll take it to his crews, Filipino, they would cook there, and I used to go with him, and there was a farmers liquor store right by 1st Street on Central and that's were he'd cash his check. Oh look at this check, he would cash like fifteen hundred, two thousand dollar check, that was in the forties, that was a lot of money. And that guy, well he didn't believe in banks, I guess, or they didn't have, you know, the owner of the liquor store he had the money and he would cash his check. Then he would bring, tell me, "get the dolly," and put like ten cases of beer take it out to the pickup, and he said, "get about four cases of whiskey," bottled whiskey, take them out there, we take them out, then he'd go buy the pig, so he'd say, "here," so everybody grabbed a bottle and start drinking. They used to like whiskey, and wine and barbecue, they party. And, we used to have parties in the house, everybody used to,

I remember when I was a kid, everybody used to come barbecue a pig, or whatever. And, we used to eat good. All the kids from the neighborhood come to eat, there sitting there waiting for me to go out and play, and, "come on in," we had a big old table, he bought some round from the Chinese place, a restaurant they closed it down, he bought the tables and chairs and woks and everything, that's were I learned to cook. My family used to cook, and then I learned. I learn all the Filipino dishes, so everywhere they call me and say hey, you got to help me I'm kinda old. Yeah, that why I used to cook for all these young, you know, all the Filipino were dying there weren't much like Mariano, Lisa Carbajal. We used go down there, I used to help Mariano, he was a good cook too, I learn from him too a lot. And then the Barogas they lived down the street, he was my *compadre* and he used to kill pigs all the time, so I go up there. I learned that because I used help and I used to cut the meat and help him shave it and all that, that how I learned. Then I worked in the packinghouse, I learned how to slaughter. I worked like sixteen years in the packinghouse, for Swift Meatpacking Company. And ... that's how, when my father knew the

Farinas, down there in that neighborhood on Mojave. He owned those house for the Farinas, he was, before he met my mother, I think her name was Mary, the lady he was staying with, and there was mother of the Farinas and the father, 'cause my dad bought that place and then he bought a lot next to it where Eddy Farinas lives.

Adrienne: Do you recall where, the location for those?

Joe: Right on Mojave, I have a house there at 608 West Mojave, that I still own and I'm, renting it now. That used to belong to Johnny Bacud, he was a Filipino. But a, he met a young girl and left to California, and my uncle he was a Filipino, they were like cousins to my father, we used to call them uncle, and his name was Fred Peralta, and he got that place on his name, he loaned Johnny Bacud some money, because he wanted to go with that young girl, when they went to California, I don't know what happened he died over there, and so he stayed with the house, and he told me, "hey do you want to buy this house?" I already had a house in south Phoenix I said, "yeah," he said, "real cheap." I think two thousand dollars at that time, I said, "yeah." So, I still, I think I paid four thousand for it. He used to hold two thousand dollars in the bank that's what he draw out to go. So that how I got that house, and I had it since, so I move and just rent it to my brothers, and whoever, take care of the house.

Adrienne: So the first house that you grew up in, did your father own that house?

Joe: Yes, uh huh, on First Street, 910 South First Street.

Adrienne: Is it still around?

Joe: Just the lot. I had it boarded it for a while and some transients got in, and build a fire and then during winter it burned it down.

Adrienne: Could you describe it?

Joe: The what?

Adrienne: Do you remember the house you grew up in?

Joe: I told you it had a picket fence in the front, and then it had a sidewalk all the way to the house, it was way in the back. So, I remember the mailman had to walk all the way to deliver our mail, and they had a porch, it had a step that was a porch, a wooden porch with some rails, and then it had some swings, two people could fit on them, it had two swings.

Adrienne: Yeah, like a little bench.

Joe: Yeah, a bench on two sides, then you go and had the living room, it was a small living room. Then they had like an arch, and then you go to the kitchen, no no, to the dinner room, and then it had a little kitchen in the back, another room. Then down here where you go in, they was, you go in there the restroom was there, the bedroom, then there bedroom, then there was another small, it was a laundry room, but they made like into a bedroom, we used to sleep there in the back. It was a nice little home, nice, they were built from,

I don't know who built them, but they were all, they used to tell me the neighbors, they were older people, they say yeah when we first move in here there was a lot of whites, used to live around the area. Then when the Filipinos and Mexicans start moving there, they (the Anglos) all went up north. They started moving all up north, so they were nice little homes, you know, all the homes were different. There's one still over there, the Navarros, there around, on Handy and 2nd Street like the northwest side there's a little a house, and there a lot of them there that are still, but ours were made out of all wood, and the inside was real, you know, it was real nice, nice home, big lot, it was a big lot.

Adrienne: What memories do you have of your father and mother while you were growing up around the house?

Joe: Well, my father and mother they get along real good, but my father had to travel all the time, and he would go to Colorado, Texas, but I remember because a, the harvest would end here during summer, and he had to go where the harvest was, take his people up there, and he would be gone for two, three months, then come back and maybe go to Salinas or Yuma, wherever the harvest was, he was always traveling, and we used to have a lot of parties, and my father always had a pair of boxing gloves in the truck, so when we go to the parties he'll take them out and say, "OK, Champ," that was me. So, you got to fight this guy, sometime they were bigger than me so here I go, so he said, "I'm betting on you," they all bet. So I go out there, he says, "Now you get your share," I used to beat them up; he showed me how to fight, so I was a good fighter, even the big kids. And ... I got a reward, but everywhere we go I said, "Oh no," I see some big guys there; I have to fight them [laughs]. But, it was, it was real, I used to like it.

Adrienne: Was it mostly, what did you speak in the ...

Joe: Yeah, my father learned how to speak Spanish real good, so he talked to us in Spanish.

Adrienne: Did you learn any Filipino?

Joe: I learned a little, but after he passed away, you know we, I didn't talk, I used to go work with the Filipinos that used to know him, and they had crews to, so I would go up there and help them, and I learned all the bad language [laugh], and I learned how to, a lot of the foods, you know, and the names of the animals, I still remember them. Like he would say, "Lets go get a *baboi*," that's a pig; *calline*, that's a goat. I forgot what the chicken ...

Adrienne: Did your father ever talk about the Philippines, or did he ever share?

Joe: Yeah he, he said they had to go farm, you know, the harvest and he was real good at it, you know, they used to plant rice and they had all sorts of fruits, all kind of fruits, but there a, I think my cousin import to San Francisco, they were pretty well off. They told me, "Come on over," because their uncle is trying to take over everything and were going to court, so you guys got share, 'cause in the will your grandfather left a will, and you guys, all of your brothers and sisters have a share, but you have to come to the Philippines. And, my uncle was telling me that time, that's when they had all that elections, you know, he said, "I wouldn't recommend you to go up there," they'll cut your neck. Especially, if your uncle is over there, you fighting against him, trying to get some of his property, so I don't know what happened, I guess he took over. He married, he was about sixty-eight years old when he went back, he married a twenty-two year old Filipina, and he took over. And the cousins, they were the ones that maintained the farm and all that for all that time. His father didn't want him to leave; he said he was crying when my father told him he was leaving to the U.S.A.

Adrienne: Did he ever get a chance to go back?

Joe: No, never, he always wanted, he used to send money to my cousins. One of them was a nurse and one of was going to a university or something and he used to send them money all the time, that's why they were well contacted, 'cause they needed money sometimes, and he would send them money.

Adrienne: What was your first memories of growing up in Phoenix, what do you remember growing up?

Joe: ...everything was there on Washington street, Penney's, Sears, there was no malls, everybody used to go down there, and Fox Theatre was there, they had like nine or ten theatres,

Rex, Rialto, Strand, all kinds of, Orpheum is still there, Palace, what's it called, right by the City of Phoenix building, Palace West, I think that's what they used call it. I used to drive my mom, my father would leave his car when he used to go work out of town, and my mother, my father would give her a hundred bucks every pay check, here go downtown, and she used to -- a hundred is a lot to go spend in those times -- and my mother would put a, I was about eight years, nine years old something, she would put hat on me, and she would put some pillows under, she didn't know how to drive, she say, "OK take me downtown," so I sit in there, I could barely reach the pedals, and the clutch, because they were standard, you were going, "Aaahh," down the street. I just go straight from first street pass the tracks, the railroad tracks, I said, "This is as far as I'm going. Get down." She'd get down, and I'd drive back, and she'd call me, two, three hours, four hours later, "Come pick me up," here I go. And, we used to play in the park all the time, play baseball, got into the team. I got to be pretty good because the park was right in front of us. Everyday I go up there and be hitting those balls, trying to break the windows at the nursery. We have some bets, hit it from, it was almost a block away, see if you can break, I was a slugger, and I hit that ball and you got it just right it would go over the fence and hit the street, then it would bounce into the building and break the window.

Ms. Turner was her name, she was our coach, she was a older lady, and she was rough, she go out there and tell me, "Go home you got a game tonight," I say, "Oh, I'm just going to practice a little bit more," "No you'll be to tired," so she'd chase me out of the park, and, "Tell your father to come pick us up," my father had the only, the only guy who had a pickup in my neighborhood and he'll take us down there, put all the players in the back, about fifteen or ten, my father would take, he used to like to go see us play ball. Every time I go up to bat he would be in the fence, "Hit one son, hit one," "Ok Dad," Boom. But I was kind of chubby so I would only get to third or second base, I would hit that ball really far, but I used to get, in the base, get them in. That's why they used to like me because I would get people in. But, you get, you play so much, you know hitting the balls just like golf, and you know when the ball is fast pitch, you know hard ball, you know when there coming you know which one to hit.

Adrienne: Now, the neighborhood, the kids that you grew up with, what type of demographic were they, were they Mexican, Filipino?

Joe: Uhh, mostly they were Mexicans, there were some blacks. We had some blacks in our team. They used to come from down around 7th Avenue, and they're pretty good players, too. We had like three of them that used to play. We stayed together about four years, the same guys, same players, and we went to the all-star game, and we beat um, all the kids from the north, they were whites, and we went up there to the all-star, I still got the certificate, the all-star game and we beat um. So, we had a good team, and, the Navarros they were Filipinos, they used to live up here. The Solanos on 2nd Street south of Lincoln -- north of Lincoln -- south of Lincoln, and they were all *compadres*. You know *compadre* is when they baptize their kids, so every time we had a party they were all there.

We had a lot of fun parties. Sometime I would sneak some beer out in the back, drink it, and come out ... come out drunk. My father said [inaudible], when I was about two years old or something like that, he'll, they use to go to the bars, and he would sit there on the bar, and he'll bet say, "My son can drink a shot a whiskey," and they say, "Aaa, no way," he said, "I'll bet you, bet you fifty dollars," "OK let me see," they'd pour me a shot of whiskey, I would drink it, I'd just go like this [laughs]. The bartender, in those times it wasn't like today, they'll arrest you for it, in those times the bartenders they knew each other. He was a good, big spender; he'll buy cases of beer there for the parties, so they knew each other, they knew me, too. The bartender, all the owners of the bars.

One time I stole ... My father used to have a bottle of whiskey -- 'cause that's all he drank, whiskey. He had a bottle of whiskey under his seat, so I stole it and went across to the park and I started drinking, and drinking, and I used to tell the guys, "Hey you want a drink," "Naw, no, no," so I got loaded and I couldn't walk so I crawled back home. We were just, our house like I said

was way in the back, and I was crawling to the house and my mother came out and started yelling, "Oh they run over Joe," they thought a car hit me because I was crawling, but I was drunk [laughs], and they put me in the bed and I could hear them eating, they were in the dining room eating. And I could smell the food and I was trying to get up, and I got up and fell right on my face, on the bed. Yeah, I used to, I used to see my father drink, but he didn't get like you know all drunk and falling, he was a good drinker, he could handle his liquor. Like I said he always had a bottle under his seat, after they get out of work, whoever's riding with him, they have a drink going home.

Adrienne: So where did you go to school?

Joe: Monroe School, right across here, yeah I graduated from there. Then I went to Phoenix Union for about a year.

Adrienne: And I walked to school?

Joe: Yeah I used to walk, well they had a bus, but after about the sixth, seventh grade I liked to walk, so I used to walk. I thought I was too old to ride the bus. So, a lot of those that went to school here, Monroe School, used to live around here, and they were, even from first street and, the Solanos, the Navarros and all the people I used to know there, live around there, we used to go Monroe. Monroe was a, they had an old teacher there, Ms. Hane I think her name was, and even my mother's oldest friend, it was her teacher too, and they were saying stuff about some other ...you know [inaudible] or something used to go to Monroe School too, and they graduated from Phoenix Union.

There weren't many schools around. I remember first when I started here at Monroe, I think in the third grade, they didn't allow blacks in the school, and I think in the fourth grade or third grade they started bringing blacks in there. I remember a little black kid, and he was always scared you know, looking around was a little scared, I say, "Hey buddy don't be scared I'm here around," 'cause like I told you I was a good fighter and I said, "Nobody's going to bother you," and sometimes, you know somebody come over here and started slapping him, I knock him down, I say, "you leave him alone, he's my friend." So, he was always behind me, and all the bullies, I used to knock them down too, all the big bullies hit girls and you know I say, "come here, you don't slap girls, she's my friend," and he said, "what are you going to do about it?" well you want to fight, and then boom, 'cause my father taught me, you know like I told you, he carried boxing gloves in the trunk everywhere we go, he said, "OK, twenty dollars. Beat him up," "OK Dad." [laughs]. Even if they were bigger than me.

Adrienne: So how was Monroe, Monroe was mostly Mexican?

Joe: Yeah there were a few whites, there were enough whites, but in the room there was almost all Mexicans, couple blacks, or three blacks, maybe about four or five whites, 'cause there was all Mexican area around here.

Adrienne: Did you have a favorite teacher or subject?

Joe: Um, yeah I had a teacher, I think it was Ms. Hanes, I cant remember, she was a real young teacher, all the male teachers were chasing her. They were always, you know, chasing her. She would be, like, she would favor me, you know, she'd say, "sit down here by my desk and I'll help you," 'cause I was kind of slow, I wasn't that bright you know on learning, and she would teach me you know, like my speak, sometimes I couldn't say words really good. She would teach me, 'cause you know in those times they just write on the board, "you do this and that." "OK that's your assignment, do it," and you know there pronouns, nouns and adjectives, I didn't understand none of that stuff, so she'd say, "OK, come sit down over here," but today I see those teachers, 'cause I got a grandson and he's kind of slow, and he goes to a special school. I go up there and I

see the teacher how they, you know they really work him, before we didn't have none of that. Either you were smart or you do, you know if you were A-1 student, or you couldn't do it.

Adrienne: What do you remember about your childhood friends?

Joe: Umm, I had some neighbors, we got to be our gang, but not gang bangers, we used to take care of the area around there. They were next door neighbors and they were adopted kids, that lady had about six of them, and they didn't have a mother or father so she would, they were from the orphanage. So, we grew up together and, so we had like a little gang. Like sometimes, from the Westside would come over, trying to take over, and you know we would fight them and tell them, "Get out of here," 'cause sometimes they were trouble makers, you know, trying to break things.

And, one of our neighbor's he was a baker, there was bakery there, Bartlett's Bakery. We'd go out there, help him, pack some loaves of bread, then he will cut, what do you call them, the loaf of bread, you know French bread, cut it in half, and make like a hole and fill it up with chocolate. We go home eating that. He was a really good person and a neighbor, he was a baker from Mexico, an old man, and he's the one who used to bake all the French bread. They deliver a lot of that to the stores, 'cause a lot of the stores they didn't have bakeries, so they make really good business. One of my friends, orphanage kinds, he was, he started working there and going to school. Poor guy. He used to work all night and get up in the morning and do his homework and then go to school, 'cause that was the only way he could get money. We would be walking from school going home and we'll stop like at the lights, signal lights, and then the lights turned green we start walking and all of a sudden I don't see him, he's over there on the pole, hugging the pole he's asleep, poor guy. He was one of my best friends. Actually, you worked for Naddy's Bakery, where they make all the bread, and he was like a foreman there because he knew all about baking. I don't know if he's retired now or not, but he was about two years older than me.

Adrienne: Now, besides the baseball park was there anywhere else everyone used to go and play and do that sort of thing?

Joe: Around 7th Street, past 5th Street there was a dumping place. They used to dump a lot of, you know, trash like cement blocks, construction dump is what I think it was, and we used to go play there, and a lot of hobos used to stay there, they make a little tent, and we go play up there, I used to know a lot of the hobos, they would be cooking hobo stew or something, and I always like to eat, so they say, "You want to eat?" "Yeah," they get a little plate, so I eat with them. We used to go play there, ride our bikes 'cause we had a [inaudible] little hills. That was about eight, I think, we used to go up there and play, talk to the hobos. Nowadays you can't do that, because you don't know what they are. Those times we weren't afraid, we never locked the door or nothing during those times. We would sleep outside, I would sleep outside on the swing on the porch.

What I used to like is my father would always go, every weekend -- or every other weekend he would butcher a hog --, he would do that for, you know, the people that used to work for him. And they just do a barbecue and say, "OK, there your chunk," and they take that piece, that's how they used to do it, they'll take it home for, for cooking for the week. That's what I used to like to go with him all the time. I always travel, actually when he got killed I was working there on that farm way out there on the other side of Buckeye, they had, he had like a little cabin in there and we used to stay there, and they were going out there one morning, five of them, went off the road, hit a [em]bankment. All of them, except one guy didn't get killed, but all of them got killed. So I didn't like that, you know I wanted to be like him, learning how to, actually the farmers used to call me and say, "You want to bring your dad's crew," 'cause I already knew them all, they already knew me. I was only about eighteen, nineteen; I said, "No I am going to get out of this business." I could have made money, too, like him, no I want to do something, 'cause I don't want to be traveling like him. Be here for a month and then go for three, four months. He was always all over.

Adrienne: Did you guys as a family go like on any trips?

Joe: Yeah we used to go to, he used to take us to San Francisco. One time we went up there the whole summer after school, we stayed there about three months, from May to almost September, yeah almost three months. He would take us up there, and he had some friends in San Francisco, and it was really nice they had a park, I can't remember where it was but we would go play in there, middle of the neighborhood, but there were buildings they were like hotels 'cause we used to go out and play in alley through the fire escapes, go down there and play. My second brother, he was always jealous of me, I don't know why, and he formed a little Chinese gang, they got me one time, but I had some Italian friends, they were my gang and that little time we were there, we did all that. So, I just whistle and here they come running, and all those Chinese started running, and my brother was there by himself, I said "OK" boom, that's for trying, I don't know why he always wanted to beat me up, he couldn't beat me so I guess he got a gang. We used to go to Chinatown. I always liked San Francisco, I wanted to move up there, but my wife didn't want to move up there.

Adrienne: So like you were saying about how your mother's parents didn't like your father due to the fact that he was Filipino, do you recall any of their interactions with any other types of prejudices?

Joe: Yeah, there were like, like at school I had a lot of friends, and girls, and I had girlfriends too, and well, when my father used, it would be raining or something so he'd take me out to school 'cause I would miss the bus or something, and drop me off, and they would see that my father was Filipino. Then, they didn't want to talk to me any more. They said, "your father's a Filipino," or so what, I'm not going out with you, my father's going to be, you can't be my friend because my father's Filipino, I don't like you, I don't want you to be my friend. Yeah, there were a lot of prejudice everywhere, 'cause we would go to a store or something, they just be looking at my father, and look at me, and some of the guys would call me Filipino. Like my grandparents didn't like him at all when they first got married, and after my father used to tell them, take them groceries 'cause they were bad off, you know. And they need to go to the hospital so he'll pay for all that. After they seen that, they liked him, they really liked him, but first they didn't like him at all, that's what my mother used to tell me. We had a good growing up life, you know, with my father, 'cause like on my wife's side they say they suffer a lot, sometimes when you have no food at all. There was a lot of poor people in those times, but my father used to, like he worked in the harvest and he'll bring crates of lettuce and melons and go all over the neighborhood delivering, that's why they used to like him. He said, "go ahead, take this one over there, and there, and there, spread it all out," so I take them out to all the neighbors, cantaloupes, carrots, lettuce, whatever the harvest was. Yeah, there was prejudice at that time, of Filipinos, they didn't like them.

Adrienne: What kind of foods did you guys eat, like all types pretty much, or?

Joe: Yeah, there was one, *adobo*, they call it, they, it's a they put vinegar, pickle and spices and all that, it came out pretty good, that's one of the first things I learned how to cook that goat, I used to barbecue it, marinate it with vinegar, salt, pepper, and fish, there was a fish market down here, downtown 3rd and Washington I think. I think it was called Marco's, Marco's Fish Market. They had fresh fish like Halibut, Sea Bass steaks like that, you don't find them anymore and my father would cook that, make *adobo*, cook fried fish, steaming fish, they just put the pots, and the pot of rice like that, and we used to eat two, three plates, we thought we had to eat like that. Now, I don't know how I could eat three plates like that, and there were a lot of leftovers, but like I said all the kids would come, you'd call them in, come and eat. Some of them, sometimes I see them and they say, "Boy, I really miss your father's cooking, when he used to cook for us." All the kids, I guess they knew what time we were going to eat, so they would come over, they eat good, fish, they would make like sushi, too, with the fish, marinate it in vinegar. It was really good. Chop suey, we eat rice everyday, we buy the fifty-pound sacks at market.

Adrienne: Did you guys have, have a chance to go out, and go to like a restaurant?

Joe: Yeah, we used to go up here to, we'd go to Sing High, it was on third street, they still got it over there by second avenue, but they don't cook like they used to, its all different. That was the best, the place where we used to go. Then they had the, they called it the Prince Hall, the dancing, where all the Filipinos would dance, and they had a bar in the bottom and the second floor was a dance hall. We had a lot of dances there, then after the dance we go to the chop suey house. The one I used to like it was on First Street and Madison, they called it the Dragon, and they had a booth with the curtains, you go in there and eat and they close the curtains. You had like a private place to eat. I used to like that one too because it was private, and like on Sunday we would go to South Mountain and barbecue up there, party, and we would go up there fishing, he used to like to fish, he was a good fisherman, take his nets and go the Salt River, throw the nets it, bring a bunch of fish and he would take his tomatoes and rice already cooked and a grill, we would throw the fish on there, grill them on the grill, and we take out the rice with some onions, tomatoes, eat that. He said he was one of the best swimmers in the ocean over in the islands. So we went to Salt River one time and there was a water, rapid water going really fast. He said, "I want to go bring you a fish you see, so he ...".

Joe: ...house of Filipinos, they would cook Filipino food. We always had *adobo* there, and I don't mention that other one that's called "chocolate meat," *dinuguan* [*dinardaraan*], they don't like it, its made out of blood, and meat.

Adrienne: What kind of chores, did you have chores around the house that you had to do?

Joe: Cut the grass, we had a big yard and the grass really grew in there, and it was all push mower. That was hard, I don't know how I used to do it there, but we cut the grass with the push mower, 'cause sometimes we let it go and it would get about this high, that was hard, it was hard to mow. And, I used to help my mom cook, that's how I learned to cook, and my father, 'cause my mother was always busy ironing, she had to iron all the clothes, and washing so I would cook for them.

Adrienne: Did all your brothers and sisters did they do all the same things that everybody else did, or was there specific chores?

Joe: Yeah, they had to, you know, just clean up, wash the dishes or something, but mostly they all didn't learn how to cook, I don't why. Nowadays they still call me and say how do you do this, how do you do that. I tell them write it down that way you don't have to, but I guess they just can't cook so. Every time they make a party or a wedding I do the cooking, I use those big woks. They had a Filipino community gathering one time and I had to cook, it was like they were trying to get some money for the club so ...

Adrienne: What club was that?

Joe: Uh, the Filipino Community Club. There still, there trying to get me to join in, but I haven't, there still running it some of my friends, Nilos and the Rayas, their running the club, and they say I cook for them, they wanted Filipino food, so I say, "I do it," so I did all that. I got an old Filipino man that come to me and said, "You cook good, where did you learn all that," and I said, "Oh, I always help them," every different Filipino, whatever they do, I'll help them. A lot of them didn't learn like my brother 'cause they didn't like to help. And when we go to the camps in the California -- we used to go to the grapes -- I would help them cook, wash the pots and the dishes, and he would tell me, 'cause he had to do that, cook and wash the pots, but I would do them for him.

He said, "I am going to teach you how to do this." "Pineapple, do you know want to know how to do pineapple?" I said, "yeah," he showed me, he showed me all the spices he put in there, he put it in the oven and when its roasted nice, the ribs, then put the juice and the pineapples and the, and I learned that, that's how I learned from the cooks in the camps. They would see that I used to like to cook and I would help, 'cause everybody after their eating they go to their room or go

watch TV or play cards, and not me I stay with him and help him wash the dishes, and there were a lot of them you know. They used to use those aluminum plates and big pots. I used to help the cooks, that's how I learned.

Adrienne: Did you go to church?

Joe: Yeah there was a church right across Central, St. Anthony's; it's a big church. It's been there for a long time.

Adrienne: Was it mostly a Mexican church?

Joe: Yes, uh huh.

Adrienne: And that was Catholic?

Joe: Yeah, Catholic. Yeah we made our holy communion there, all of us.

Adrienne: So the whole family used to go?

Joe: Uh huh, yeah mother would wake us up Sunday morning, "Get up." "No we want to sleep over." "No your going to church." So here we go. Then after she wasn't going to it. I don't know what happened, but she would make go, light up a candle for her, for her special saint, so here I go. So mostly I was the one going to church all the time. I was there every Sunday.

Adrienne: Now did your parents have any, did they ever participate in any, were there any groups or you know get-togethers that your parents would go to?

Joe: Well, just the *Prinfo* [?], the dance on Saturday nights. The orchestra was all Filipinos. One of them used to play the piano, another one the saxophone -- called him Bob the Sax -- saxophone, and a drummer. They weren't that great, but they did their music, you know the Filipinos used to [inaudible].

Adrienne: I'm sure it was more about just everyone getting together?

Joe: Yeah, that was one of the main things, the *Prinfo*. Everybody like [inaudible] the family were there. We used to, that's how we met at the parties.

Adrienne: You were talking about how Pearl Harbor, did your parents ever talk to you about that event, like what they felt about when it happened and that sort of thing?

Joe: Yeah well, like I was saying my mother was pregnant with me when they bombed that day. She got upset and the next day she delivered me. So, I was, it happened so quick she couldn't go to the hospital so they called a doctor and I was born at home on Second Street and Madison, in between Jackson and Madison, and a doctor came over and he delivered me at home, and my mother said that the doctor said, "OK, I'm going to give you a rifle, go to war, go fight," that was just, I was born ... I think my father they wanted to draft him, but he were running all those harvests, so they left him alone because they needed all that produce. So, one of my uncles, they took one of my uncle's, his brothers. A lot of friends, Filipinos that I know went to war. They used to tell me when they came back how they, when they drop them off in the islands, they said bullets were flying through their heads, they would duck down and pretty soon they said, "We didn't duck down anymore." They got used to bullets flying through their heads, and one of, they were like cousins, they were from the same place, they hang his brother, flagpole. The Japanese and he didn't like Japanese for that.

Because my father, like I told you he only went to fifth grade, fourth grade and he couldn't read or write, but he was successful over here, he was a great man, without reading and writing he did

something over here in the United States. I was really proud of him. He was a leader, everybody respected him. On his funeral day, I mean you could, the guys who was driving the limo he looked back and he said, "Oh, were about six, eighth blocks and there still cars turning." The whole cemetery was full, St. Francis, all around the cars. We had group pictures were they put the casket, I mean hundreds of them. And they told me, "They must have liked your father." Everybody liked him. He was a good man. Even little kids would come. We had a wake at our house, they would come and bring flowers. They said, "We liked him, 'cause he used to give us money all the time." And you know, everybody used to like him. He was famous around here. Its just like the Farinas, he bought those houses and he gave them to them when he bought this other house. 'Cause before he met my mother he used to live there, and they called him Tata, the Farinas, because he was like their father, grandfather. And, he gave them all that house, 'cause they don't have no place to go, so he said, "That's your house you guys." They used to like him for that too.

Adrienne: How about the Japanese internment, did your parents ever mention anything about that? How they had to, you know, their internment camps and that sort of thing?

Joe: No, we all just said they had a concentration over here on, I think it was Van Buren and Thirty-fifth [inaudible]. But, we used to go by there and see the guard, guard shacks, you know where they put them by the fence and there up there guarding. They had a lot of, I can barely remember all of this. I was about fix, six years old. They used to have Japanese prison there, and a lot of those Japanese that had property over there on Baseline, they put them in the concentration camp. But after that, they, no, they were not against them, you know the Japanese that used to live here. They used to respect each other. My father was always worried about Japanese getting to their place up there in the islands, 'cause they used to go villages and kill everybody. My father would tell they bad, really bad people, Japanese. They killed a lot of their friends, got killed over there. They draft a lot of, when he was here, a lot of them came back, a lot of Filipinos came back. A lot of them didn't talk much about the war, they didn't want to talk about the war, a lot of them they did.

Adrienne: Is there any other properties or any places that you might think of that were around back then that were either owned by a Filipino or Asian American or any stores or anything like that?

Joe: No, the ... Philip Wong, he was a Filipino. He had a pool hall downtown on First Street and I know one of his sons, Philip I think was his name. I think he graduated from ASU or something. He started a flower shop, I think that's the name of it Philip's Flower Shop, and he's millionaire, he lives up there in Sedona somewhere. That's one of the biggest successes of a Filipino family, but I remember his father, he always had a cigar in his mouth. He was always like a leader too, 'cause when they go look for a job, he had like a bulletin board in the pool hall, he'd tell them, "OK, they need some people over in Texas somewhere," he says, "here's fifty dollars gas money, go over there but you got to take three guys with you," 'cause they needed a trio, its was supposed to be three guys. That's how we used to go get a job there too. He get a little profit out of it, everything he did he get some profit. They call him Papa Wong, he was a Filipino, and Fred Solano, he had a pool hall with my father there, too. That's all he used to do, he didn't work, just run the pool hall, that's how he made his money, plus the gambling downstairs. His son got pretty good playing pool, Tony Solano, he just died last summer, this summer. And he used to go to tournaments in Vegas, 'cause I remember we used to barely reach the table, pool table, and he would always beat me, he kept on doing. He went to Vegas when he got married and got divorced, he moves to Vegas, he says that how he was doing his living up, playing pool, tournaments, and when he came up here he was still playing tournaments, and he got cancer in the liver or something, he died last year. I remember seeing him the last time two months before he died. "Man, I want to go to the tournament." But he had a big stomach, "So, I can't adjust myself to the table." The poor guy. He said come over to my house, "I got a pool table and I'll teach you how to." I said, "No, I don't want to learn, then I will be out there at the tournaments too, and that's gambling, you got to bet a lot of money." Well, then I started getting with the Farinas

and Gugi [Felix, Jr.] Carbajal, that was just here, we met out there and we used to barbecue all time with his son and father-in-law. No, not his father-in-law, he was married to his sister, so we always had parties there -- Carbajal's house.

I had parties, I live across from him, so I had parties all the time, too. I used to do all the cooking, and then I go help Mariano and he did some, and sometimes he come over and help me cook to so. Yeah, my father when they closed the Chinese place he bought all the tables and the woks, I had a bunch of woks, and then when he died, you know, there were friends, Filipino come over and, "Hey, can you lend me that wok?" I say, "You know your father were great friends," so I say, "it might be two of them." I had a storage room and I had ten, twelve of them. Then they came back I say, "Where's my wok," "Well, they stole it last night," "Yeah they stole," I say, "Go ahead and keep it," I said, it's a gift from my father. So, I stop lending them, I kept some, I don't want to lose them all, especially the big pots. People borrow them and they disappear.

Adrienne: Ok, I have a couple final questions, like our closing questions. What would describe as a defining moment in your life, which made you become the man that you are today? Is there a specific or is there any moment in your life where really comes out in your mind?

Joe: To me, I was proud to be, my father was a Filipino, 'cause he always treat me good. I was always with him everywhere we traveled, and he would always take me, and when he got killed that hurt me. I was about eighteen years old, really hurt me, like I lost a good friend, you know, really hurt me. A highway patrolman came over on a Sunday. Actually, we were partying at Estril's house that night and I got home about four o'clock in the morning. And about six or seven in the morning they were knocking on the door, it was a highway patrol man. I said, "Oh, what did I do?" I thought they were coming after me, and that's when he told me, "Your father owns a station wagon ...," and he told me his name, and I said, "Yeah, what's wrong," "Well he got killed this morning, on the highway." That really hurt me, that was something else you know. I just backed up. I liked my father a lot, and I was proud to be a Filipino.

Adrienne: Now, What would you want your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren to know about you, or your time growing up here in Phoenix, and you know, just about like in general?

Joe: Well, like in the '50, between the fifties and sixties, I used to love Phoenix, you know, I still do that's why I haven't left, and downtown everything was cheap. You could go to a movie it was twenty-five cents when we were young, five cents to go in the movie, five cents for popcorn. I still have that [inaudible] when we get out of the movie and go to a Playland, they were all penny machines, stay there another hour, two hours. You know with thirty cents you could do a lot, and that's what I used to like about Phoenix. Phoenix was a nice place to, especially downtown. Everything was there, Penney's, Sears. My mother used to take us all the time shopping, buy new shoes, pants. She used to like to spend money, 'cause my father would give her a hundred bucks. One time my father was out of work for about a month, they weren't ready to go up there, my mother say, "Hey, where is my hundred bucks?" He said, "I haven't gotten a check, yet." I remember that she was real mad, she was used to, you know, like a kid you give money every time. Well he said, "I can give you fifty," "No, no. I don't want fifty, I want a hundred dollars." They were fighting. I remember that they were fighting for a hundred bucks. I said, "wow," my mom, he always give her money so she got used to it, and then when you don't have it no more [inaudible], like a lot of these rich people, they shot themselves they can't see falling.

Adrienne: All right, is there anything else that you felt that you want us know, or that we didn't ask, and you would like to ...?

Joe: No, but a just going to that dance. We had our club, a *mestizo* club. We made a club -- the Yabos and Carbajals -- and one Saturday we were having a dance and all the young Filipinos were coming from the islands, and they were real wild, and one dance they started a fight with us because they didn't like *mestizo*. They said, "*Mestizo*, if your not a full-blooded you're a ..." We had a big fight. Oh it was bad, big fight. And a lot of people got hurt. I had some friends that go to

Delano, working the grapes up there and he got to Chinatown where all the Filipinos. There were pool halls and all that, bars. He got there, they beat him because they saw, he had Arizona plates and he was a *mestizo*. He said, "What did you guys do over there?" 'Cause he didn't hang around us, he used to hang around with them, but he didn't go to the dances. "So you guys had a fight over and they beat me up way out there in California because of you guys." And we didn't, I don't know we couldn't get along, the young Filipinos. They were like gang members, they used to tell us that they wild up in [inaudible]. They were pretty bad, they always carried guns, and that's all I can remember.

Adrienne: Well, we thank you ...

Joe: Yeah, there was a lot of Filipinos here in the fifties and the forties. I mean my father had a crew of nothing but Filipinos. They all worked, they were used to that, that's all they did farming in the islands, and they were good at it.

[end of interview]

ROBERT TANG

Interviewed by Vince Murray
11 December 2006

Vince: This is an interview with Robert Tang on December 11th (2006) at the home of Mr. Tang. This is Vince Murray, who is the interviewer. For the record, do I have your permission to tape your interview?

Robert: Yes.

Vince: I have your name spelled pretty simply -- the usually ask for spelling, but it is T A N G.

Vince: You were born in Phoenix?

Robert: Right.

Vince: What year?

Robert: September 14, 1930.

Vince: And your family originally came from China. At one point your father or grandfather?

Robert: My grandfather and my father and later on his father came.

Vince: Oh OK, so your father came first with your grandfather.

Robert: No, he was here. Then his grandfather joined him later.

Vince: So the first member of your family to come here then would have been your father?

Robert: Well, my mother was already here. She is a native, of course.

Vince: Oh yes because she was actually born here in 1896. Is that correct?

Robert: I don't know the exact date. It's in there somewhere in the obituaries or whatever they would show that.

Vince: She was here first.

Robert: In the 1800s, yeah.

Vince: She was born in Chandler as you mentioned before (in an earlier conversation). And then your father came here in 1910 and opened a store in 1911. If that is correct.

Robert: Right.

Vince: Where was your father born?

Robert: Canton.

Vince: Do you know the name of the village?

Robert: In Asia.

Vince: I thought that was a region. And do you know what year he was born?

Robert: No, I don't.

Vince: He had originally had a grocery store in Phoenix in 1911 and opened up the Sun Mercantile in 1929, which would have been a year before your birth.

Robert: Right.

Vince: And you say his father came after he was here?

Robert: Yes.

Vince: About year was that do you know?

Robert: thirties. It would have been around '37-'38.

Vince: So around 1937, 1938. Did other family members come around the same time?

Robert: No.

Vince: Just your grandfather?

Robert: Are you speaking of his cousins or something like?

Vince: Or brothers, sisters, cousins, that kind of thing.

Robert: No, no.

Vince: Just primarily it was your grandfather that came over. Did your grandmother come over the same time too?

Robert: He remarried again and then she came, but not really his mother.

Vince: Where was it that you grew up then? Where was your house in Phoenix?

Robert: Well, actually up until five years old, we lived on 7th Avenue and Grant.

Vince: Oh, that's where the store was, wasn't it?

Robert: Yeah.

Vince: Was that the back of the store, where you guys lived?

Robert: No, no. It was off to the side as I recall.

Vince: Where did you move after that?

Robert: To 1801 East McDowell.

Vince: Do you know if that house is still there?

Robert: No. He lived there until 1954 and I got discharged from the Air Force at that time. But they moved to 2438 East Harvard probably in 1952.

Vince: What memories do you have of your mother and father?

Robert: Good memories. I know they spoke Chinese to each other, but they spoke English to us.

Vince: But your mother was also fluent in Spanish from what I understood.

Robert: Very fluent in Spanish. Her family actually came up through Mexico.

Vince: Oh, OK. So were they actually merchants in Mexico, her family?

Robert: I don't know what they were.

Vince: But they came up through Mexico and eventually came to Phoenix.

Robert: Right.

Vince: What do you remember most about growing up in Arizona?

Robert: Well, just like anyone else who was born at that time. I just remember on McDowell there was farmland across from us there and I could see Squaw Peak -- it was so clear that I could reach out and touch it, it was that clear way back then. And then McDowell Road ended at Papago Park.

Vince: So it didn't go up and over the mountain like it does now.

Robert: During World War II they had prisoner camps there for the Germans and Italians. I would see them in military trucks that come drive by our place. Put them on work details and stuff like that.

Vince: They would be actually working on the farmland across the street from you?

Robert: No. They had projects somewhere, but I can remember them riding on armor trucks. They would wave. They're just like young guys, you know.

Vince: What school did you go to?

Robert: St. Mary's.

Vince: So your family was Catholic?

Robert: Yeah. Very Catholic.

Vince: And that was from

Robert: My mother's mother went to Mass everyday.

Vince: OK. So your mother grew up Catholic.

Robert: Oh yeah.

Vince: And your grandmother on your mother's side was Catholic. What about your father?

Robert: He converted.

Vince: What activities did you and your friends have when you were growing up? Probably the same stuff as ...

Robert: Boy Scouts.

Vince: What type of interactions with people who were non-Chinese Americans?

Robert: Very good because I can't remember any discrimination on my part. Some of my family ... I asked that question a lot. I never did receive any. When I was in the service, I just didn't receive any.

Vince: Can you describe any of your parents' interactions with people who were non Chinese Americans -- as far as business or friends and things like that?

Robert: She was very active in the church and she had a lot of lady friends. We were actually, as I recall, practically the only Chinese Catholic family in Phoenix.

Vince: Didn't one of your brothers become a priest?

Robert: Yes, he is a priest. Emory.

Vince: Emory yes, I think I read that somewhere. He's a Franciscan priest.

Robert: Yeah. And my father really wasn't too happy about that. But he left when he was twelve years old.

Vince: To go to seminary?

Robert: Yeah.

Vince: Wow.

Robert: He did.

Vince: And he's still an active priest now?

Robert: Yeah, he is. He's 79.

Vince: At St. Mary's?

Robert: No. He's in California right now. What's the name of that beach? Huntington Beach he's there.

Vince: I suppose there could be worse places to work in -- Huntington Beach in California.

What type of foods did you eat when you were a kid? Was it pretty much American food or some Chinese food, Mexican?

Robert: Everything. I can remember my mother she would fix our lunch everyday. White bread was a luxury.

Vince: Really.

Robert: Yeah. Health-wise, she made us eat wheat bread and that kind of stuff.

Vince: That's before most people were eating wheat bread. Now, everybody eats it. Back then white bread was the bread that everybody ate.

Robert: That (white bread) was a treat when we got it. She was an excellent cook. She could cook Chinese, Mexican. She was an excellent cook.

Vince: So she probably picked up some of her Mexican cooking skills from Mexico.

Robert: That's right. She'd speak with the Mexicans and you wouldn't know. She just sounded fluent.

Vince: Did she grow up in Mexico?

Robert: Well ...

Vince: I know she had to be in Phoenix by 1914.

Robert: No, she was born here.

Vince: That's right she was born in Chandler.

Robert: Then we had a Mexican woman who helped with the house. She came everyday and that influence.

Vince: You guys didn't learn Spanish yourselves?

Robert: No.

Vince: Did you have to go to Chinese language school?

Robert: Yes, we did. [laughs] But it was kind of a farce on my part. I didn't learn a thing.

(laughter).

Vince: So you just had to go and walk through the motions and just left from there. What were your favorite restaurants growing up?

Robert: We didn't go to restaurants.

Vince: Just pretty much eat at home and that was pretty much it?

Robert: Yeah.

Vince: At home what type of activities did you have to do around the house? What kind of chores and responsibilities did you have?

Robert: Mostly my older sister kept us busy -- Mary. We did all the chores. I grew up mostly on McDowell. That was a pretty large home and it had lawn in the front and on two sides. And we had to get out there and mow that lawn and stuff like that.

Vince: How many kids were in the family?

Robert: Nine.

Vince: Nine! Wow. And of nine, how many are still around?

Robert: We've lost two boys, Tom and Eugene.

Vince: Tom was a judge. What did Eugene do?

Robert: He worked for Boeing at one time. He worked for the First National Bank and then he got to get into business up in Seattle. He moved from here to Seattle.

Vince: Was he in finances then if he was working at the bank?

Robert: Yeah.

Vince: And you said Mary was the one who would tell you what you had to do around the house? So she was [laughs] crack the whip and have the kids run around and do everything. So you pretty much had to do the lawn work and things like that. What did your sisters do?

Robert: Housework. Part of it.

Vince: Because you said you had a housekeeper who would actually come in? And did your father have to do anything around the house?

Robert: No.

Vince: Now your family owned the Sun Mercantile building, which at one point was the largest warehouse, wholesale warehouse in the Phoenix area. Who were their typical customers?

Robert: All the people who owned grocery stores.

Vince: So the Bashas, Bayless, as well as the small stores too.

Robert: Some of those he started them. He gave them credit.

Vince: Oh really. To get some of the small stores started.

Robert: Oh yeah.

Vince: How did they pay that back?

Robert: We had a salesman who called on them and he also collected money for the previous delivery and they just ran an accounts receivable line.

Vince: OK. And you worked at the business too?

Robert: No. I watched him a lot. I went to business school and I'd come back and help him write his checks and I was using the typewriter and do his envelopes for him and check his invoices and stuff. But I was with him a lot. He'd walk me through the store and show me what he had bought. He was pretty happy with what he succeeded in doing. But I was with him a lot.

Vince: How long did he run the store -- the warehouse?

Robert: Until 1952, he got diabetes and he passed away two weeks before I got discharged in 1954.

Vince: The diabetes just ...

Robert: He got blind and his kidneys quit functioning and that kind of stuff.

Vince: And you don't know how old he was at that point?

Robert: He didn't make it to sixty-four.

Vince: So he would have been born around 1890 then. What occasions did you and your family get together for -- primarily just the Catholic holidays, Christmas and things like that or did you celebrate some of the Chinese festivities that they also had?

Robert: No. It was mostly our church activities, the holidays and things like that. My mother was an excellent cook and she would always have friends on the weekends. When the Chinese cadets were training at Luke Field, she would have a bunch of those boys come and she would cook for them and things like that.

Vince: Oh really. So were they involved at all in the Kuomintang?

Robert: No. I don't think so. They were visiting pilots.

Vince: No, I mean your parents -- were they involved with the Kuomintang Nationalist Chinese Organization that was operating around that time period?

Robert: My father wasn't an active member. He might have been a social member.

Vince: What is your earliest memory of attending church?

Robert: When I was old enough, like six.

Vince: Did you have Sunday school that you had to go to as well?

Robert: No, because we went to parochial school our whole life.

Vince: Oh, I guess you got enough of it there, didn't you. [laughs] And this was St. Mary's Church that you went to?

Robert: St. Mary's and then when they moved to Harvard, it was St. Agnes. Then there was a priest there -- he rose pretty high -- Monsignor Donahoe. We were real good friends with him. But my mother was very active as I said in church.

Vince: So there were none of the activities with the Chinese New Year's and things like that?

Robert: No, I don't remember them.

Vince: What about the 4th of July?

Robert: Yeah, they went to those activities.

Vince: Picnics and things like that at the different parks.

Robert: Yeah, that was after I got married, we did stuff like that.

Vince: Oh really. What year did you get married?

Robert: 1956.

Vince: A couple of years after you got out of the service. You went to Catholic school, church ...

Robert: I figure you're going to ask me about my kids -- they all went to private school and then they went to Brophy and Xavier. I also have a son who is a priest.

Vince: Oh really. So your kids went to private schools, like Phoenix Day ... Country Day.

Robert: Camelback Desert School. They went there up until 3rd or 4th grade and then they went to St. Agnes then.

Vince: St. Agnes is kind of a junior high set up.

Robert: It is a parish school up until the 8th grade. Then they graduated and then went to ...

Vince: Brophy or Xavier depending on boys or girls, OK. I went to Central High right across the canal from Brophy. So I had a lot of friends from Brophy.

Robert: You guys walk up the sidewalk up to Camelback.

Vince: Growing up for us we had the Jewish kids and the Protestant kids went to Central and the Catholic kids went to Brophy, and all of us were neighbors of each other, so we were all just kind of right there. I think it's changed a little bit now. Brophy allows non-Catholics kids.

Robert: There are a lot of Jewish kids there. Probably about 15 percent.

Vince: It's become more of a college preparatory school.

Robert: Because of the academics.

Vince: Right. Was your father involved in any of the farmer's associations as well?

Robert: No.

Vince: So he was pretty much just a businessman and private individual and other than your mother socializing with friends in the church and occasional Chinese friends come over ...

Robert: Well some of these were like people he started in the grocery business and then they would come to visit him on Sunday and things like that.

Vince: Now you said you went into the military in 1952? 1950, oh, OK. Were you stationed in Korea?

Robert: I was in the Korean War.

Vince: Oh you were in the Korean War.

Robert: I was stationed at [inaudible] where we had gunnery training for the pilots. When they left there, they went right into combat.

Vince: So that's where you served your tour of duty then at [inaudible]?

Robert: About half. Then I went to Madison, Wisconsin, there was an air defense command there for two years. We had that Cold War thing going on then too.

Vince: So that's where they had the air defense command before NORAD.

Robert: That was part of it.

Vince: I remember the NORAD building, a big complex in Colorado in the mountains. I think that was later when they built that.

When you returned from the service in 1954, where did you move to at that point?

Robert: I stayed with my mother there on Harvard for maybe a year. Then we developed that property, Tom and myself - that property on McDowell they leveled that and we put in a pretty large drive-in laundry at that time.

Vince: Really.

Robert: And it was one of the most advanced ones at that time. People from Tucson opened that up -- Sparkle Laundry. Then I had a hi-fi business in the same building. I did that for twenty years -- custom sound and stuff like that.

Vince: Was it kind of like a strip mall- multiple businesses or lease some of them out?

Robert: At that place it was called a miracle mile at that time -- Jennifers -- it was one of the first strip malls there. All the way over to 16th Street up through ??? It's still there, the building is still there.

Vince: I know where you're talking about. Isn't there a pool hall or something that there?

Robert: Across the street.

Vince: I grew up in Phoenix too, so I can remember some of these areas.

Robert: That was a hot area. There was a women's fashion store there called Jennifer's and they used to come from all over Phoenix there.

Vince: Really? And Jennifer's was just one of the leasees then. What else did you have in that mall?

Robert: Liquor store. That was a very large, it almost went a block deep. They did commercial laundry. I know they had contracts with Williams Field, all the big hotels and things like that.

Vince: And did Tom have an office in that complex too?

Robert: No. He worked downtown. He worked for the county attorney's office and later on he was in private practice with Solomon Mahoney and then he became a Superior Court Judge, then after that a Federal Judge.

Vince: How much has that strip mall changed? Does it still look pretty much the same?

Robert: No. I haven't been there for a while.

Vince: I'm now going to have drive over there and look at it.

Robert: There used to be a Bel Air National Bank on 19th Street. I understand there's a Checkers there. That building that we sold, I think it is still there.

Vince: Your family still doesn't own the property?

Robert: No.

Vince: I know the Toy family still owns theirs.

Robert: On 24th Street.

Vince: 16th Street and Camelback. That big corner lot, they still own that. I was real surprised. I think it might be a little smaller than when they first bought it back in 1927.

Robert: And across the street, let's see, those Tangs there, we're probably like fourth cousins at 24th Street and Indian School.

Vince: Tang's Imports?

Robert: Yeah, that's part of it.

Vince: Oh. Those are like your fourth cousins or something, huh? So you probably didn't associate with them too much?

Robert: Once in a while, a little bit. I used to bowl with them and stuff like that.

Vince: So you developed this property and where did you move to yourself after living at your mother's house for about a year?

Robert: On Osborn, 2315 East Osborn.

Vince: And you were living in a house there?

Robert: Yes.

Vince: I'm trying to mentally put this stuff in my head here. I lived on 22nd Street and Whitten. That was one of the first apartments I had was right there. That's just two blocks north.

Do you know if that house is still there?

Robert: I think it is. I sold it when I built a custom home out in Cave Creek. I lived there for nine years.

Vince: About what year was that?

Robert: '70. My first wife she passed away when I was like forty-two years old. And I met my second wife and we moved out to Cave Creek. I own about five acres there and built right in the middle of it.

Vince: That was in the seventies?

Robert: That was in the seventies.

Vince: There was nothing out there in the late 1970s.

Robert: No, there wasn't. We built out there. I had built this car garage with balcony up there. We get up there and it's absolutely black, couldn't see a light. And then we sold that and then I went to Hawaii for eleven years, then when I came back, I couldn't believe it. I mean there are four lanes and a traffic light out there.

Vince: Just over on 24th Street and Osborn, that had to change pretty drastically too since you had a house there. And that would have been from what 1955 roughly to the '70s.

Robert: When I lived there?

Vince: Yes.

Robert: Yeah.

Vince: Until you moved to Cave Creek. Did you build the house on Osborn or was it already there?

Robert: No.

Vince: We covered some of your business things here. Now the purpose of this interview is for the Phoenix Asian American Property Survey. As part of that we're probably only going to use maybe a couple of sentences. [laughs].

Robert: That's OK.

Vince: But we will be taking this information and it will go to Arizona State University which they will keep in a repository for future things as other people want to do research on other subjects. With that in mind, what would you want your grandchildren or your great grandchildren to know about you?

Robert: About me?

Vince: Yes. This is a legacy. This will go into the archives of Arizona State University. Thousands of years from now somebody will look at it and what would you want them ...

Robert: I'm just an average citizen, an honest average citizen. I taught my kids the best principles about living the best I could. That's it.

Vince: So in a lifetime of experiences, what would you consider to be the defining moments of your life that made you the person that you are today?

Robert: I don't know. Just what my mother taught me. That's all.

Vince: Well, right. Then we're going to close our interview at this point. Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts and memories. I appreciate it.

Robert: Thanks.

[end of interview]

ROCKY TANG

Interviewed by Krystin Yee
23 November 2006

Krystin: November 22nd, 23rd, 2006.

Other person: How do I, record?

Krystin: Record?

Rocky: Recording it?

Krystin: Alright. Please state your name and its spelling. Oh, for the record, do I have permission to tape your interview? You're on video.

Rocky: Oh. Yeah.

Krystin: 'Kay.

Rocky: Yes.

Krystin: Yes. Okay. Please state your full name and its spelling.

Rocky: James Rocky Tang. J-A-M-E-S. R-O-C-K-Y. T-A-N-G.

Krystin: If you don't mind me asking, when were you born?

Rocky: September 3rd, 1928.

Krystin: Where were you born?

Rocky: Phoenix, Arizona, Maricopa County.

Krystin: Were you born at home or in a hospital?

Rocky: At... can't 'member. I think it was at home.

Krystin: At home? Do you know ...

Rocky: Doctors made house calls.

Krystin: Oh, okay. Was it a Caucasian doctor? Asian doctor?

Rocky: Probably a Caucasian doctor, 'cause at that time...

Krystin: [to other person] What?

Other person: Can we pause?

[break]

Krystin: Okay. From what country did your family originally immigrate from?

Rocky: China.

Krystin: Who were the first members of your family to come to this area?

Rocky: First close member?

Krystin: Yeah.

Rocky: [inaudible], my dad.

Krystin: Your dad was the first one to come over here from your family?

Rocky: Yeah, of our family chain.

Krystin: What about your grandpa, no?

Rocky: No, he stayed in China.

Krystin: Oh, okay. What did he come over here for?

Rocky: Try to have a better life in America.

Krystin: What did he work as? Railroad?

Rocky: Oh, he made, no. He worked his way through New York. Immigrated through New York. And he did work in the laundry. Ironing clothes and shirts.

Krystin: When he came over, who did he come over, like who sponsored him?

Rocky: I don't really know.

Krystin: You don't know. Do you know when he came over?

Rocky: It probably in the early twenties.

Krystin: Early twenties. Okay. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Rocky: No, I have no brothers. Have five sisters.

Krystin: Five sisters? Could you state their names?

Rocky: Rose. Gladys. Betty. May. Hazel.

Krystin: Were they all born here?

Rocky: Yes.

Krystin: Do you have an uncles or aunts that came to Phoenix with you?

Rocky: No.

Krystin: No. Alright. Do you know when they came to Phoenix? Your dad.

Rocky: When my dad was probably here in the early twenties. Then he went back after workin' a while. To go back and bring my, or, to marry my mother.

Krystin: To marry your mom.

Rocky: That time, marry.

Krystin: And then he brought ...

Rocky: And then, now at that time, women couldn't come over. 'Cause of immigration laws. So he worked for a while until he was able to get her on the quota to come over.

Krystin: When was that?

Rocky: 'Round 1927, guessing.

Krystin: Okay. What did he do for a living when he got here? When he got to Phoenix?

Rocky: He worked in, like, kitchen help. At the American kitchen. And then people helped around that helps, helped him start his store. So he started one on 4th Street and Buchanan. So with that start, then he bought a piece of property on 24th Street and Washington. Built a building there for grocery.

Krystin: He built the building?

Rocky: Well he had so-called contractors build it.

Krystin: Oh. Is that, are either of those buildings still around?

Rocky: Oh yeah.

Krystin: Oh yeah?

Rocky: No. Second one.

Krystin: The second one?

[phone rings]

Krystin: What was the store called?

[break]

Krystin: So those buildings are still standing?

Rocky: The second one is.

Krystin: Where is it located?

Rocky: 24th Street and Washington.

Krystin: Do you know what corner? Where...

Rocky: Southwest corner.

Krystin: It's on the corner or is it down the street?

Rocky: It's on the corner.

Krystin: Corner of 24th Street?

Rocky: Southwest corner.

Krystin: Southwest corner of 24th Street and Washington? Alright. Did you guys live there, too?
Or...

Rocky: We lived in the back. That was kind of traditional on the Asian people, or Chinese people comin' over. We couldn't afford houses, so we kinda lived in the back 'til we got something.

Krystin: What was that store called?

Rocky: East Washington Market.

Krystin: What was the first store called? No?

Rocky: No. I was too young then, I can't 'member.

Krystin: What year did you build the second store?

Rocky: My dad.

Krystin: Or what year did your dad build the second store?

Rocky: Probably in the thir ... early thirties.

Krystin: Early thirties? Do you know, did he own the property?

Rocky: Yeah, he bought the property everything.

Krystin: How did he buy it?

Rocky: Well, at that time, Chinese could not – new Chinese immigrants – couldn't buy property. So what they did was use somebody else's name that was here a long time. So we bought that through another relative's name.

Krystin: Do you remember which relative? Or...

Rocky: I kinda, I kinda remember the relative, but can't remember his name.

Krystin: Was he a close relative?

Rocky: His Chinese name was Sep Lei [?]. That help you?

Krystin: No. But okay. Can you describe the store and the house?

Rocky: The store was about fifty by fifty. And then we had a open breezeway. He built the house in between the breezeway. And then he discovered that we spend more time in the breezeway. So he closed it up. So we wouldn't have to go outside to go to work in the grocery store.

Krystin: Right. So about how big was it?

Rocky: Forty-five by forty-five.

Krystin: And then the house in the back?

Rocky: The house was about twenty by thirty. Not too big. 'Bout two bedrooms.

Krystin: What memories do you have of your parents?

Rocky: Memories of my parents?

Krystin: Yeah. Like in the store or outside of the store.

Rocky: What type of memories?

Krystin: Just, like, everyday stuff. Any memories you might have.

Rocky: Well I remember my mom, she did the cooking for everybody. And through the store we, she took, she would take out the older stuff, like the darker meat, squash or produce, and cook it up. And dad, he would go down and buy a little bit of grocery and bring it back, put it on the shelf.

Krystin: Buy groceries from where?

Rocky: At that time it was a cash and carry. Can't 'member the name. And then Sun Mercantile came in the picture 'bout that time. So we ordered through them and they'd ship it out.

Krystin: About what time?

Rocky: 'Bout the late twenties.

Krystin: So you guys would order the groceries and then you'd sell them in your store?

Rocky: Yeah. And that, for fresh produce he would go down to market, which was on 2nd Street and 3rd Street on Madison and Jackson. And the growers, at that time, they would bring all their green stuff, like carrots with green tops. Green onions in the bunches. And they'd bring their, they didn't grow potatoes at the time though. Tomatoes, they would grow. Sometime we'd have grapes.

Krystin: So it was like a farmers' market?

Rocky: Yeah, it was mostly ...

Krystin: Everyday?

Rocky: The Japanese people were farmin' at that time. They would bring it to the market to sell.

Krystin: So how big was the farmers' market? Like, just...

Rocky: It was like one... 3rd Street to 4th Street. And then about Madison to Jackson.

Krystin: Wow. Everyday?

Rocky: Well, they'd, they'd have different house, produce houses. There were guys that would sell right on the open area. They brought it out, their trucks, backed it up. And you went and dug through the pile. You know, Chinese are "the bottom is better."

Krystin: Yes. So the Japanese farmers, where were, where were their farms? Do you know? Or...

Rocky: They, some of them probably started out at 19th Avenue and... Bethany. And there was the Tanitas on 35th and Glendale. They had tomatoes. And then, no let's see, not Tanitas, what was the... I can't remember the name. But they grew strawberries there and different things. Then the Tanitas, they would, they would have a big farm. And then, at that time, they would be overrun by civilization, [inaudible] so-called. And then they, the buyers or the developer would

say, "Hey, we'll give you two for one if you move out a little further." So what they did, they kept movin' the Japanese farmers out further and further by trading two for one.

Krystin: Like, to pieces of land for...

Rocky: Two acres for one.

Krystin: Two acres for one. So then the Japanese would bring their fresh goods ...

Rocky: Produce, to the...

Krystin: And did your parents' store sell the produce? Or what did you guys sell?

Rocky: Yeah, we sold it. Wasn't much to sell. Because you didn't have refrigeration.

Krystin: Mm-hm.

Rocky: So you had to bring just a little bit in, set it out there, and then people would buy it. 'Cause it'd be, would be wilted.

Krystin: Who would, who shopped at your store? Like, what was the demographic?

Rocky: There were mostly -- can I say it? -- Okies.

Krystin: What is that?

Rocky: Okies was mostly the immigrants that came from, from Texas, Oklahoma. They migrated through and then they would pick crops. They would stay in the motels area. And then, as the crop would har ... set to be harvest, they would move on to, like, California, to the great pickin', all that. And then reverse the order back to Oklahoma, Texas, and come back to, every year.

Krystin: So that was ...

Rocky: That was most of the people. There weren't that many people settling down. There was, like, maybe railroad workers that worked on the railroad, would settle down. There was, at that time there wasn't that much work around. So people just had to take what they could do. Maybe carpenters did a little bit of carpenter work. Like up around the resort, Camelback area. And then they maybe would live around there. 'Cause mostly they, the migrant workers was stayin' there and working, moving on. Every year they'd come back.

Krystin: So around your store, was it mostly like the hotels where the Okies stayed at? Or was it houses?

Rocky: Yeah, it was small motels. Small houses.

Krystin: Who lived in the small houses?

Rocky: The Okies.

Krystin: The Okies.

Rocky: Or the migrant workers.

Krystin: Where there any ...

Rocky: And then across the street we had a canal. There was a mesquite trees there. They would camp out there during the season, the ones that couldn't afford to live in small houses or a motel. They would pitch a tent and live there, cook outside. Sleepin' and go to work the next day.

Krystin: Were there Chinese or other Asians in your area?

Rocky: There were quite a few that had their stores on Washington.

Krystin: Like who?

Rocky: Well, let's see ... 22nd Street and Van Buren was Howard Tang's family.

Krystin: What corner?

Rocky: They was on the south ... southwest corner.

Krystin: Of 22nd and Van Buren?

Rocky: And Van Buren. And then on, about 20th and Van Buren there was some single people. Like Ben Ong family. They were all just single like. When they came in, they would work a while, get enough money, then they sell the store, go on to another store. It was three brothers that did that.

Krystin: Ben Ong?

Rocky: Ben Ong. The guy, another guy we called – you understand Chinese? – Gow Hing [?]. That was another brother. Then it was Bill Ong, another brother. It was about four of 'em. Then on down the street, on Washington, 18th Street was a, there was another Ong family, William Ong. And they're gone, away. 16th Street and Washington, the northeast, northwest corner was Mary's Store. And that's where John Sing Tang ...

Krystin: That's where John Sing ...

Rocky: John Sing Tang, the architect that was one of the first person to be in the professional business. And he drew up a lot of schools and ... high schools, grade schools. And a lot of different stuff. He was quite famous for his architect.

Krystin: Now, how is he connected to Mary's Store?

Rocky: He was a son to Mary.

Krystin: Oh.

Rocky: And then his wife is still living, I think.

Krystin: What, what's her name?

Rocky: I don't know.

Krystin: No.

Rocky: Then they had about three sisters. But I've never seen them any. Never did see 'em anymore. Then across to the 15th Street and Washington was Lee Jew Market.

Krystin: Who owned that?

Rocky: That was Mr. Lee Jew. Mrs. Lee Jew was the one that did all the work.

Krystin: Oh yeah?

Rocky: Cut the meat, hauled the meat in, and laid it on the meat block, and cut it up. They had about, Rose Lee was one of the, probably the oldest person, daughter there. Then they had Rose, Evelyn. Esther, Evelyn... and John. John, one boy. I think they had five girls and one boy. Traditional for Chinese.

Krystin: So pretty close to your family.

Rocky: Pretty close in numbers.

Krystin: Yeah.

Rocky: Then on down the street there was, 11th Street was the Dong family. They was there shortly. Short while.

Krystin: 11th Street and what?

Rocky: 'Bout 12th Street, I guess. On south side of the street.

Krystin: Of what street?

Rocky: Of Washington.

Krystin: Of Washington.

Rocky: That was the Dong family. There was Jesse Dong. Fred Dong. Jimmy Dong. Jesse Dong. But they're all gone somewhere else to live.

Krystin: Yeah.

Rocky: And then back across the street was Jim Ong Market. Over on 11th.

Krystin: Jim Ong?

Rocky: Jim Ong Market which is... Jim and George. Then we hop back to 9th Street, was... there was a Wong family. Ruth Wong and Herbert Wong. Kenneth Wong. And 'nother younger boy. Had four, one girl. Two girls. I didn't know the oldest one, but I did know Ruth.

Krystin: And these are all grocery stores?

Rocky: They were all grocery stores on 9th Street.

Krystin: Did all ...

Rocky: Yeah.

Krystin: Did all the store pretty much sell the same kind of thing?

Rocky: Yeah. Sold what they could and gave credit with, whenever they could. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose.

Krystin: Yeah.

Rocky: Then there was 7th Street and Washington, Edward's family, his brother had a store.

Krystin: Edward who?

Rocky: Edward Yue. They had one over there. On, I think on the north ... northeast corner. Then you get down to 3rd and you had about four of those down there. Did you want 'em all?

Krystin: No, that's good. I mean, if you'd like to go on, feel free. But that's good.

Rocky: Well there's down on 3rd Street, back to 3rd and 4th, where we used to live on 3rd Street, there was Zeke Ong, which was, they went to South Phoenix Market. Zeke, Anna May, Raymond... about four boys, three girls. They went, they moved to south Phoenix. Then across the street from them there was Bill Ong, which is one that started over there on 20th Street and Van Buren. And he moved there. And ... can't remember the others. Anyway, there're a whole bunch of 'em. Even across the street from each other.

Krystin: Were they competition for each other?

Rocky: In a sense, yeah.

Krystin: Were there ever arguments or anything?

Rocky: No, everybody was friends with each other.

Krystin: Were there kids your age? Did you, like, were you ...

Rocky: Yeah, they were about my age. Maybe younger.

Krystin: Did, what school did you go to?

Rocky: Went to Phoenix Union.

Krystin: What about elementary?

Rocky: Elementary was Wilson School.

Krystin: Where was that located?

Rocky: 24th Street and Buckeye. Or Henshaw, at that time.

Krystin: Henshaw.

Rocky: Southeast corner. Oh, then across the street, southwest, was another family. Fong. They had two boys and four girls. Since then, since they was able to, they moved out to San Francisco.

Krystin: Oh. So at your school, were there a lot of Chinese?

Rocky: No.

Krystin: What was the demographic of your school? Elementary school.

Rocky: Migrant workers.

Krystin: And migrant workers' kids.

Rocky: Kids.

Krystin: So mostly Caucasian?

Rocky: Some Spanish. Very little. No Blacks at that time. The Blacks weren't allowed in the White schools. They had their own. Plus the Indians, they had their own. It's all been segregated, it used to be segregated, not like we are now.

Krystin: Did you feel any prejudice towards you while you were there?

Rocky: Oh yeah.

Krystin: Any racism?

Rocky: Yeah.

Krystin: Like what?

Rocky: We had some pretty good fights.

Krystin: Oh yeah?

Rocky: Yeah.

Krystin: Like what and why?

Rocky: They'd call us derogatory names. Like whatever, "ridin' on the railroad," and whatever stuff like that.

Krystin: Were there a lot of Chinese there?

Rocky: No, just our family. And the Wong family at that time. One Japanese family. His name was Jimmy Kohara. No, Jimmy something anyway. He came from toward south Phoenix.

Krystin: So were, were you the only one involved in the fights?

Rocky: Not really ever ... Fights where kids didn't last long.

Krystin: Okay.

Rocky: Okay.

Krystin: Okay. Let's see. How did you get to school?

Rocky: Sometime we walked, sometime we catch a bus. It was only a mile away.

Krystin: A mile away. How much was the bus?

Rocky: Free. School bus.

Krystin: Oh, school bus. Okay. Did your parents have a car?

Rocky: Yeah, we had one car.

Krystin: What kinda car?

Rocky: 1939 Packard.

Krystin: And all your sisters went there with you?

Rocky: Yeah, I think.

Krystin: And then after Wilson, where did you go?

Rocky: Phoenix Union High School.

Krystin: Where was that located?

Rocky: 7th Street and Van Buren.

Krystin: How'd you get there?

Rocky: By bus. City bus.

Krystin: How much was it to ride?

Rocky: 'Bout ten or fifteen cents.

Krystin: What else did you do besides school?

Rocky: When I was a kid?

Krystin: Yes.

Rocky: Played around.

Krystin: With who?

Rocky: Can't remember their names, they were all migrant worker.

Krystin: Oh, migrant workers.

Rocky: Yeah.

Krystin: No Hispanics, no Blacks, no Asians.

Rocky: No.

Krystin: What else did your parents do besides work in the store?

Rocky: That's about it.

Krystin: That's it? Did they talk to any of the other Chinese?

Rocky: Well on Sunday, now, it was kinda traditional where the families would shut their, close their store from about two to four, two to five. And then they'd go out and visit each other. I mean, we were very, the whole family would jump in the car and go visit with the other families.

Krystin: So what families did you guys visit?

Rocky: We went to Peoria. Visited Grant Tang family. Which was Edmund Tang's father and mother. And ... can't remember too many of the others.

Krystin: But every Sunday?

Rocky: Every Sunday we'd take a break, go visit. Or they'll come over. Like we had the air shows that you could see from our house.

Krystin: Air shows?

Rocky: Air shows, yeah. They, they would happen at Sky Harbor.

Krystin: Put on by who?

Rocky: I dunno. By...

Krystin: Amateur?

Rocky: An airports, or. They'd have planes flyin' around. No parachute jumps. Planes stunting around. They were small, light planes. Not like nowadays, our jets.

Krystin: Yes.

Rocky: And then everybody would come over to our house. And we'd, they'd sit on our, we had a breezeway where you could look out from the breezeway and see all the acrobatics. [inaudible]. Lim Tang's family came over. Kim Tang's family would come over. And I think maybe Sun Brite Market, their family would come over.

Krystin: Sun Brite?

Rocky: Yeah, on ...

Krystin: Where was that?

Rocky: 7th Street and Camelback, which is now Walgreen's.

Krystin: Alright. What else did you guys do? Anything else during high school? Any other activities?

Rocky: Not much. There wasn't too much organized. Stuff in high school, we played, like, traditionally where we would play North High, Phoenix Union goin' football. Basketball, sometime we'd have tournaments.

Krystin: Were there a lot of Chinese, then, at your high school?

Rocky: Maybe about ten or fifteen. That's close to my age.

Krystin: Mm-hm. Did you go to Chinese school?

Rocky: Yes. When we was goin' to grade school, well we went. Get through with our school about four, four-thirty, and then mom would have something ready to eat. We'd eat more or less there or in the car. Dad would take us down, drop us off at school. It would started at five, and it would end at eight o'clock, I think.

Krystin: Everyday?

Rocky: Everyday. Saturday was all day. Sunday no.

Krystin: What, what would your mom make you? To eat.

Rocky: Tomato beef.

Krystin: Tomato beef?

Rocky: Which was very good.

Krystin: Anything else?

Rocky: Whatever had been left over. She'd fix it up with rice. There was ... only two of us that went to Chinese school. My sister and myself.

Krystin: Why was that?

Rocky: Couldn't afford that much more.

Krystin: What else ...

Rocky: Tuition was like ... think five bucks a month or something. Very cheap, but nowadays. Then, five bucks was a lot of money.

Krystin: Who else went to Chinese school with you?

Rocky: That was in Chinese school? Lots of kids.

Krystin: Lots of kids?

Rocky: Yeah.

Krystin: About how many?

Rocky: Maybe seventy-five.

Krystin: Wow. How many teachers?

Rocky: Two teachers. The room was kinda divided. One would teach at that side, one on this side. We'd had teachers that would teach us and – you know what *say-yuck* [?] is? It's a different dialect than what we speak here. We speak more *song-yip* [?]. And they tried teach us in *say-yuck*. And which we didn't learn much that way. Try and translate it back and forth. Chinese. You would memorize it. That was hard.

Krystin: How many years did you go?

Rocky: Probably four or five.

Krystin: Where was the school at?

Rocky: On 2nd Street between Jefferson and Madison on the west side of the street.

Krystin: How big was the school?

Rocky: In size, was probably hundred feet by two-hundred. The building was like... forty by eighty.

Krystin: Was it just one big room? Or...

Rocky: Yeah, one big room, it had a divider.

Krystin: Was there a playground?

Rocky: Kind of a playground on each side. On the west side and then on the south side.

Krystin: Do you know if that's still there?

Rocky: No, it's part of the arena now.

Krystin: Ohh. Okay. What else would your mom make? Food-wise.

Rocky: I can't 'member. But she ...

Krystin: Mainly Chinese?

Rocky: For nighttime it was kind of a treat. We'd have oxtail and salt fish with steamed pork and... She had tomato beef a lot of times. She made, like, four flavored soups. Pulled it up. But very little vegetable.

Krystin: Very little vegetables? Why?

Rocky: She didn't know how to cook a balanced diet?

Krystin: Oh.

Rocky: She did the best she could.

Krystin: That's good. What, what was your favorite food outside of what your mom made? At home.

Rocky: It's hard to say, it was all my favorite.

Krystin: Well, what else did you like to eat outside of the house?

Rocky: Well, we'd have, like, tomato beef over noodles.

Krystin: Mm-hm.

Rocky: Which was, was pretty good.

Krystin: What about, like, when you went out and bought stuff? Like, McDonalds?

Rocky: We didn't have McDonalds.

Krystin: What did you have?

Rocky: We didn't have Jack in the Box. We had nothing.

Krystin: You had nothing?

Rocky: Nothing. Not a pair.

Krystin: All you ate was what you got at ...

Rocky: What was home.

Krystin: What about those sandwiches? No sandwiches?

Rocky: We was too poor to really spend more money to eat out.

Krystin: Yeah.

Rocky: You know, there wasn't much money around to cook. When I was young, it was like Depression time. Fifteen bucks would go pretty far. It would feed your family for at least a week. So we didn't spend a lot of money.

Krystin: Did you eat lunch at school?

Rocky: Yeah. I think it was, like, ten cents for lunch.

Krystin: Ten cents. Let's see. What were your responsibilities at home?

Rocky: Gotta work in the store.

Krystin: What did you do in the store?

Rocky: Help put up a little bit of stock and watch, take care of the customers. At that time, you didn't have grocery carts. Everybody would pull their stuff off of the shelf, put it on your counter. And then when it's ready, then you'd check 'em out.

Krystin: So did you do the same kind of stuff as your sisters? Or were you responsible for different stuff?

Rocky: Everybody did a little bit. What they had to do at the store.

Krystin: So... Did you, like, what did your sisters have to do?

Rocky: They did about the same thing.

Krystin: Same thing. What were, what else did your mom do around the house?

Rocky: Well, she'd wash, wash-up everything. Wash your clothes. You didn't have a automatic thing. You had a churn thing and you had to wring it out yourself. And then when you dry, you have to hang it up to dry. It's not throwin' it in a washer and dry it up.

Krystin: What were your father's responsibilities?

Rocky: Keep up with the store.

Krystin: Keep up with the store. Did your parents have different expectations of you rather than your sisters?

Rocky: Not really.

Krystin: Same thing?

Rocky: Same thing. They didn't expect us to really get in a profession. 'Cause they weren't that highly educated enough to see or foresight of having to have an education. 'Cause they never did go to school themselves.

Krystin: Did you go to college?

Rocky: Yes.

Krystin: Where did you go?

Rocky: I went to Phoenix College. And then I went to ASU. And from there I went to the service. And I came back and went to Phoenix College again.

Krystin: Then what did you get a degree in?

Rocky: I didn't have, [inaudible], finish my requirements.

Krystin: What were you studying?

Rocky: I studied about everything because when I came out of the service they was payin' us hundred-and-sixty dollars a month, to go to school. So I took that hundred-and-sixty dollar to go full-time in school. So I took everything that was right there. Just to qualify to keep the family goin'.

Krystin: So what year was that?

Rocky: That was in 1950, '53. '54, when I came back, during the Korean War.

Krystin: Alright. Did your sisters go to college?

Rocky: Not really. No, I don't think they did.

Krystin: No. Let's see ... Were there any other occasions, besides Sundays, where your family or your parents would get to together with other families? Or other people?

Rocky: There were like weddings and banquets.

Krystin: Banquets.

Rocky: And then they would have it more in the evening. And then everybody would... I would say the league got invited. The [inaudible] league never got invited. And they met over there what they call the Peking Restaurant.

Krystin: Where was that?

Rocky: Which is not there. That went to... 1st Street, 1st Street and Madison on the northwest corner. And that's where most of the banquets were held.

Krystin: What were the banquets held for? Like, holidays?

Rocky: [inaudible]banquets. There were birthday parties. Or special wedding celebrations. Or kids' two-month party where they have the red egg roll on your head. And that was a party. They'd drink soup, chicken soup made with *mm-gow-pay* [?]. Which is a high-potent Chinese brew. Real crude [?].

Krystin: Okay. What about church? Did you go to church?

Rocky: We didn't really go to church, so... Our church, Brother Stanley didn't really come out for to start to the church, [inaudible]. 'Bout '52, '53 when he came out and they took over the Jewish church. Or Jewish synagogue.

Krystin: So nothing really before that? Like, when you were a kid.

Rocky: No, well. Then after I got married in ... '50, I think it was.

Krystin: You think?

Rocky: Yeah. And then Brother Stanley, which was the first pastor, came out of Texas. Him and his wife, they tried to start up the church. They had a tough time doin' it. Tryin' to get people that never been to church to come to church. And through mainly the kids, they were haulin' the kids to, to church for, what they call?

Krystin: Sunday School?

Rocky: Sunday School. And through the kids, well then the gates grew open. They would eventually try to get their mother and father involved, which was hard.

Krystin: Why?

Rocky: Because a lot, most of their parents, they came over. They, they believe in a Buddhist. They weren't Christians. It was hard to change them over.

Krystin: Where was the church at?

Rocky: Church was at 1st Street and Culver on the south side of the street. It's still there, over by the library.

Krystin: What was the name of the church?

Rocky: First Chinese Baptist, I think.

Krystin: Do you remember what it looked like?

Rocky: Yeah, it was white and it had [inaudible]. Five cottages next to it, 'cause the church was growing. So I, I like to tinker and all that, so I helped Brother Stanley do a lot of that tinkering at the colleges ... the cottages.

Krystin: When did they buy that?

Rocky: Probably in fifties. 'Cause I think I was gone to Korea and when I came back they had the church.

Krystin: So who taught the Sun ... who, who was the pastor?

Rocky: Brother Stanley.

Krystin: And then who taught Sunday school?

Rocky: Mrs. Stanley, Brother Stanley. We had Walter Ong, their family. Let's see, who was it... Jet Ong was there.

Krystin: Jed?

Rocky: Jet Ong.

Krystin: *Jet* Ong.

Rocky: She was one of the members. Mrs. Henderson was mainly the Sunday school teacher. And there was... can't remember the man that, that would pick us up and bring us there. Then there was...

Krystin: "And then there was...?"

Rocky: Oh, there's more?

Krystin: No, I don't know, I'm asking you, I thought ...

Rocky: You want the people there? There was probably about eleven members when we were there.

Krystin: When you were there?

Rocky: There was Jet, and Walter, and, and I think his... cousin, no wait a minute. Mary-Ann's father was one of the members. And...

Krystin: Mary-Ann, Mary-Ann Ong? Or Mary-Ann Yee?

Rocky: Yee. Mary-Ann Yee's father was one of the members.

Krystin: What was his name?

Rocky: Gosh, gosh, I know, what's his name?

Krystin: Martin Wong?

Rocky: Martin Wong. He, he was very good to me, I remember.

Krystin: Good. Anything else besides church and school and Chinese school and work that you did? Like, sports? Girls and Boys Club? Cultural things?

Rocky: Well, we tried to start our boys', Chinese boys' club. We called it The Dragon. It was when softball. And we played basketball. We played against, like, the teams down south, the Mexican teams down there, played them. Like in a tournament. And other times we'd go to Tucson, play a Tucson team. And then for basketball we'd play, like, Carver High, which was all black players, they were big. And then we'd play the Indians. They had, like, fifty teams. And they'd send 'em in every two minutes on us, and run the, they ran the heck out of us.

Krystin: Anything else? How'd you get ...

Rocky: And then we would skates. Dances or socials, trying to get the kids together.

Rocky: ... church ... Brother Stanley, Mrs. Stanley, which Mrs. Stanley did most of the organ playing. Did the mail-outs. She did the secretary work. She did everything for Mr. Stanley. Then Mr. Stanley was pretty much the handyman. He did all the cleaning, gardening, irrigation, all the, everything. He did all that. Nowadays a church requires ten or fifteen people to do, they, the two of them did it. And they came out of Texas, San Antonio. My wife was one of their early members in San Antonio when she was a kid. Then he came over here and that's how we, well we, she knew 'em. Anyway, but we got involved. Then she started teaching school there, Sunday school. All with everything else. But that man, and why ... they earned it.

Krystin: They earned it? Any other ... anything else you wanna talk about? Any other properties that you remember that are still around?

Rocky: Properties?

Krystin: Yeah. Any buildings?

Rocky: I can 'member the Chinatown, which was located on 1st Street to 2nd Street, and Madison to Jackson. And it was kind of a, a square deal where they had little shops all the way around, or little small... what you call? Like, cabins, or, where they. 'Cause most of the people came over first were all, all bachelors. So they stayed there and, you know, they could get out and do their own. And then they had a big pit, in the back, that they did their roasting of pigs. And then for Chinese New Years or another celebration, Chinese, they would roast a pig and they'd chop it up. Call everybody, they'd come get a sliver, and that was what we got. It was our, our treat.

Krystin: Your treat?

Rocky: Or our celebrating. And then they, another traditional thing was the boiled chicken. They'd boil a chicken, half of that goes in the same bag. I used to help 'em bag it 'cause I was maybe about eight years old. And I'd help 'em barbeque there, put the fire into the pit. And then after that, well then, while I was away for Korea, well then they tore that down, made a fire station right there on Madison. But next to that they had two stores. One store, which would have been... Benny's family was there. Then there was, they had another one across the street. Benny's dad built that. Then he sold that and went across the street to a new one.

Krystin: Benny Yee?

Rocky: Benny Yee's father.

Krystin: Kevin Lee?

Rocky: Kevin Lee, Misses. And then across, behind there were, caddy-corner was China Tea Garden, another restaurant. We didn't have very many, we had maybe four.

Krystin: Do you know if any of those buildings are still around?

Rocky: No, they're all gone.

Krystin: No, all gone.

Rocky: But the families are still here.

Krystin: Are they?

Rocky: Yeah. The Mandarin, the family is still here, or they [inaudible].

Krystin: Just going back to the celebrations, can you describe what a "red egg" party is?

Rocky: Well, I didn't really get with it. But red egg is like when your, when you have a baby that's two months old, then you have a party to celebrate. They do the red egg, it's supposed to be traditional that they roll it on his head. And then they pack it away, give you two or three red eggs and half a chicken, piece of pork, roast pork. And that, that was what they would give you then. Later on, though, they would have, put different parties, what they call? *Guy-tew* [?] party. You might have to get translation for this, but the "chicken and whisky" party.

Krystin: Only for boys? Or for girls and boys?

Rocky: I think mainly boys. I'm not sure. But it was two month [inaudible], when they celebrate their baby.

Krystin: Anything else you wanna talk about that we haven't covered?

Rocky: That's pretty much, that's enough.

Krystin: That's enough?

Rocky: Yeah, can we sign out?

Krystin: Yes sir. Thank you very much.

Rocky: It's been very pleasant. I'm happy to participate.

Krystin: Well I appreciate it.

[end of interview]

TORU TANITA

Interviewed by Christina Wong with Vince Murray
10 March 2007

Christina: This is an interview with Toru Tanita on March 10, 2007 at ASU downtown by Christina Wong. Also present at this interview is Vince (Murray).

For the record do I have your permission to audiotape your interview?

Toru: Yes you do.

Christina: Please state your name and how you spell it.

Toru: Toru Tanita.

Christina: And is this the name that you were given at birth?

Toru: Yes.

Christina: What year were you born?

Toru: 1931, April 4th.

Christina: And where were you born?

Toru: Glendale, Arizona.

Christina: What were the names of your parents?

Toru: My dad's name was Noamasa Tanita. And my mother's name was Sui.

Christina: Where were your mother and father born?

Toru: In Fukishima, Japan.

Christina: And when did they come to Phoenix?

Toru: Well, I think it was about 1927 when they came to Phoenix.

Christina: Did they come directly?

Toru: No, they were living in California for a few years.

Christina: Where in California did they live?

Toru: Monterey Park.

Christina: And why did they decide to come to Phoenix?

Toru: I have no idea. But I think it was more opportunity to farm here.

Christina: Do you know how they got here? Was it by car?

Toru: Well, most of them, my mother and most of my brothers and sister came by train and then my oldest brother and two other brothers drove from California on a Model T. I guess it was a Model T truck. Back then I don't know what kind of cars they built.

Christina: Did your family come at two separate times or come at one time in two types of transportation?

Toru: I think they just came the one time but two different ways, one by train and one by car.

Christina: And what did they do when they got here?

Toru: I have no idea. I think they farmed with someone. I don't know who it was.

Christina: What type of farming did they do?

Toru: Vegetable.

Christina: Do you know what part of town they were farming?

Toru: They were farming in originally in, from what I gather, was around Tolleson.

Christina: And did they stay there or did they eventually farm somewhere else in the valley?

Toru: Back then most of the farmers moved all over. They'd rent a piece of property for so many years and when the lease was up or something, they would go to another, maybe it was land they used to like to rotate land ...

Christina: You said that your parents were working for somebody else. Did they eventually rent out land on their own?

Toru: I don't know. I think it was in the late twenties when they went out on their own.

Christina: And what kind of farming did they do then?

Toru: Vegetables.

Christina: Where did you grow up, what city?

Toru: Glendale.

Christina: What high school did you go to?

Toru: Glendale.

Christina: Do you remember the cross streets or the address of your house where you grew up?

Toru: No, it was on -- when I went to Glendale it was on about 47th Avenue and Peoria.

Christina: Were there other Asians living around that part of town when you were growing up?

Toru: Around Glendale, there were quite a few, but not close. The rural area is big. There are different areas where they farmed.

Christina: Did you eventually have any other family come to Phoenix?

Toru: I don't understand.

Christina: Like, did you have any other relatives move into ...

Toru: No.

Christina: You were the only ones. Can you describe the house where you lived? What the layout of the house was, about how big it was.

Toru: Well, it wasn't very big, probably about 1500 square feet if that much. And it was thirteen of us kids.

Christina: Oh, wow.

Toru: There were other little dwellings with different brothers slept in.

Christina: Was there the maid house and separate housing -- is that how it worked?

Toru: Well, you know there was like maybe a little shelter that they slept in and roomed in. It wasn't a regular house. It was like a shack or shelter or whatever you could put a bed in and sleep in.

Christina: So how did they deal with the heat in the summer when they were sleeping in the shack outside?

Toru: They had evap coolers.

Christina: Oh. Did your family own that house?

Toru: No, we rented property until maybe the forties.

Christina: What were some of the other properties that your family rented?

Toru: There were several places around Glendale that we farmed. And then we bought property on Peoria Avenue and, as things got better, we bought different properties and brothers moved into different houses. Eventually, we bought some property in the sixties and seventies on 180th Avenue [?] and we were farming on the other side of Luke Air Force base. We got scattered out quite a bit.

Christina: But it was usually on the west side of town?

Toru: Yes.

Christina: Did you change homes frequently based on where you were farming at the time?

Toru: Not frequently, but we did until we bought our own property.

Christina: When did your family finally buy your own property?

Toru: In the forties.

Christina: And where was that?

Toru: Glendale.

Christina: Is that where you went to high school and that is when you moved to that house?

Toru: Yes.

Christina: What memories do you have of your mother growing up in Phoenix?

Toru: She was one of the most wonderful cooks around. Everybody liked her cooking. She was strict. She didn't put up with anything. She was the nicest person that I know; even though she was strict.

Christina: Did she help your father farm or did she ...

Toru: Yes, about as hard as anybody.

Christina: How did she take care of thirteen children and farm during the day?

Toru: I don't know. [laughs] It's amazing how they did it. I remember her washing clothes. There was an old, maybe a Maytag washer or one of them, where, well before that she used to use a scrub board to wash clothes. And that took a long time with thirteen kids. And then I remember when they got a washing machine and they had them crank, what do you call them, what do you call those things that squeeze the water out?

Christina: You put the clothes between the rolls and crank that.

Toru: A lot of clothes on the clothesline. She was always working. That's all I can remember about her. If she wasn't out in the field, it was around the house doing laundry or cooking. She fed everybody. And sometimes there was thirteen or fourteen of us sitting there eating and she made sure that all the children ate first, and if there wasn't anything left over, she just ate a bowl of rice.

Christina: Wow. Did she have the older children help with the younger children a lot of times?

Toru: Not that I know of. My sister was the only one out of thirteen kids -- she did a lot of the helping too, washing, cooking and stuff. It was tough on them. I don't think you could see women doing that in this day and age. [laughs] Do you?

Comment: With thirteen kids -- that's a lot of children. It's a real struggle with that.

Christina: Did your parents have the older children help with the farm work?

Toru: Everybody helped with the farm work. Not just the older, we went out there too.

Christina: You picked?

Toru: We pinned and pulled the weeds and everything.

Christina: About how big were the pieces of land that your family rented the farm?

Toru: Well, some of it was eighty acres, some of them would be 160 acres. And one piece was 320 acres. We got more land as we got ...later on.

Christina: Did your family ever get outside help to help with the farm?

Toru: Oh yeah. We had a lot of outside help -- picking the vegetables.

Christina: What type of people did you have help on the farm?

Toru: We had Hispanics. Right after the war we had some Japanese families that came in from internment camps that they were in and stayed on the farm until they got their foot on the ground

and several families helped that way. Mostly it was Hispanics who did most of the work in the later years.

Christina: Did your parents and your brothers and sisters all pick up Spanish from working with the Hispanics on the farm?

Toru: Yeah most of my brothers did. My parents didn't. All of us spoke a certain amount of Spanish.

Christina: At least you were able to communicate.

Toru: I used to speak pretty good until -- after twenty, thirty years you forget it.

Christina: What about your father -- what are your memories of your father?

Toru: Oh, he was strict. [laughs] But he was fair. He never -- he'd get after you if you did something and one thing about it when we ate -- there was a bunch of us there at the dinner table, no body talked, we just ate. Otherwise, if everybody talked, you wouldn't hear anything. He had the upper hand. Nobody ever gave him any arguments.

Christina: Was your mother the one who disciplined the children or was it your father?

Toru: Both.

Christina: How many hours did your parents work a week on the farm?

Toru: Oh gosh, I don't know. Shoot, probably twelve hours a day.

Christina: Did your father work longer hours than your mother, since your mother had to take care of the children?

Toru: I wouldn't say that. She worked -- from the time she got up -- she was cooking breakfast. By the time dinner was done she was washing dishes and things like that. That's all -- she worked pretty hard, don't you think? Women usually worked longer hours because they got laundry to do.

Christina: What was it like growing up in Phoenix?

Toru: Oh back then it was great. I remember going to high school -- you could go from Glendale to Mesa in no time. There were no cars. You could take McDowell Road or Indian School road and go out west. I bet you could make it faster than you do now. Do you know that Vince?

Christina: Did you own your own car?

Toru: No. We did have our own cars when we were older, but that was when we were going to high school, we bought our own cars. We didn't have all have cars because there were so many kids in the family. There were just a couple of cars.

Christina: Did you know any of the other Japanese growing up?

Toru: We knew practically all of them. Everybody practically knew everybody around.

Christina: Were there ever get-togethers?

Toru: Yeah, they used to have at the Japanese school. We used to go to language school on Saturday. And then in the summer time we'd go about four to five times a week for a couple of hours. And they would have different, like for New Year's, it's quite a Japanese holiday, you

know, they'd have that. And a couple of others like the Emperor's Birthday or something like that they would celebrate it. But, after the war started, that all went away.

Christina: Where was the Japanese school located?

Toru: On 43rd and Indian School. The property is still owned by the JACL. It is close to where the Buddhist Church is.

Christina: What about elementary school and high school, what was that like growing up in Phoenix?

Toru: We went to Glendale and it was nice.

Vince: What elementary school did you go to?

Toru: I went to Washington Grammar School. And then went to Glendale Grammar School.

Vince: But you would have been going to Washington School when the war broke out.

Toru: Yes.

Vince: What was that like? Was there a lot of negativity towards you from the other kids?

Toru: No, not really. I'll tell you what. Our friends were really good to us. They were friends. And if somebody called us a dirty jap, we didn't have to do anything, our Caucasian friends would go after them. That's what kind of friends we had. And same way -- that was probably in 7th or 8th grade and then in high school they were all pretty nice people. Glendale was pretty good to the Japanese. You always find a few -- like there signs and I don't remember the stores where a few of them said "No Japs Allowed" or something like that.

As a whole, this one guy who ran the Sign Hardware, his name was Mr. Hibbold and he would, and people wouldn't let you rent land if you were Japanese, and so he would rent it in his name and sublease it to us. And there was actually, the state passed a law against that, but he didn't care. And everybody, the Japanese really admired him. And if you needed something in Phoenix, because we couldn't drive to Phoenix, he'd send somebody down there and get what you needed. He had a guy next door to him was Mutt Whitney -- he had a gas service station there with his wife and if you needed something downtown, they'd do the shopping for you. Like the clothing store or anything that you wanted, you just told him what you wanted ...

After the war ended and stuff, there was one like Standard Oil and Union Oil, the distributors would come out and want to sell you fuel for your tractors and things like that. My brother said, "Where were you when we needed you?" Well, Supreme Oil Company used to be on Grand Avenue. Did you ever see that? Just north west of McDowell. They had Supreme Oil. He didn't care. He delivered to you regardless. And so all the Japanese farmers bought from him. And he might have been a few cents higher on his gasoline than Union Oil or Standard Oil, but we stayed with him because he was good to us.

Christina: Why do you think these people were so good to you, to the Japanese community?

Toru: Well, I don't know why they were so good to us. Maybe, because we led a pretty good life. We never caused any trouble. Most of all of them paid their bills and everything else. They were good citizens.

Vince: So there was a total of thirteen children from your parents. What were the names of the other children?

Toru: [laughs] Well, the oldest brother was -- his name was Shigeru.

Vince: And he was the oldest one. What year was he born?

Toru: He was born probably in -- he would be ninety-one this year. So what would that make him?

Vince: He would have been born in 1916? He was actually about fifteen years older than you.

Toru: Maybe more.

Vince: OK. And who else?

Toru: Then there's Satoshi, he was about a year and a half younger than him. And then my brother Makoto, he just died here a few months ago. He was eighty-eight. Then there is my sister Ahiko, she's eighty-seven.

Vince: And she is still around?

Toru: Yes. And then there's under her, Tadashi. I don't know how old he would be, probably a year and a half or two under her. And then Minoru. He was about a year or two younger than her, probably about eighty-six or eighty-five. Then Wataru, he's still living, I think he's eighty-three or eighty-four. And then Tomotsu. Now these are not the names they go by.

Vince: Oh, OK.

Toru: Shigeru -- they called him Shig. Mak was Makoto. And then Satoshi was Sat. And then my sister Ahiko, everybody calls her Aki. [laughs] And then my brother Tadashi was Tad. And then Minoru was Min. Wataru they called him Waru. Brother under him was Tomatsu, they called him Tom. And then next one under him was Kiyoshi, they called him Kiyu. One under him was Susumu, they called him Sus. And then brother under him was Tsudomu, they called him Stome. And then there is me, Toru, they call me Toru. And then one under me is Mitsugu, they called him Mits.

Vince: So is this two daughters?

Toru: No, one.

Vince: Oh, one, Ahiko. She really is outnumbered isn't she? So your family purchased the property on 47th Avenue in Peoria in the 1940s.

Toru: Well somewhere in the forties. It was after the war.

Vince: It was after the war?

Toru: Yeah, it was after the war, probably closer to the fifties.

Vince: I was looking at a photograph that was from the church, it was I think Shigeru's wife's name is?

Toru: Haru.

Vince: I think it was a photograph that she had and it said that the church ... because the church was on the other side of Grand Avenue, it's to the south and west of Grand Avenue the church, you couldn't go to it, so you attendee church at the Tanita farm. Where was that?

Toru: On Peoria and 47th Avenue.

Vince: So that would have been in the forties.

Toru: We were renting it then.

Vince: OK; that is what I was wondering.

Christina: How did your family explain what was going on in the war to all the children? Since a lot of them were real young ...

Toru: Oh, I don't know, we were old enough to know what was going on I think. I was eleven at the time. One afternoon two carloads of FBI people came over and told my dad to pack up and pack his clothes and get in. We didn't know what was going on. They checked the house and everything to see if there was any guns or anything. We didn't have any guns or anything. We were barely able to eat at that time anyway. And they hauled him off. They took him to a Federal pen until the war ended.

Vince: Really?

Toru: About four or five years.

Vince: Why did they take him to prison and not to the internment camp?

Toru: We didn't go to internment camp, because we were on the north side of Grand. They never explained to us why they were taking him. They just took him, hauled him off and put him in jail.

Vince: Had your family been in the military?

Toru: No. We never did know why they took him, but they took quite a few of them around there with him.

Christina: Do you remember some of the names of the people that they took?

Toru: There was Yamamoto, I don't remember his last name, H.L. Yamamoto and then there was a Nokobayashi and then there might have been three or four others.

Vince: And they were all taken to Federal prison?

Toru: Yes. That's why I don't why, they never explained to us why or anything. To this day ... But there's quite a few they sent to prison from California, Arizona.

Vince: Where did the Buddhists go to since their Buddhist Temple was off limits as well?

Toru: I don't think they did anything. They just didn't go to church.

Vince: Because everybody from the Free Methodist church went over to your place.

Christina: How did your family life change after your father left? Did the boys have to take more responsibility?

Toru: Well, my oldest brother was doing most of the, he was doing all of the selling, he was doing all the business anyway.

Christina: So he just took on a little bit more responsibility?

Toru: Yes.

Christina: But he was carrying the bulk of the responsibility.

Toru: The older brothers were.

Christina: Did any of your extracurricular activities change after the war started?

Toru: What do you mean extracurricular activities? Like what?

Christina: Where you would spend your free time doing.

Toru: We didn't have a whole lot of free time anyway, because we were working all the time.

Vince: You said you would go to the Japanese Language school to take Japanese language lessons.

Toru: That was stopped after the war started.

Vince: And after the war ended -- they didn't go back?

Toru: No, they didn't start up the school after that.

Christina: Were there any other establishments that got stopped when the war started and never restarted again?

Toru: No, not that I know of. Do you mean Japanese establishments?

Christina: Right, like churches or Japanese stores.

Toru: No, well like we were talking about the Buddhist Church. They just stopped altogether. I think. I don't know for sure because I didn't go to the Buddhist Church. And then they started up again after the war ended.

Christina: Were your friends and people in your community mainly Japanese or were a lot of the Caucasian that you met at school?

Toru: Well, as far as my brothers and I -- we ran around mostly with Caucasian kids because the Japanese community was more or less decimated. But we would go to school and our friends were Caucasian, so we ran around with them. And they were great kids, great friends.

Christina: Did the way the people in your community interact with your family after the war started change?

Toru: Well you got to understand in a rural area, maybe your closet neighbor is half a mile away and next to us was a dairy. We went to school with their kids, so we got along good with them. The other way -- they had a dairy. In those days we didn't travel by car too much if we wanted to go see our friends, we either walked or they came over or something.

Christina: Vince mentioned that when the church moved location to your farm after the war started, why did they pick your property?

Toru: Well, they didn't pick it. We offered it to them. My brother was quite active in the church. His wife was a minister's daughter and so she wanted to see the church activities keep going and so it was in the barn. You'd be surprised -- an old cow barn and they had meetings in there.

Vince: Do you remember the name of the minister?

Toru: No I don't. It was a fella from the Free Methodist Church on Indian School and about 19th, east of 19th Avenue. You know that church south of Indian School, Free Methodist Church, Phoenix Free Methodist Church. The minister was from them. And then there was a Caucasian missionary woman who came.

Vince: Mrs. Dorcas?

Toru: I don't know about that. It's been a long time. I can't remember.

Christina: You said your brother was very involved with church? Did all the children attend church?

Toru: Whose children?

Christina: All the kids in your family?

Toru: My brothers and them?

Christina: Right.

Toru: Yes, my dad told us we didn't have to go to church on Sunday, but he says if you don't go to church, you're going out in the field and work.

Christina: So everybody picked church.

Toru: [laughs] He gave us a choice.

Christina: Did your family and kids in your family hang out with other kids who were also members of the church?

Toru: Yeah.

Christina: But not as much as the Caucasian kids?

Toru: No, because we went to school with the Caucasians. When I worked there were some Hispanics and others too.

Christina: Were the children that attended your church, the same children that attended the Japanese school on Saturdays?

Toru: Yes. But the Japanese school just shut down completely.

Christina: Did your mom try to continue teaching all the kids Japanese?

Toru: No. She didn't have time. But most of us, she didn't speak English too well and so we all spoke Japanese. But now I don't remember much of it. She's been gone maybe thirty something years.

Christina: Did most of the children in your family end up marrying Japanese people?

Toru: No, I wouldn't say that. My son is married to a Caucasian girl. My daughter is married to a Korean fellow. And then all up and down in my brothers' kids, some of them are married to Caucasians. I would say there is less Japanese than there were Caucasians.

Christina: Were your parents upset about that at all?

Toru: No, my mother didn't ...because my dad was passed away before most of the grandchildren started to get married. And my mother even if we went out with Caucasian girls she never said anything one way or the other. It was up to us. And that's how I got to take my hat off to my mother, she never, I don't think she ever had a prejudice bone in her.

Christina: Did you feel that there was a pressure to get married to an Asian person?

Toru: No, not really. It's funny, out of the thirteen of us, we all married Japanese. And then when you take the children from my brothers -- I would say there are more Caucasians than there are Japanese. In fact I know there are more Caucasians than Japanese.

In fact when we were growing up, I think it was harder to take outside of your -- in that period, because the war was going on and everything else. Wouldn't you think so?

Christina: Did your mom keep practicing Japanese traditions and holidays after the war started?

Toru: Well, not really. She never really did much of that anyway. The reason we did practice Japanese customs was because when we were going to the Japanese school, but other than that, well, they were Christians, so we went the Christian route.

Christina: Did the church ever celebrate Japanese holidays?

Toru: Not that I know of. The Japanese school they did. The church never did. They only celebrated things to do with Christ, Easter and things like that.

Christina: Who were some of the other people who attended the church?

Toru: I don't know.

Christina: How big was the church?

Toru: At that time I think there were about thirty to forty people there at the most. But before the war there were quite a few maybe a hundred.

Christina: After the war did the numbers go back up again?

Toru: No, yeah it did go back up again, but as the children got married and had kids and moved across the valley or out of town, then it shrunk. And a lot married outside their ethnic, what you call it. One of my niece, whose husband is Caucasian -- they go to a Caucasian church.

Vince: Why did the church move from its old location to this new location?

Toru: What do you mean?

Vince: Over on Indian School ...

Toru: Well the same guy who started the church owned the property, OK. So he gave that property where the church is now to the church -- the property to the church and he sold the other parts off.

Vince: Oh, so the church was actually sitting on his property.

Toru: Yeah.

Vince: He gave the other property to the church after the war, in the 60s and sold off the other. I know the Buddhist church moved because the first one was burned down and they moved to the other one, which is just south of that.

Vince: Do you remember in the 1930s any of the anti Japanese things that were going on then prior to the war? There were incidents that were happening, assaults on some of the people and farmers? You were a little young, about six years old.

Toru: Not really. When the war started in '41, I was ten years old.

Vince: This would have been around '37 when one of the farmer's districts said that the Japanese were ordered out of Maricopa County and started fire bombing some of the farms that were in the west Valley.

Toru: No, I don't remember that. I remember after the war started, my brother Mak was farming in South Mountain and the war started and they wouldn't let him go back over there, so he sold the crop to somebody. I don't remember what the deal was. Then he got drafted and went in the army.

Vince: He was actually drafted and went into the army? How many brothers enlisted in the army during the war?

Toru: Well, there were five during the war. Two of them went to Japan as interpreters and two went to Italy and one went to Germany. And another brother was younger he got drafted but the war ended.

Christina: We were talking about anti-Japanese.

Vince: You said you didn't remember any anti-Japanese actions going on in the 1930s, but your brothers, though, were drafted into the military during the war is where we left off.

Toru: There were five brothers in the service. Before the war ended, the sixth one got drafted, but then the war ended so he didn't go anywhere. And then when the Korean War started, three of us went into the Korean War. Nine out of twelve served in the military.

I volunteered for the Air Force because I didn't want to be in the Army. [laughs] So I was in for four years and spent one year in Korea.

Christina: Was it hard for your family since so many of the boys left to go serve in the military?

Toru: It was a little bit tough at that time because everybody was going into the army. And [inaudible] was hard at that time. It was sort of tough. Our father was in the prison. We all worked. We were in grammar school and we worked. Nobody forced us to, but we worked.

Christina: You just knew that it was something that needed to be done.

Toru: Right.

Christina: What other responsibilities did you pick up since your brothers had left?

Toru: I don't know. We just did what we, as you're growing up on the farm, you know what has to be done and nobody had to tell you what to do, we just did what we thought had to be done.

Christina: Did you work on the farm everyday after school?

Toru: Everyday after school. First thing we did was change our clothes and get in our work clothes.

Christina: And what about the weekend?

Toru: We worked on the farm then too.

Christina: Did you work full days on Saturdays?

Toru: Full days on Saturdays. We didn't work on Sundays. We would of worked if we didn't go to church. [laughs].

Christina: How did your mom feel about your brothers going into the war?

Toru: I don't know. My dad when he was in prison, he wrote my mom a letter and said, "Tell the boys to go ahead and go in the army or service, because this is their country." And so everybody went in. They didn't protest or anything. This is where they are going to live. This is our country.

Christina: Did you ever know how your parents felt about the war?

Toru: No, they didn't -- not really, they never did talk too much about it.

Christina: What about your brothers? Did they ever talk about how they felt about the war even after they came back?

Toru: Not really. We didn't talk too much about the war. They talked about how different the countries were.

Christina: What countries did they get stationed to?

Toru: Two of them went to Italy. They were in the 442nd. One of them was in Germany and I don't know what outfit he was in. Two of them went to Japan and they were interpreters over there. They went to the language school in the military.

Christina: Did all the brothers come back and live in Phoenix after the war?

Toru: Well, we all came back. One of them went to University of Arizona and got a job in California as a pharmacist. Another one he married a gal out of Colorado, so he moved there. The rest of us all stayed here. [laughs].

Christina: What happened to your brother Mak, who had the farm taken away because it was on the other side of the land, what happened to that land after the war?

Toru: He didn't own the land, he just rented it. And so, I don't know, he just sold the crop that was on the land to somebody, because he couldn't get over there and harvest or anything. Things like that happened. In California a lot of the farmers lost everything.

Christina: Did he continue to farm during the war and after the war?

Toru: Did we continue farming? Yes, we farmed all the way through.

Christina: What about your brother Mak? Was he farming separate land from the family?

Toru: No, he was still, it was all part of the farm and he was taking care of it over there.

Christina: He was just managing a different lot.

Toru: During the war because we couldn't go downtown to market to sell it, we had to hire somebody to take it down and sell it.

Christina: Do you remember who that was?

Toru: I don't remember who that was. But I know that's what happened. You hire somebody to take produce and sell it. You know where that old market was?

Vince: Right back over here actually. Because you couldn't come onto this side of Van Buren.

Toru: Was it McDowell?

Vince: It was Van Buren. Because Grand Avenue came down and becomes Van Buren and it was the highway.

Toru: But on the north end you couldn't be south of Indian School either.

Vince: Oh really? They wouldn't let you south of Indian School.

Toru: And you couldn't go east of Central.

Vince: Wow. Why was that?

Toru: I don't know. I think, I know there used to be when we used to live on Peoria Avenue, the Arizona Canal was a line going north because the Thunderbird Air Base was the school was -- we couldn't go over there because that was an air base.

Christina: Did your family know any families that were on the other side of the line?

Toru: Yeah, there were several, quite a few, not quite a few, but several that were on that side, who didn't have to go to internment camp. In Mesa there was a certain area that you didn't have to go.

Vince: North of Main Street.

Toru: Yeah, I think so. If you're too close to the railroad track or something ... Was it around the railroad track, where the limit was? You couldn't go south?

Vince: Yeah, something like that. But the line whether you went to the internment camp or not was US 60, Grand Avenue down to Van Buren where it turns into Tempe and turns into Apache, it was south of Apache you had to go and north of Apache you didn't.

Christina: Oh wow.

Vince: It's right by ASU.

Christina: So if you went to ASU, you don't have to.

Toru: Laughs.

Vince: Going back to the Japanese Language School, when they closed that down, what did they do with that property then? You had a building there. I think it had a gymnasium and some other features.

Toru: It just sat there until -- I think Basha or it was K Mart rented the property and built a store and then Bashes got it after K Mart.

Vince: Basha leased the property from JAACL and rented it to K mart.

Toru: Maybe that's what it was.

Vince: But prior to that right after the war, what did they use that property for?

Toru: Nothing.

Vince: Nothing? Just closed down. That was kind of the center of the Glendale Japanese community was 43rd Avenue and Indian School.

Toru: Well, that's where the school was ...

Vince: The church and the Buddhist Temple. Was there anything else in that general area right there where everybody would go to -- restaurants or places like that? It was primarily just those three places that you would go down to?

Toru: Back then there weren't any Japanese restaurants. The only Asian restaurants were the Chinese restaurants. Did you know that? [laughs] And most of them were right downtown here.

Vince: Earlier you had a Japanese pool hall, which is downtown in Chinatown. You also had a Japanese garage, which was on McDowell and 19th Avenue.

Toru: Yeah.

Vince: That was Yoshi's I think was the name of it.

Toru: Yeah, that sounds familiar. And there was a couple of Japanese grocery stores downtown somewhere.

Vince: Japanese grocery stores, like the Chinese grocery stores but they were primarily down here. I don't think you had any up there.

Toru: Chinese grocery stores were all over the valley.

Vince: Did you go to church with the Chinese kids as well at Washington Elementary?

Toru: I don't remember any.

Vince: I know the Ongs had a store in that area, but I think that might have been after World War II when they were operating up there.

Toru: You have brothers?

Christina: I have a younger brother.

Toru: Was your dad born here?

Christina: No, my dad was born in Hong Kong.

Vince: There was a Japanese Farmer's Association at one point. You don't know if your family was a member of that?

Toru: No, I don't remember that.

Vince: What about the Japanese American Citizens League? What exactly is that organization? There is a local chapter here, but ...

Toru: It's National.

Vince: But what exactly is it?

Toru: Oh, I don't know. It's something like -- they take up different things -- Japanese culture, they sort of do and they have a newspaper they publish and this local chapter here has a JACL Scholarship Fund for kids. It's more or less for trying to promote Japanese culture and things like that.

Vince: How did they end up with the property of the old Japanese school?

Toru: Because most of the people who belonged to the Japanese school were members of the JACL. And the old school was shut down and so they, I guess the board members got together and decided it over to the JACL and the JACL uses that money for the scholarship fund and different things.

Christina: Do you know when JACL opened the Phoenix chapter?

Toru: No, I think it might have been back in the thirties. I'm not sure.

Christina: Do you know who some of the original members were?

Toru: Not really. I think my oldest brother was one of the original members and a couple of brothers. Some of the old timers around here -- my brother in law, he's ninety-two, he might have been.

Vince: What was his name?

Toru: John Kimura. And Takegushi they were -- none of the brothers are living now, they were probably original members. Ikedas, Sato -- Kishiyama probably, Nakagawa, Kokobayashi -- they were the older ones who originally started.

Christina: What were some of the activities that they did after they formed this chapter in Phoenix?

Toru: Well, they were sort of dormant during the war. And after the war one of the activities was the scholarship fund that they started for the kids graduating high school. And they would have different people come in. They got a place in Glendale that JACL ... They have picnics for different people every year -- they hold a picnic, JACL picnic, this year it's in Glendale. I'm not that active in it.

Christina: Were the majority of the Japanese people who were in Phoenix involved with the JACL or was it just a very small percentage?

Toru: No, I think a majority -- somebody in the family usually ...

Christina: What about the Japanese Association?

Toru: I never heard of that.

Vince: That was the Farmer's Association.

Toru: I don't remember that.

Vince: I suspect that that was the organization that preceded the JAACL here.

Toru: It could be.

Vince: I know they were meeting back in the 1930s when they were doing all the anti Japanese things over in the West Valley. They were actually meeting to get attorneys and things like that.

Toru: I was too young to get into that. And by that time when I got out of high school, I was in the service and went to U of A.

Vince: I suspect that the Japanese Association probably evaporated during the war and after the war became the local chapter of the JAACL.

You didn't live very close to your elementary school. How did you get there?

Toru: School bus.

Vince: Oh, there was a school bus at one time.

Toru: Shoot, they used to bus them ...I know from Glendale High School when I was going there they were bringing them in from Cave Creek.

Vince: Wow, that's quite a haul.

Toru: And New River.

Vince: Did your mother pack you a lunch and everything for school in the morning?

Toru: No, we were able to eat lunch for twenty-five cents.

Vince: In the cafeteria?

Toru: Glendale High School didn't have a cafeteria, they had them stands. Can you imagine that? You get hot dogs for a nickel and drink for a nickel or a dime.

Vince: What about elementary school? What would you eat for lunch in elementary school?

Toru: They had a cafeteria.

Vince: So there you ate in the cafeteria. You didn't bring a box lunch or anything like that.

Toru: Glendale High School when we were going to high school didn't have a cafeteria.

Vince: I don't think Phoenix Union originally did. I think they had like hot dog stands right next to it.

Toru: This is what they had: hot dog and hamburger stands.

Vince: ...right there on the periphery where you could go and have lunch out.

Toru: You could get a meal for a quarter, back then. Now you can't even get a soda pop. [laughs] Can you get a candy bar for a quarter?

Vince: No.

Christina: You can get a pack of gum; five sticks of gum.

How long did your family live in the house that you grew up in? When did you finally sell that property?

Toru: Well, that property we had for about 20 years, but we moved to a different house when we bought another piece of property. And bought another piece of property, we moved to that house. We live in it for maybe 3 or 4 years. But it was pretty close to the area where we were living.

Christina: What about your brothers as they got older -- did they move out of the house and buy their own houses?

Toru: Yes. And then they got married and bought their own houses.

Christina: Were the houses that you bought later, were they smaller since there were less children in the family?

Toru: Most of them lived in the main house anyway. There were maybe some shacks out there where the laborers lived. After the war things changed. Maybe we made a little more money and the brothers got married and they bought their own homes and stuff like that.

Vince: Your house up on Peoria, did it have in door plumbing and all those things there with thirteen kids or did it have an out house?

Toru: Originally we had an outhouse. It had water to the kitchen. We built a Japanese bathhouse.

Vince: Really.

Toru: You know how those are?

Vince: It's been a number of years. Well, describe a Japanese bathhouse.

Toru: It's a tub and then you fill it up with water and then underneath it's a metal tub and you fill it up with water and heat it with wood until the water is hot and then you sit in there and you take these pans and you wash yourself outside with soap and everything and you rinse yourself off with the hot water.

Vince: And how often did you do that?

Toru: Everyday.

Christina: Did you have regular shower or bathtub?

Toru: Later on we did.

Vince: So a typical day would be -- you would come home from school, and you were a kid, switch into your work clothes, work in the field and come back, take a bath and go to bed.

Toru: Study.

Vince: So you did study after you did the work around the farm. That's a tough day.

Toru: And then you wonder why your grades weren't good, your dad would chew you out. [laughs].

Christina: Was it strange since your daily schedule was so different from all the other Caucasian kids that you had to work on the farm and things like that? Did you feel differently since you had to do extra work around the house?

Toru: Not really. We knew we just had to do it. It wouldn't make any difference how you felt, you still had to do it. But the Caucasian kids if they were on a dairy, they had to milk the cows and everything else too when they came home. Back then there were a lot of rural farmers out there and the kids worked. It's not like now where they go to a shopping mall and play games.

Vince: Back then the Caucasian kids didn't have bathhouses.

Toru: No.

Vince: So your family was probably the cleanest one in the neighborhood.

Toru: I don't know. When we went to high school, we worked out in the gym and took a shower there, so we didn't have to ... but by then we had regular baths and showers at home. When you're poor and you ain't got none, you got to do with what you have.

Vince: In talking with George Kishiyama, he described one of the houses he lived in when he was very young as being portable. He said the floors were dirt and basically it was a wall with a roof and when it came time to move to another farm property, they would literally pick up the house and put it on a truck and drive to the other property and put it down.

Toru: And those things people just slept in them, just a shelter is what it was.

Vince: So it's kind of like the houses you were talking about that your brothers lived in and the other laborers on the property lived in, as well as the returning internees, the ones who were in the internment camps -- when they came to stay on the property until they could get on their feet ...

Toru: By that time we were able to have houses for people who worked for us and they had plumbing and everything.

Vince: Oh, OK. Do you remember on Indian School Road, I was looking at aerial photos and my understanding is that a lot of people were returning from the internment camps lived along Indian School Road around 31st Avenue -- did you ever own any of that? In the aerial photos it shows a long line of small homes about a half-mile.

Toru: Yeah, there were some right there. They had a runway, airport for small aircraft.

Vince: Yes that's in the picture too -- small airplanes and it's a small, little airstrip.

Toru: There were several families who lived along there.

Vince: Who owned that property, do you know?

Toru: I don't know who owned them. I know on north side of Indian School Road there were several Japanese families who owned homes in there.

Vince: That was on the north side of the street.

Toru: I think the guy who has Eton Homes or Eton Construction, I think they owned that property. I'm not sure.

Vince: You said the gas station owner helped you a lot. Whitney and his wife helped you. Did they have any of the Japanese families living with them or staying on their property?

Toru: No, they had their own business -- tire and service station.

Vince: Where was that located at?

Toru: Right there on Grand about -- just south of Glendale Avenue about 58th Avenue and then Sign Hardware was right next to him.

Vince: So that's part of Glendale now. Because your property I think up on 47th and Peoria is part Phoenix now.

Toru: No. It's still Glendale.

Vince: It's Glendale.

Toru: 43rd Avenue ...

Vince: Is that the cut off in that area. Because down on 43rd and Indian School that was all called Glendale back then but it's actually Phoenix now.

Toru: No. See 43rd Avenue is west is Glendale, except north of the Canal. Then it goes to 51st and then Glendale is on 51st Avenue.

Vince: It makes it very confusing for this type of research when you're trying to find everybody in Phoenix. It says they are in Glendale, but some of them are and some of them ...

Toru: See the Canal at 43rd Avenue -- the Canal goes at an angle and north of the canal is Phoenix to 51st Avenue and then it's Glendale west of 51st Avenue.

Christina: What do you consider to be the defining moments of your life that made you the person who you are today?

Toru: I don't know. It's hard to say.

Vince: The things that happened during the war and right after the war and you going into the military, did that have an effect on the direction that you decided to go for your future or did you continue on being a farmer like your father and probably like his father.

Toru: We continued being farmers. I went to Ag marketing school at the University of Arizona and when I got out I was working for Ryserand [?] pesticide company and my older brother got sick and he asked me to come in and start selling the produce and that's when I started working for Tanita Farms.

Vince: And Tanita Farms had an office in downtown Phoenix.

Toru: Yes. Right after the war.

Vince: Where was that located?

Toru: It must have been on 3rd Street and between Madison and what's that street south of Madison?

Christina: Washington?

Vince: Madison and Harrison is there, the train tracks and you got Buchanan.

Toru: South of Madison, what's that first street?

Vince: I think that's Harrison.

Toru: Between there on Third Street, we had a warehouse there.

Vince: Oh really? Between Madison and Harrison on Third Street.

Toru: That's where my brother started shipping produce out of.

Vince: Do you know if that's still there?

Toru: I doubt it.

Vince: So just south of Madison and north of Harrison. Harrison and the train tracks, it depends on where the tracks ... Harrison is right there. I have to drive over there after this and check it out. [It's the US Airways Arena].

Toru: He started shipping out of there. It would go to Salt Lake, L.A.

Vince: So you would truck your produce from your farms to West Valley down to this location here and then he in turn would ship it by rail line?

Toru: No, just trucks.

Vince: Oh trucks.

Toru: He hired different trucks. At that time we didn't have any farms out way out west. When we moved to Glendale we had a shed there where we packed and processed produce, from there that's when we rented some land out west and started farming west of Luke Field.

Vince: So when did you move from the office in Phoenix to Glendale? Do you remember?

Toru: Oh probably 1950.

Vince: So you were downtown for a very short period of four to five years. So you went to school after the war, and you got a degree in Agricultural Business basically and became a businessman dealing with agricultural products and then when your brother, was that Shigeru, who got sick -- you took over the family business from him?

Toru: No, I didn't take over. I just took over the sales.

Vince: So you still weren't farming, you were a businessman.

Toru: I was a salesman there.

Christina: Who was in charge of the farms?

Toru: Oh gosh, I had all kinds of brothers out there. There was Tom, Waru, Teo, we were scattered.

Vince: Why did you decide to become a businessman versus a farmer?

Toru: I didn't decide that. My brother asked me to come in and sell.

Vince: But prior to that you got your degree from University of Arizona. So you went to school.

Toru: Ag marketing.

Vince: Was this something your parents asked you to do?

Toru: No, we were just in it so long and I just thought ...

Vince: Because this was a defining moment in your life that she asked you about. I was just wondering how that came about.

Christina: Was it because it was familiar? So it was a starting point, " I know a little bit about this ... so I'll study this."

Toru: I knew all the products. Ours was a matter of supply and demand. If demand was good, you just raise the prices and see what you could get.

Vince: It wasn't like going to church on Sunday when you just wanted to get out of doing the farming.

Toru: No it was fun. I had fun doing it. In fact we used to sell to quite a few big chains, Kroger Company, Safeway.

Vince: That was here in Arizona?

Toru: We used to ship all over the United States.

Vince: Under the Tanita Brothers label?

Toru: Tanita Farms. We used to ship to Japan.

Vince: Really?

Toru: And ship to -- before Castro got in -- we used to ship dry onions into Cuba and we shipped quite a bit into Canada.

Christina: What were some of the products that you shipped to Japan?

Toru: To Japan the only thing we shipped to them was dry onions.

Vince: So your family really went from ...

Toru: Nothing.

Vince: Pretty much nothing and with a lot of hard working kids to being an international produce shipping company. In a relatively short period I guess.

Toru: Well, I wouldn't say a short period, it was probably thirty years.

Vince: OK, I guess from the time that they moved here and starting farming to the time that they were actually shipping things to Cuba and Japan would be about thirty years.

For the most part they were just regular farmers until the kids became grown and that's when they started to branch out into these types of businesses. And did all of the brothers follow the farming bug in a sense?

Toru: No, one of them was a pharmacist, one had a sporting goods store and the rest of them were in the farm. At one time we were probably farming 3,000 acres of vegetables.

Vince: In fact you guys just recently sold your last farm didn't you?

Toru: Well, my sister in law sold it.

Vince: The one way out in West Valley, in the 300th Avenues or wherever it was way out there.

Toru: 303.

Vince: It's way out there. [laughs].

Christina: By the prison and the Wildlife Zoo.

Toru: It's closer to the prison.

Vince: Out by Perryville, it's way out there.

Christina: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Toru: No.

Vince: We covered just everything that I can think of.

Christina: Well, we're going to end our interview. Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts and memories.

Vince: We really appreciate it, sir.

Toru: No problem.

[end of interview].

VIOLET TOY

Interviewed by Aurelia Bradley
22 September 2006

Aurelia: This is an interview with Violet Toy, on 9-22-06 at 3:30 PM, at her home, by Aurelia Bradley. And, for the record, do I have your permission to tape your interview?

Violet: Yes, you do, OK.

Aurelia: OK. And if you could please state your name and it's spelling?

Violet: My name is Violet Toy. V-I-O-L-E-T. And my last name's Toy, T-O-Y.

Aurelia: And in your other interview they went over when you were born and where you were born. But can you go ahead and go over that with me again?

Violet: I was born on 11th Street and Monroe, January the 2nd, 1927.

Aurelia: Oh my goodness. And was that in a hospital?

Violet: No, no. If I were born in a hospital, I would have gotten all the freebies. Yeah, Carnation used to, or, they'd come, they'd give you a month's supply. But all my brothers and sister were born at home. And, see, I was born the first baby of that year, but I didn't get any freebies.

Aurelia: Not because you were born at home.

Violet: No, uh-huh.

Aurelia: And, from what I understand, your family originally came from China?

Violet: Yes, my dad came in 1909. So we were part of the first family, 'cause he came to the Valley there.

Aurelia: That is so interesting. And so you said that your father was the first member of your family to come.

Violet: Yes, uh-huh, uh-huh. And then after the war he went back to bring my mother.

Aurelia: OK. What memories do you have of your mother?

Violet: Of my mother? Well she was... I mean, I always have good memories of her. And I guess there were so many of us, I was just thinking that, you know, she kept us busy. I remember. And I guess that's why I guess I'm a gardener.

[telephone rings].

Violet: Would you excuse me?

Aurelia: Yeah, I'll pause that for just a moment.

[break].

Aurelia: OK we were talking about the memories that you have of your mother.

Violet: You know, I was thinking, just the other day, that she kept us busy. We had to go, after school, we had to go weed the garden. There were so many of us. And that's why I guess I'm a gardener. And then if we had a grocery store, and we were old enough, that we would have to stock the shelves. And so she kept us busy. And then, there were so many of us, I'm the middle one. I have a sister that's ninety-three, and she took care of all of us. And when I came around, I'm the middle one, and so I took care of my younger sister, washing diapers and taking care of her while my mother and dad worked in the grocery store.

Aurelia: How old was "old enough to work in the store"?

Violet: Nine, or ten, or eight! You know, we were...

Aurelia: As soon as you were able-bodied!

Violet: Uh-huh, able-bodied, we did! In fact, we were all doing our own washing by the time we were ten, 'cause there were so many of us. I have ten, I had ten, there were eleven of us.

Aurelia: Oh goodness.

Violet: I had four brothers and there were seven of us girls.

Aurelia: That is a big family! I come from a very small one.

Violet: Yeah, so.

Aurelia: What other memories of your mother do you have, as far as how she interacted with the people in the store?

Violet: You know, my mother, she came from China. Back in those days they did not educate the girls. But she was a very smart woman, even though she didn't go to school. She learned Spanish before she learned English because we were in the Spanish district at the edge of town back then. And she'd run the grocery store, so she learned her Spanish before she learned English. And then she learned her English as we all grew up and talked to her in English. And so she, I felt that, "Gee, if my mother had gone to school, she'd really ..." She was the one that gave my daughter advice; some *good* advice.

Aurelia: She was kind of the woman behind the man.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. Although, although we had said that my mother had vision. My dad, after the war, bought land, about Shea and 32nd Street. And back in the '50, it was a desert. And my mother said, "Get rid of that land, get rid of that land. It's all desert and never get water out there." So, my dad sold it. But he made money selling it, back in those days, too, so. But she had a vision. You know, she looked at him and said, "There's no future out there." [laughter].

Aurelia: Was that the land that, was it as a result of the sanit -- the woman that ran the sanitarium? That land? Or is it different?

Violet: Well we had a grocery store.

Aurelia: Right.

Violet: And my dad, we used to, she did have a sanitarium in Sunny Slope. And she ran up a bill that she couldn't pay, and she gave us the land. She couldn't pay her bill, I guess it was costly. But my mother again said, "Well that's no place to live," you know, with the TB group. So we got rid of that. Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: And now does your family still own the property on 16th and Camelback then?

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: OK.

Violet: Uh-huh. And the reason we own, you know. We moved there after I was born. So all my brothers and sister, after me, were born right there at the corner at 16th and Camelback. And my dad, he ... my mother ran the grocery store, and he ran the vegetable wagon. He would come running out here to the sanitarium, to, to sell to the sanitarium, fresh vegetable and fruit. And he would always have his lunch at the [inaudible] because there was a great big cottonwood tree there, and irrigation ditch. And he said, "Someday I'd like to own this land." So we bought, he bought the five-acre, way back in 1927, for five-thousand dollars.

Aurelia: Wow ...

Violet: That was a lot of money back then.

Aurelia: Yeah, I bet.

Violet: But see, so now we're living off the fruit of that land.

Aurelia: Well he was a smart man to invest then.

Violet: Uh-huh.

Aurelia: As far as responsibilities around the house, what responsibilities at home, other than the gardening and the weeding, did you and your brothers and sisters have?

Violet: We, I know there were so many of us, I realize. No, we had to, we had to take care of the younger one. We all had to do our own washing and drying back then. The laundry, by the time we were able to, at ten, eleven. And, so we were, you know, dad put, mom put us to work in the grocery store to stock grocery, or. And kept us busy.

Aurelia: And did it, did the roles, did your responsibilities differ between the boys and the girls? Or was everybody pretty much expected ...

Violet: Well, we took turn and my mother didn't like that. She said if, us, between us children, we decided, "Well, it's one turn, one day you wash, one day you dry, and one day you set the table," and all that. And my mother was one of these that's, well, "Whoever's able to do it, do it!" But then we would fuss about it, "It's not my turn!"

Aurelia: So everybody was just expected to do everything.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well, we, you know, there's a lot of dishes when there's nine, ten of us eating everyday. And then you washed, or dried, or clear the table. So, but it worked out. We ... [inaudible].

Aurelia: Now, as far as your parents' expectations for you and your brothers and sisters, did they differ? Did they, like, did they expect anything different from the boys than from the girls.

[telephone rings].

[break].

Aurelia: We were talking about the different expectations, *if* there were different expectations in your family, as far as what was expected of the boys in your family and what was expected of the girls in your family.

Violet: I guess the boys were expected to behave. I mean, I know my brother had to do, you know, when they were of age, they had to do, deliver the grocery and really work in the grocery store. And, I guess my mother's expectation of us was ... well, I, they didn't understand our, you know, I remember that they didn't care about our report card or whether it was good or bad. But, but no, I guess they expected us to go on to study, to go on. And they were willing to give us, to support us to go on to college. Except my older sister, at that time, she was, during the Depression, so she was not educated. And she finished high school, but they couldn't afford to send her to college. But I guess they just expected us to do well. In fact, my dad had said, "I want to see this family with a lawyer, a doctor," and what else did he say? And so we do now. "And a professor." Not our generation, but the next generation, we do have a professor and a lawyer. And we married into a doctor. So, they expected, high expectation of us to do well in school. But I didn't, oh, I guess he wanted us, too. My sisters are, we're schoolteachers. We taught school because we either were a schoolteacher or a secretary back in those days. It was hard for women to go on to other professions. So my second sister was a teacher. And I was a teacher. And my younger sisters were teachers. So, we have teachers in the family.

Aurelia: Do you, do you feel like you've got your ... Even though you said that there was only two real professions for women to go to in that time, do you feel like you continued your education? Was your mom very encouraging because she wasn't able to pursue that? Or, did you sense anything like that?

Violet: I guess she, it was unspoken. I guess she just expected us to *be* that. You know, she never said, "I want you to be a school teacher," or, "You must do this and that." She just, was sort of, unwritten in her thinking that we would do better.

Aurelia: That you would take advantage of the opportunities that you had in front of you?

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: Let's see ... What are some of the things that you remember the most about growing up in Arizona?

Violet: Well we had fun. I mean, there were so many brothers and sister. Well my brothers used to go swimming in the ditch there. We'd go fishing. Or even, even when we would have irrigation in our area, we had fun playing in the yard. We, yeah, we did have fun growing up because, with the neighbor's kid, growing up in the back yard playing games. And my two brothers would be on, each one would have a side, and they would choose us girls to be on either side of them, and we would have rubber gun fights.

Aurelia: Oh!

Violet: Cutting up the old tire. And, so we did have fun.

Aurelia: A lot of fun. No TV or video games for you guys!

Violet: No, no, no. We had to make up our own fun. We used to, I remember, trying to sail down a tub, down the irrigation ditch. It didn't work. Down the irrigation ditch. And then my dad, it was five acres that we bought, at the corner of 16th, and he put in a pecan grove. And so he said there was seven rows, so each one, each girl had a row-a-thing. And my mother kept us busy by, as soon as it got cool weather, we had to go out and collect the nuts.

Aurelia: So you were always busy.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh. She was enterprising. You know, she would, sometimes, she would even crack the nuts. And we would sell them *cracked*. We would double the money then, than selling it whole, nuts. So we were, besides running the grocery store. And that's how we earned our Christmas money. My mother paid us five cents a pound to pick nuts. And so if we wanted more money, we would go out there and pick more nuts.

Aurelia: Were there any other activities that you and your siblings or your friends did? Like, did you guys play sports? Or swimming? Or ...?

Violet: No. My, my two older brother, and my sister next to me, the four of us, had to go to Chinese school. I guess then my dad wanted to educate us in Chinese. And so, we didn't have much free time because we, after American school, we had to go down to China -- to where the Arena is now, for where the Chinese school is. And we had to go there from about 4:30 to about nine o'clock, or 8:30, to learn Chinese. But I didn't learn too much, because I was just a first grader. I've forgotten it. We've all forgotten it.

Aurelia: And, and I read that your brother actually used to, you'd guys would sneak out of Chinese school!

Violet: We would leave on a Saturday because we had to go from nine to five, on Saturday. And he didn't like it, so he would sneak us out. So we would go to the movies.

Aurelia: I also read in your other interview that at school, at American school, you didn't have a lot of other Chinese American classmates or anyone like that.

Violet: No, no, no. Back in those days, when my sister went, she was put in with the, they had segregated the Spanish children and, I guess because they didn't speak English. And I remember, my dad said, he went to school and said, "Why was his daughter," my oldest sister, "put in that class?" So I guess she was put in a regular classroom. Uh-huh. Because, 'cause when I, yeah, when I, no, when I went to school they were still that segregated class of Spanish kids that couldn't speak English. So they had a separate class in that, at Madison.

Aurelia: OK. But then at the Chinese school, were you able to make friends that were also Chinese Americans?

Violet: Oh yeah. Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: Were they mostly also family members? Or were they ...

Violet: Yes, uh-huh. And we've had a close tie. I mean, we had a, we had a reunion, back in the nineties, and got together, and it was a nice. And in '95 we met again. But it was a smaller group, each time. And we did have a, you know. Father Emory, who was "Dickie," who was one of the Tang family. Back in those days, each family knew everybody. I mean, there was not that big of a Chinese group. And we've kept up with each other. Or we will see each other, at dinner parties or something. So, so there's still a nucleus of us that went to Chinese school. Although none of us remember the Chinese we learned.

Aurelia: Do you feel that as the generations are getting, with each generation, is the closeness, are they losing that?

Violet: We're losing our culture. We're losing it. And it's sad, because although. Like, my mother celebrated every Chinese holiday by making the Chinese cakes and all that. And now we've lost. Well, you could get a cookbook and find the recipe, but nobody bothers to make all of that, dumplings and things for different holidays. So, we are losing. And now, this next generation, they

don't even care for Chinese food. I mean, they'd rather have American food. So if there's a banquet with Chinese food, they opt out on it.

Aurelia: That, that brings me, actually, to my other, some of my other questions here. What food items that differed from your *home* food do you recall tasting for the first time? Did your, I guess what I'm asking is, did you eat a lot of Chinese food at home? And then, if so, can you remember the first time you really maybe tasted something really American? Or ...?

Violet: No. The thing is, we, we always had, when my mother was alive, we always had Chinese meal for dinner. Of course, if we wanted to [inaudible], it was American food. And, and then, we would have, that's the only meal, would be Chinese. And she would just cook a vegetable, or, or dried fish, which we know that's not good for us now. But we did always have a Chinese dinner. In the evening.

Aurelia: Well I read that your mom, I read in your interview, that your mom loved to cook a lot. And, and you think that maybe that's why most of you kids never learned to cook!

Violet: Cook! That's true! She was a good cook. And we would help her. She would make us do the cleaning and the chopping up of the vegetable and all that. But she did the cooking. And she was a good cook. And we used to have a dinner every Sunday with chicken, which is sort of special on a Sunday. And we would have the family that helped us get started, over for dinner. So, it was sort of a, and it was fun because I went and played with girls, you know, they were our age. And so we had a good time on Sunday.

Aurelia: What were some of your favorite things that your mom cooked? Some of the, maybe some examples of dishes that she used to cook.

Violet: She used, she used to do a chicken. You know, lots of chicken. She used to do a stir-fry of oyster, minced oyster with all the other vegetable. And that used to, we used to have it just on really special day, like New Year's Eve or something, the day before New Year's. She did, she had a good chop suey duck. She did a very good all, chopping all the, roasting a whole duck with all this vegetable on top of it.

Aurelia: Oh goodness.

Violet: And the soup, she made some very good soup. You know, like shark fin soup or bird nest soup. And she'd make us clean that. And days we would pick out the little feather, when we had bird nest soup. You know, 'cause the little feathers she just didn't get out there.

Aurelia: Did, so your, did your father cook at all? Or ...?

Violet: Yes. My dad was a good cook, too. In fact, he was a cook in the first World War.

Aurelia: Oh!

Violet: We sent him overseas, and he learned to cook from there. And he was very good. He was telling us, when he was overseas, I guess it was Thanksgiving or something, and he remembered cooking a whole turkey with the hairs in it. I mean, you know, it was one of his stories that he didn't realize that he had to clean out the turkey.

Aurelia: The turkey!

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: How funny. Now, I also understand that your family, after the grocery store, opened a restaurant. Is it the restaurant that is still on 16th and Camelback?

Violet: Uh-huh. It's, it's, when we had it, it was called Toy's Shangri La. Now the restaurant is called Imperial Garden. It's a buffet. And we lease out the, the property to the people to run it.

Aurelia: When your family opened Toy's Shangri La, did your father cook there? Did your mother cook there?

Violet: Yes. Well, my mother didn't, because we still had a grocery store.

Aurelia: Oh, OK.

Violet: And my brother, it was my dad, the reason he built the store, it's 'cause -- the restaurant -- it's 'cause my brothers came back from war. And to keep -- and my brother-in-law -- and you need something to keep them busy. So he opened the restaurant. And my brother was a cook. And he'd gone from tasting all the good food in China, when he was stationed in China. And he became a very good cook. And my dad, as he, after the store closed, he would come back in the restaurant and help in the busy hour. Do some work.

Aurelia: So it's almost like your family encourage the children to not follow traditional gender roles. I mean, your brothers cooked and you guys, you and your sisters were encouraged to go to college. Did you think that, did you realize that the time that that was a little forward-thinking? Did you, did it seem different to you at all? Or ...?

Violet: No, I guess it was just expected of us to go to college and make the best of it. And, and make something out of us. So, I came back and taught at the same school that I attended in grammar school. And that was because my sister, my youngest sister, was working in the superintendent office, and she told the superintendent, "Yeah, I have a sister that's graduating from Cal." And so he asked for an interview and hired me to teach. So I didn't have to.

Aurelia: And so it was like coming full circle.

Violet: Uh-huh. Circle, uh-huh.

Aurelia: You got to start out school there and then teach.

Violet: Uh-huh.

Aurelia: Wow, that is, that is really great.

Violet: So that means we've had a Toy at that school since 1927 to about 1950, when I left teaching to go overseas.

Aurelia: Wow.

Violet: So that's a long time to have. And then, of course, yeah, then my little niece lived in the neighborhood, so they went to that school too.

Aurelia: Let's see, some of these ... I understand that your father started the, he was one of the founders of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Violet: Yes, uh-huh.

Aurelia: Is there anything that you can tell me about this organization? What you recall about it?

Violet: Well, you know, the Chinese community, they were very small back in those days. And we felt that the American wanted us, the American workday. You know, we used to stay open on

Saturday and Sunday and late to catch the business at, when the American store would close. And, and my dad decided that, you know, we, we should give back something to the community, 'cause they, you know, were opening the grocery store, and we all had a grocery store. So he went around with a few of his friends to ask the community, like the milk company, to provide milk, and the soda company to provide soda pop. Because we were doing business with them. And they came through. And so, and then we asked some of the restaurant owners to donate chicken. And so it started out that we would rent a hotel or rent a place where people could go swimming and have this picnic lunch. It was always chicken, and free soda. Chicken and corn and. And they, that's the tradition. I think that you go to one of those Fourth of July party, you would have chicken and corn and free milk and free chips or free soda. And, and the, it's been carried out, I don't -- now I think they have to buy their food. But back in those days it was small enough that a couple of the restaurant would donate the chicken. And for a while we were giving out the chicken. Giving, frying the chicken and taking it down there. So, it's, it's gotten to be a big event now. They have pageants, queen pageants and all that. But it was just a, back in, and they gave scholarship. Now they are still giving scholarship, or have a queen contest. So, so it's still a tradition, but it's gotten so big that, you know, when we go now, I don't know anybody there, so.

Aurelia: And traditionally, or typically, how often did you meet? Was it just on the Fourth of July?

Violet: Uh-huh. It was just on the Fourth of July. And now I guess they would meet regularly. I mean, on different, for different occasions, on what they should do. The community.

Aurelia: The members of the community.

Violet: But the big thing was the Fourth of July. And then got us to, to close the store- grocery store. Everybody closed that day. Because otherwise many of the store would-

Aurelia: Nobody would be there.

Violet: Uh-huh. We would open seven days a week. I mean, we used to open seven days a week. And late in the evening to catch the extra customer.

Aurelia: And that was, that was good business then. Just to get all the customers possible.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: I, I wanna talk about, do you have any memories of specific treatment, as far as maybe positive -- or negative -- based on being an Asian American or Chinese American? Did, did you. I know what some of the people had talked about the Chinese Exclusion Act and things like that. Did you experience that?

Violet: No, we were about the only Chinese, and there was a few Japanese family, at grammar school. But I think my brother felt it. I mean, he really got upset when somebody called him, like, "chink" or something. And that didn't do well with him for -- And I think he still has that chip on his shoulder. But it didn't bother me, you know, what's a little name calling? But it bothered him.

Aurelia: But people did call you names?

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And, yeah, but I always, the only time I felt it was, if we were in an accident, we were always in the wrong. The other guy, if he was Caucasian, was right. But, I, you know, but it didn't, that didn't happen.

Aurelia: The kids weren't mean at school. Nothing like that.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: One of the questions is also, can you describe the first time that you recognized that you were Asian American? Did you ever have a sense that you were different from the other kids? Or did you just ...

Violet: We just grew up and we were Asian American!

Aurelia: So you just always knew.

Violet: Yeah, I always say, "Am I Chinese American or American Chinese?" [laughter] American Chinese, I guess we were American Chinese.

Aurelia: OK. You said that two of your brothers were in the war. And where were you when you first heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

Violet: I was at the grocery store. It was a Sunday, working I guess. And I heard, you know, they had "Extra! Extra!" paper came out that that day, of the bombing of the Pearl Harbor.

Aurelia: And about how old were you?

Violet: I, I was about fourteen.

Aurelia: Oh, OK.

Violet: And because ... You know, we were always entertaining the Chinese Air Force flyer that came over here to be trained to be flyers. And so, my sister dated all of them, but I was a little too young to date all those [inaudible]. They would come to the house.

Aurelia: What did you think about when you heard that Pearl Harbor had been? Did you have any thoughts on it? Or ...?

Violet: No, I didn't. But I did see, all of a sudden, all my Japanese friend was gone. You know, they were put in the, in the...

Aurelia: In the internment camp.

Violet: In the camp, uh-huh. So, no, it didn't affect me any way.

Aurelia: Other than the seeing, seeing your friends.

Violet: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Aurelia: Did you, did you notice or did you feel like people treated you different because maybe they thought you were Japanese? Or, anything like that?

Violet: Once in a while. Once in a while. I remember going into a parking place and somebody says, "Well why don't you go home?" Or my nephew, he said, "Well home is on 16th Street and Camelback." You know, that's where my mom, his mom was born. You know. But I saw less and less of it after the war.

Aurelia: Did you feel like your life changed at all during the war? Were there things that you couldn't do? Or things that...

Violet: Well, I'll tell ya. During the war, my dad's policy, his philosophy is "The customer is always right. No matter how wrong they are, the customer is right." It was during the wartime that we had to open the grocery store. Well, the customers, and they were always right, never got the ration

thing. We would save our, the sugar, our whatever was hard to find. We'd save it for our favorite customers.

Aurelia: Ohh!

Violet: We'd save it for those others. [laughter].

Aurelia: Those times when they were always right.

Violet: Never, never right.

Aurelia: Were there any other changes, other than, at the, as far as what you were selling at the grocery store, that you felt?

Violet: Well, I remember standing in line at the department store, waiting for a pair of nylon stocking.

Aurelia: So, kind of the same things that everybody felt.

Violet: That everybody felt, during the war.

Aurelia: One of the other things that I'd like to do is maybe get a list of some of your family members. If you would be interested in doing that with me. Just kind of a family tree.

Violet: Oh, well. You asked for some pictures...

Aurelia: Oh, yes. If you have pictures, too.

Violet: I do not have a baby picture. We have a family picture. And the baby picture that I'm, my mother's holding me, it was cut off. My head was cut off. So I don't have a baby ... Let's see, I did say family photo. Like this, this is not the whole family, because there was one more baby after this. This is my other [inaudible], my youngest sister is not here. So this is our family, and ... let's see. Let's see, she's, she's seventy-two years ago. So this is maybe, she was seventy-two last August.

Aurelia: Which one is you? That one?

Violet: Uh-huh. My oldest sister's ninety-three. And my brother's gonna be eighty-five in October. We're having a family reunion. No, I'm sorry, this is my oldest sister. This is the only sister I lost to cancer at forty. This is my sister, she's ninety-three now. This brother is eighty-five. We lost this brother two years ago, to liver cancer. And so these are the two that are missing. Gray. And then counting my sister Katie. Then I, this is me. And this is Henry. This is the brother that has a chip on his shoulder on, on prejudice. And then, after, this is Nancy, and she's in California. And this is Louis. And this is Betsy. And my mom and dad. So, and then there's Shirley, who's the baby that came a couple years later. So this is 1934. This picture was taken about 1934.

Aurelia: OK. And ... You all have very American names. Was that something, was that your mother or your father?

Violet: No, it was the doctor, that delivered us. And Kennedy, his wife was named Katie. And the doctor, I don't remember, he wanted to name us flowers. That's why I'm a violet, but Nancy should have been a pansy, but we're not. Sometimes discard that. So, so, Katie was the doctor's wife's name. And then by that time, my sister's name, they named Shirley and Betsy. Uh-huh. But the ... And, Gray, was that the doctor? I think the doctor named Gray and Will, Bill. I think the doctor's.

Aurelia: And what was your oldest sister's name?

Violet: Sue. And she lives in Chicago.

Aurelia: And she, she's the sister that was born in China.

Violet: China. Uh-huh, uh-huh. And she came over with my mom when she was five. This one, this is, these are the grandchildren. When it was my mother's birthday. And then ... And this is, when he became governor, and we were invited to the ball.

Aurelia: And is, now, who is this?

Violet: That's Louis, my youngest brother.

Aurelia: Oh, OK. And, and...

Violet: My mom.

Aurelia: Your mom.

Violet: This is my sister Sue. She's ninety-three. I'm going to visit her in -- she didn't come. We had a, Shirley became, my youngest sister was seventy last month. And the, or the ninth of this month, and she had a party. So, she didn't, she wanted to come, but they said it was too hard for her to come. So ... OK. This is, this is the sister I lost. She was only at age forty. And ... This is a family tree that my brother-in-law tried to fix for us. But it's not, it's not correct. I mean, there's a lot more to come yet. But, we don't have anybody to do it for us. Let's see ... My dad had a, a World War buddy. I think they come to the ... This is my dad in his World War I uniform. And I ... This is the, they had a get-together. I guess he went to his ...

Aurelia: Oh, it's the rest of his ... Now did he, he enlist in the Army? Or was he...

Violet: No, he was drafted.

Aurelia: Oh.

Violet: From here, from Phoenix. And that's why, he was drafted and he was with a group from South Dakota. So most of his buddy were from South Dakota. And, over the years, when they came to winter here, he got together with some of the ...

Aurelia: Oh!

Violet: And this, this is, I guess this was, I don't know ... The background, I guess this goes with this picture! Yeah. It's, it's my brother, I guess he went overseas again. They took him to ...

Aurelia: Now, did all of your siblings -- I know that you didn't marry.

Violet: No, I'm the only one.

Aurelia: You're the only one that didn't marry.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And that's why I had the family home.

Aurelia: Oh.

Violet: See, when everybody comes home there's room for everybody.

Aurelia: I see. Did, did you feel like your parents were disappointed that you didn't get married? Did you feel like you were expected to get married? Or ...?

Violet: No, they tried to match me up several times, but it didn't work. And so I guess they weren't disappointed. You know, they tried. You know, I guess they hoped for everybody to be married, but it didn't work out. So, I had fun. I don't regret it.

Aurelia: But they didn't, they didn't force it on you?

Violet: No.

Aurelia: Like, you know, I understand that theirs was an arranged marriage. And that that was common in China.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And my sister was sort of arranged, but she had her choice. I mean, she, they introduced my brother-in-law to her and it was her choice whether she wants to get married with him or not. So, it worked out. She married him and it worked out. But it didn't work out ... She said ... My mother, we ... The Presbyterian [inaudible]. The Chinese girls [inaudible] were entertaining. My mother became Presbyterian because it was a Presbyterian lady that helped her when she was very sick, when she was in Casa Grande.

Aurelia: And so you went to, did you all go to church? Or ...?

Violet: Mm-hm. And so we were member of the First Church. I'm still a member there, but the others had broken off and my sister's a Baptist and Shirley's a Catholic. But we were all started as Presbyterian. Because of the Presbyterian lady that helped us.

Aurelia: Helped you, what do you mean "helped you"?

Violet: Well, my mother was very sick when, my dad had moved to Casa Grande. And my mother had a [inaudible] on her and she was very sick. And my sister was in school. And she told her sister that her mom was, my mom was really sick. So the teacher, the two teacher went to visit my mother, and found that she was very sick. And meanwhile, my dad had written to China to get some medication or something. So they, they, and my second brother was born, he was a preemie. And my mother was sick. And so they were smart enough to call in the doctor, too. So, so, this was a very young teacher, and we got to know her through the later years, in her nineties, we got in touch with her. And she told us about the time that she was just a young teacher. And she was telling us that, yeah, my mother, the church is right across the street, my dad had a restaurant in Casa Grande. And so after she got healed, she, the teacher was always singing in the choir. And so she, she asked mother to go to church, and mother would always point her out, "That's the teacher that helped me out." Her name was Gladys Aldrich. And was telling us, she was just a young, young, she wasn't married. And my mother was so sick that she couldn't bathe the baby, my brother. And so she asked them to help bathe the baby. [inaudible] bathe the baby. But she tells us the story that she told my sister to say it in English to tell her that she wouldn't know how to bathe the baby! And she remembered that story to tell us that she, you know, my mother was worried that the baby couldn't be bathed because she was too sick to do it herself! So then, and we got to know her quite well. We'd go visit her. And she, you know, active. But then she, she broke her arm and her son had to move her to Texas. And then she passed on. This was in our old home, we had a home at 16th and Camelback. You know, since my dad wanted us to go back to China in '36. But the Japanese war broke out, so we didn't go back. And so he built a home right next to the grocery store. This home was built in 1941. Right before the war. And lived there 'til we moved here.

[dog barking].

Violet: What's the matter? Did you want to use some of these things? I would want 'em back, but.

Aurelia: Yeah, I have a form, actually. And I have a scanner at my house. So I could take them to my house and scan them over the weekend and then bring them back to you.

Violet: Oh, OK.

Aurelia: And I have this form, acknowledging that I would be taking them. And then that way I would be returning them.

Violet: OK, OK. Well take the, well you know.

Aurelia: If you don't mind, I'd like to take all of them, and then that way I can pass them on and others can decide.

Violet: Well this, well this, this is, well that's my youngest sister now. She's seventy. And this is my aunt, my dad's sister. And her children here. This was during the war. But, that's a baby picture. And of course, let's see, my brother is still in the service here.

Aurelia: When you said that you were gonna go back to China, was your family going to move back to China?

Violet: No. My dad was going to send us kids to be educated in Chinese.

Aurelia: Oh.

Violet: And he had a home built. We had duplex, and four-story building that my uncle, I guess my dad provided the money to have him build it. And since the war came along, we didn't go back and he built the home for us here. And so we never did go back to learn our, to learn our, that heritage, or, our, our, our thing, so.

Aurelia: Do you regret that? Do you regret not being able to go?

Violet: No. We've been back there. And, in fact, my cousin is taking care of the building. It's still, the communist government, after the war, has given us back our property. The overseas Chinese can claim their property. So we have our property, but it's not a modern building. I don't think there's any modern plumbing in there, or cooking. And, but the property's ours, so we had given her power of attorney to take care of it. But, no. And, and we come from the v -- my folks...

Violet: We never drank water out of the faucet. We always had to boil water because, back in China, I think you had to boil the water before you was able to drink it. It was just a habit, that we'd boil water before drinking it.

Aurelia: Was there anything else that your mom brought over from China? Any other, maybe traditions? Customs?

Violet: Well, she did, you know, all the customs. She did do all the, the Chinese holiday. I mean, she would cook [inaudible], get up early in the morning at four o'clock and make all these cakes. Like, like the moon cake festival. You know, it's where you buy the moon cake now. Because it's coming up in another week or two. It's the eighth, the eighth month and the fifteenth day, in Chinese calendar, is Moon Festival.

Aurelia: And what is that?

Violet: Well, it's, Moon Festival. It's a festival. I don't know the reason. The moon cake has all these yellow egg yolks in it, it's like a moon. And they're very expensive. But she would get up, if it's something like that, and she would make, make those dumpling. Like in May there's a custom

that you, we start making the Chinese tamale. And she would start up days or weeks ahead and make us wash the tea leaves and, and separate the rice, the glutinous rice from the thing. It was a big deal to get ready for this festival. I mean, mostly it's food. Eating it, we didn't do anything. Now, I guess, now, like, the Chinese community, they have a double-ten, they might have something, a meal or a banquet at the restaurant. But now we've gotten away from all that. Yeah. Here, you don't need this. Or any of the, my sister. My sister, you know, I've given her all the family thing. And she has tried to make photos of it. This is ... OK.

Aurelia: And you said these are cousins then?

Violet: Uh-huh.

Aurelia: These are all cousins?

Violet: These are cousins, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Aurelia: And this, the only one that's your sister.

Violet: That's my sister, Shirley.

Aurelia: OK.

Violet: And so, I could, you could interview her, if you want a feminist view.

Aurelia: Yeah!

Violet: On her part now. Her husband says she's gonna be the first [inaudible]. You know, she [inaudible] at the Catholic church.

Aurelia: She certainly sounds like somebody I need to talk to.

Violet: I'll tell her. Look, look, twenty-five cents a quart. How about buying a pint of ice cream for fifteen cents?

Aurelia: Oh my goodness. Now, and this was a sign that, where a flyer [inaudible], that your parents gave?

Violet: Someplace. She, I don't know where it was an advertisement. Some ...

Aurelia: Looks like maybe a school? Maybe ...

Violet: Yeah, graduating class. Yeah, from 1940. That was an album that, yeah, it was Katie's album.

Aurelia: Oh, OK.

Violet: Uh-huh. 'Cause I graduated in class of '40. Then that was her album.

Aurelia: So your parents then bought, like, they bought the ad in the back of the yearbook.

Violet: Yeah. Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: OK.

Violet: OK. OK, yeah. This is when we gave up the grocery store. See, I was gone. And then, OK, you didn't even need to interview me, you just could have read all this!

Aurelia: Oh no! I find it very interesting to talk to you. Now you said that you went away. I understand you taught for the Defense, the Department of Defense.

Violet: Uh-huh. Uh-huh, uh-huh. For twenty-two years.

Aurelia: And what was that like? Just being ...

Violet: Ah! It was fun. You know, never get- every weekend you go someplace. Two weeks at Christmas you made a big trip. And it was like that until the last, last years, I came home every Christmas because the folks were getting old. But I on a safari. I was watching that PBS yesterday and I said, "Yeah, I saw all those gazelle [inaudible]." And, you know, we went to the Holy Land. My, my, Betsy. Betsy went overseas. This one. She came over seas in year '60, in '60 ... what year was it, '63? Well, in '60 she came over because we had [inaudible], I think. Or '70, 1970 she came over. And, you know, we had to, every weekend we would take off, or Easter weekend we'd take off some place. Now this was our restaurant.

Aurelia: Oh, wow. And that was there right on 16th Street?

Violet: Uh-huh. And see, cars used to park here, but the city took all that from us and never paid us a penny.

Aurelia: Oh.

Violet: Isn't that something? Of course, we didn't know how to get a lawyer to fight it. But we used to have parking in front. Now the street is right up to the, almost to the sidewalk.

Aurelia: And did they do that to a lot of the business owners there on Camelback? Or did you feel like it was maybe because your family couldn't, like you said, hire a lawyer?

Violet: Hire a lawyer or something. I guess, I guess so. We didn't, weren't smart enough to.

Aurelia: Oh, I don't think it has anything to do with smarts!

Violet: Yeah. And they widened the street on 16th Street, because that used to be a two lane, two lane highway. Now this is ... my mother was seventy? Their seventieth anniversary? But here are my four brothers. And this, I lost this, two years ago.

Aurelia: And their names are, are, this is?

Violet: This is Colonel, he was a Colonel. And this is Henry. This is Gray. And that's Louis.

Aurelia: OK. I have an uncle named Louis, also.

Violet: [inaudible] I don't know where Shirley got these pictures. But that's all I have. But are you sure you'll bring it back to me?

Aurelia: Oh yes, ma'am, I sure will. And we can fill this out.

Violet: OK, lemme see.

Aurelia: We can fill all of this out. And I will make, what I'll do is right now I'll make a whole list on this paper of all of the pictures. That way you have a list.

Violet: OK, just. How many pieces you have? One, two ... You want all of them?

Aurelia: Yeah, I'd love to take all of them, if you don't mind. And then I can bring them back.

Violet: Five, six ... seven, eight ... nine, ten, eleven ... twelve ... thirteen ... thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three. It should say you have twenty-three pieces, OK?

Aurelia: OK. Twenty-three pieces of memorabilia. Why don't we go ahead and decide a time that I could bring them back to you. This weekend, or Monday, or ...

Violet: OK. Monday, the same. No, Monday, let me see.

Aurelia: Or Sunday, also.

Violet: This is the 22nd.

Aurelia: Mm-hm.

Violet: OK, you don't need all this, or do you?

Aurelia: No, I can, I can fill all the rest in.

Violet: OK. OK.

Aurelia: I just have a few more questions. I'll sign this and ... A lot of the, a lot of the stuff that, a lot of the questions that I would have asked you, they asked you previously when you were interviewed at the museum.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: The questions that I have is, are there any people, any other people besides Shirley, that you think that I should talk to? Or anyone that you could recommend that might have more information about any of the buildings in Maricopa County? Or anybody that, like I said, I'm kind of looking for the feminist slant, so I'm looking for women, if there's anymore women that you know.

Violet: Yeah, talk to Shirley.

Aurelia: Talk to Shirley?

Violet: I'll tell her. Talk to Shirley. She's the feminist one. She went to Beijing with Harry and did that feminist movement. You talk to her.

Aurelia: So definitely talk to Shirley.

Violet: Talk to her. She's a peacemaker. She's always for the underdog. And then, are you familiar with this ... I gave it to somebody. I'll put this in a folder here. I'll put this in this folder here.

Aurelia: Great.

Violet: Oh here.

Aurelia: Oh, I did, I have that.

Violet: You have that one that has my brother.

Aurelia: Oh, that's your -- Oh! The Colonel is your brother! OK.

Violet: Uh-huh. This is his, yeah.

Aurelia: OK.

Violet: So that's my dad's picture. And there's my, OK, that's it, no. And this is a article about Gold Mountain.

Aurelia: Yeah, I actually, I do have this book at home. So I'm gonna reread over your brothers.

Violet: OK.

Aurelia: [inaudible] That's really interesting. I didn't, it may sound ignorant of me, but I didn't want to assume that everyone with last name of Toy was related. Or everyone with the last name -- I didn't want to assume that everyone's related.

Violet: We're the only Toy.

Aurelia: Are you?

Violet: So we are related.

Aurelia: OK, so anybody that's Toy *is* all related.

Violet: If they're Chinese, they're related.

Aurelia: Now, was your family, did your family change their name when they moved? Because I know some of them, some of the families *changed* their names.

Violet: See, my dad was one of those "paper" ...

Aurelia: Paper sons.

Violet: Pacer nun. Or paper son. And see, so, we all use Kwan, Kwan is our real surname in Chinese.

Aurelia: Oh, OK.

Violet: So you see, we have Violet Kwan Toy. And he had to confess when, when we petitioned for my uncle to come over. "Well, how come you're a Toy and he's a Kwan?" So...

Aurelia: So all these years later, he had to confess.

Violet: So, my dad was made another citizenship in 19 -- what, 19-something. Yeah, we went to the courthouse and they swore him in. And that's, everybody knew him as Toy, so they said, "Just keep the name Toy. Not Kwan."

Aurelia: Wow.

Violet: My dad was a paper son!

Aurelia: He was a paper son. That's ...

Violet: And we had gone to the archives in San Bernard something, and looked it up. And I, somewhere, I, my sister, we did copy it, the interrogation that he had to go through.

Aurelia: Oh, wow.

Violet: The interrogation, they wanted to know "Where was the door near? Who was the back door of your house?" Or "How come, how come your mother" -- he was at the wedding, and then one of the question was -- "How come you were invited to my mom's wedding" or something. And the question they asked was really, it's a wonder that he made it over here.

Aurelia: Did your father talk to you guys about that when you were growing up? Was that something that you knew he had done? Or ...?

Violet: Well, yeah, I guess we did. I mean, but everybody else came over that way. Nobody, you know, nobody have their right name. Like the Yees or the Ongs, they have different names because...

Aurelia: Oh really?

Violet: Yeah. It's just that my sister-in-law's, her name is Yee, her last name is Yee, but they're really an Ong family. So the [inaudible] another paper son, he was a paper son.

Aurelia: And the, now the Ongs are a big family here.

Violet: Big family. Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: And, now, in some of the stories that I was reading, some of the people came from the same village. And you said that your *parents* were from the same village.

Violet: Well, nearby village. And, but we all speak the same language. I mean, the village language. I mean, when we went back we saw the Ong village. It was only seven miles from our village. And so ...

Aurelia: So were the villages, were they, like, in Native Americans it's "tribes." Was it kind of that situation? Like, was it all families in a village.

Violet: Yeah. Uh-huh, uh-huh. So all the Kwans are in that same village. And they could have been, well. We went back to our village, and my seventh uncle lived in that village, and his son lives there now, and my sixth uncle had a home there. When we took him back he was in tears because he had a beautiful home and it's in ruins, you know, nobody's taking care of it and the chickens are running around. And, no, I guess it's the family. Because each son was given a plot of land or something on that village so they could build their home. So it's within, I guess, it's still within the family. I mean ...

Aurelia: So did the, you said that the sons got property. So then did the daughters go to their new husband's family?

Violet: Yes, uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: OK.

Violet: And, like, my, we didn't go to my mother's village. And my sister, when she went back, she did see. And, well, evidently, we don't have, I don't have any idea about grandparents. Not even a picture of them. But, but it sounds like my mother's dad was quite well-to-do. Because he had concubines all over. And my mother never recognized them. She was from the first mother. And even then, when my, that was arranged marriage, and when she was very sick, she had a boil on her. My dad's father-in-law said, "No, she dies, I'll have another daughter for you." When my mother heard that, she never spoke him again anymore.

Aurelia: I bet. That's ... So obviously then, your mother's family didn't value girls.

Violet: Yeah, yeah. Uh-huh, uh-huh. So we don't know that side of the family. But my dad, when I travel with him, we came over and I traveled with him around the world, the rest of the world. And when we got to Singapore, he sorta knew some of my mother's half-brothers or sisters. And she said, no I don't even know them. But they used to, would write him letters, you know, begging, wanting money or something, they needed help. So that's how he knew that she had all these half-brothers and sisters all over the world.

Aurelia: Some of the, some of the things that I was reading talked about some of the families. Were there family members that your parents sent money to in China? 'Cause I read that that was common.

Violet: Uh-huh, uh-huh. My mother is like a chapter from *The Good Earth*. Have you read that book?

Aurelia: No.

Violet: Well, *The Good Earth*. See, my mother was left over there and she had to live with the in-laws. She lived with my dad's family.

Aurelia: OK.

Violet: And of course, my fifth aunt, we would always, we'd make fun of her. And they, you know, it was hard for my mother. She remembered the time, and she never forgave that fifth aunt. They would taunt her and say, "Well your husband will never come home. He's gone to war." And of course, she couldn't read. I mean, he couldn't write her letters that she could read. So there was hardly any communication while he was over here and gone to war. Well, now that he's prosperous, well there's [inaudible]. My dad always, he was always a generous man at Christmas time, he said, "Well, why don't you send her a little bit of money." And my mother would say, "Not to her!"

Aurelia: Yeah.

Violet: "She's the one that taunted me!" And she never forgave them. But, but when I was in Okinawa, when I was stationed in Okinawa and I was going to Hong Kong. My dad sent me some money and he said, "When you see the villages, give them a little bit of money." And so I did. But, but these were things that my mother ...

Aurelia: That she held on to.

Violet: Uh-huh. Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Aurelia: Were there any other things that she talked about, living with your father's family, that stood out to her?

Violet: Well, I guess they made her do the, the work, I guess. She was the daughter-in-law that didn't have a husband there, or something. It really sounds like a chapter from *The Good Earth*. [laughter].

Aurelia: I'll have to read that.

Violet: And so, it must have been hard for my mother.

Aurelia: Yeah. Did, did she ever mention if she, if she thought that your father would come back for her? Or if she wondered if your father would come back for her?

Violet: I guess she never mentioned that. Well, you know, right aft- because of the war, he was able to go back, and bring her over and my sister. And you know that, we just assumed that she was an American citizen, being that my dad became naturalized. I guess being in the Army. Well one Christmas, they went down to Nogales. And she almost wasn't able to come home because they said she was not a citizen.

Aurelia: Oh no!

Violet: But my brother, you know, he was in the service, and he got. So she had to go to school. And she did it by rote memory, rote memory. A church member clued her in on the question on, to become a citizen.

Aurelia: And she just memorized everything.

Violet: Uh-huh, Uh-huh. By rote, I think. She wanted no one should question her, so she became a citizen. Not until, I guess it's, when did my brother come home, and six years [inaudible]. We just assumed she was American citizen, because my dad was.

Aurelia: Did you all go to her citizenship [inaudible]?

Violet: No, I was overseas. But I did go to my dad's when he was, we, we, you know ...

Aurelia: Oh, the second time around.

Violet: [laughter] Uh-huh.

Aurelia: I think that that's all the questions I have for now. Is there anything else that you want to talk about?

Violet: No. No. If you want to feminist [inaudible], talk to Shirley.

Aurelia: OK, well, hopefully you can put in a good word for me, 'cause I'm gonna definitely give her a call next week and set up, see if I can set up something with her.

Violet: OK, OK. 'Cause she'll tell ya. If she doesn't get going on everything.

Aurelia: Now, is Shirley a member of Desert Jade?

Violet: No, no. She's so busy, she's in all kinds of peace movement and all. In fact, yesterday she said, "Oh, Vi, you should have gone to here." Somebody speak about the aftermath of 9/11. And, who was it, she said, "Oh, you really missed something good." But you know, once I'm home and I'm comfortable at home, I don't want to go out in the evening. Uh-huh. [inaudible].

Aurelia: Yeah, I will. And...

[end of interview].

SHIRLEY TUNG

Interviewed by Aurelia Bradley
18 October 2006

Aurelia: This is an interview with Shirley Tung on October 18th at her office by Aurelia Bradley.

Aurelia: For the record, do I have your permission to tape your interview?

Shirley: Yes.

Aurelia: OK, if you could please state your name and its spelling.

Shirley: It's Shirley Tung.

Aurelia: When were you born?

Shirley: Sept. 9, 1936.

Aurelia: And where were you born?

Shirley: Right here, 16th Street and Camelback, Phoenix, Arizona.

Aurelia: We know that your family came from China, so we'll skip over that. From what Violet told me, your father was the first person to come to Phoenix.

Do you know what year your father came to Phoenix?

Shirley: 1909, according to him. He was fifteen years old. He had several brothers here that enticed him to come this direction. There was also a Chinese fellow here who owned the American Kitchen and offered him a job. So that's why he came to Phoenix so he could have a job. He started off as a dishwasher and soon became a waiter and soon he saved up his money and finally he went to Casa Grande to open up his own store. He had various jobs. He was very entrepreneurial in doing things. He was kind of cheated out of money. He said that his partner just left all kinds of debts for him and he ended up coming back to Phoenix. He opened up again at the Lourde's Building as I recall he said and he also had I guess it was kind of a lunch room of some sort and again the partner that he went in with did the same thing to him, left him with a lot of debt and so after that he was dead set against -- and I think he told us a hundred of times, "never go into a partnership." Because he was stung twice.

And then when it was about 1921 when he had come back from Casa Grande, as my older sister said, they were just starving to death. They were at 11th Street and Madison and according to her, they just had nothing to eat. They had a little store and all they sold was bread, eggs, and milk. She said that all she had to take to school was a little dry biscuit. She does remember a Chinese gentleman -- in those days, the Chinese helped one another -- like the white banks were not opened to the Chinese, so therefore, the Chinese did a kind of lottery every month to help the needy person for that month and it happened to fall to my dad.

I think it was around -- they bought him, I'm not sure, it was before 1927, they bought him a horse and buggy so that he could go to [inaudible] and Sunnyslope which were the TB sanatoriums of the day. Of course they were the lepers of the day. Nobody wanted to deal with them. So my dad took groceries out there. He said he rang a bell and he would yell that he had fresh fish, he could barely say the words, and he said he would ring the bell and tell everybody all the different things he had packed in ice. Then he would stop here at this property and rest his horse, and rest himself, underneath the cottonwood tree. And there was an open irrigation ditch and so he was

able to water his horses. It was like half way between [inaudible], Sunnyslope and back home. And that's how he made his money.

And then we came out in 1927 it was kind of an area my dad said there were a lot of Mexican labor camps out here. The Chinese did not think it was safe for him to leave the Chinese community and told him so and said it was not a good idea for him. He said, "No, it's going to be the best part of town someday," and he felt OK about it.

Well, he did buy the property and, of course, later on Wrigley built his mansion and the Arizona Biltmore built about a mile away. I think in his mind I think he already had some foresight about where growth might go. Again, during those early years he was offered to homestead that property on 16th Street and Northern, which is now the Pointe. It was eighty acres and he was offered to homestead that. When you homestead, all you do is live on the property. And my mother he said refused because she said mountains are only good for rattlesnakes and scorpions. She said, "Why do you want to move up there?" So she would not move.

And then was given a chance to buy the property caddy corner over there because they going through a bitter divorce. The ladies told him that all he would have to put down is \$5000 and my mother said, "No, "you have eleven children, it's absolutely useless if you die, what am I going to be left with all the debt." Of course to pay off \$5000 would have been quite hard.

At the time in the early, I'm not quite sure of the year, Vi thinks it was early fifties and I think it was much earlier than that, but I do remember going out to Paradise Valley and my dad owned -- he bought the property from 32nd to Tatum and Shea to Greenway with 180 acres and he bought it for \$5000, which was then a lot of money. It would be comparable to like \$250,000 now. And of course he said he had dreamed of putting a city on wheels and what he meant by that was old fashioned trailers that people lived in. Not the mobile unit that you know of now, but the old trailers where people used to live in trailers. There were a lot of trailer units. So he thought that would be a nice thing to have -- a city on wheels. But then he got together with some other merchants and there was no way to get water out there. I know we went a couple of times to go look at the property and we would look for a little wooden sign that said Shea Blvd. and we would go in our model T. Mother would declare every time -- she thought he was absolutely mad to buy all this desert and she'd say, "If we died out here, she said, it would take ten years before anybody finds our bones." And look at Paradise Valley, now.

So he had a lot of foresight and he did a lot of speculating of land. He bought forty acres on 19th Avenue and Maryland and it became a kennel farm. I think he just rented it out to farmers. And I do remember forty acres of cantaloupe and the smell of cantaloupe to this day kind of bothers me sometimes, because I can remember the rotting smell of cantaloupe.

And then he bought acreage here and there. He bought something on Indian School which I think is now the Post office over there. And he just bought little pieces of property here and there thinking that someday, of course, everybody else thought he was crazy, but he was a good speculator and he was able to visualize it.

Actually, this was five acres but unfortunately the city took advantage of his immigrant status and he had no idea that he could be enumerated for the amount of land that they took from us. So they took 8/10th of an acre and so if you think of an acre now of being over millions of dollars that now 8/10th of an acre is almost

Aurelia: Now from what Vi told me, it was the land to widen the road.

Shirley: Right. So they took land on both sides.

Aurelia: So you could actually park in front of the restaurant. Now was this the only property then that the family still owns? I'm sorry and the home.

Shirley: Yeah and we also have a property on 7th Street and Osborn, which is now a car repair shop. It was for a long time it was rented out to a cousin. My dad tried to help. The Chinese helped one another, help a cousin who had a grocery store there for many years.

Aurelia: What was that grocery store called?

Shirley: It was called Keystone Market. That family left. It's quite a number of years ago now. And then he also has property on 24th Street and Roosevelt, which became the old county health department building. It is now a Dollar Store.

Aurelia: What was it when your father had the property? Did it have anything on it?

Shirley: No. I think he built a building, I'm not sure if he built it or the county health department building. I think for about thirty, forty years the county health department building, I mean the municipal group rented from us. When they gave it back, now it could be rented out because he had like eighty-seven little rooms to it, so we kind of demolished the other side of that and it became that Dollar Store. The guy who has it now has broken it up into other little stores.

Then he had, I'm not sure, he had the corner of 24th and Roosevelt, because he's a little bit south of that, but now my brother has that property, so I'm not sure if that was given to him or whether he purchased that on his own. Most likely, my dad, but we never kept up with that.

I think he had property in other parts and I know he looked at property even when he was elderly. He was looking at Apache Junction. Of course, all of thought he was really crazy because that was nothing out there. I'm sure he's looking at it now and says "See, I told you so." [laughs].

He had a lot of foresight and he had a lot of gumption to go ahead and do things when it was not so safe to do it in those days. Because up to 1912 I believe that the Chinese were being tarred and feathered in Arizona. So for him to move away from the community was taking a chance.

And by the way the picture of him with a horse and buggy is in the America West Arena. On the east side of the building they don't keep it opened, but if you go for a game or some kind of event there, on the east side, they have a diorama of the early Chinese, the very first picture is a picture of my dad with a horse and buggy. I don't have a picture of that and I don't know where actually that came from, but anyway that was him.

It was nice that they paid tribute to the early Chinese in that time frame.

Aurelia: I have a question you were talking about your dad's partnerships -- was that because of the way -- the Chinese were excluded from doing business, is that why he entered into those partnerships?

Shirley: I think my dad said it was a lot of times they wouldn't rent to a Chinese, so you rent to a white person and then you just take over the thing. But I guess the two fellows were not too ethical about ...

Aurelia: But they were Caucasian?

Shirley: Yes. Even though that was the case, he never had any prejudices against whites, but he did just told us to be careful of ever going into a partnership. In those days it was of necessity that you did. Even where Vi lived there was a deed restriction that that property would be deed restricted even up to 1968. The deed read, it said, "No negroes, orientals were allowed to be in that area." Now what happened -- we were the only store for seven-mile radius, so all those people who lived over there were customers of ours. And my mother got permission from all of them to live there. But that deed restriction was still on the books up until 1968 I believe it was.

The other ethnic group was Indians. Negroes, Orientals and Indians -- that meant they would not be able to buy that.

Aurelia: Did your father -- was he then able to purchase the land? How did he purchase the land?

Shirley: Now that my mother did that. In the early days I told you she was not trusting of any kind of banks or anything else and so my dad said in 1950 when she decided that she wanted to move and buy a new house, my dad said, "We don't have that kind of money." And my mother pulled out about \$20,000 from under the bed. She had been saving dollar by dollar by dollar from what thirty years of savings. So she made the down payment to that house which was then in the 1950s was \$45,000. That was a lot of money.

Aurelia: Now you couldn't get a house for \$45,000. Let's talk a little bit -- you grew up in the house that Violet lived in?

Shirley: No. I grew up here. What happened is we kind of grew out of that house behind the grocery store. We lived there most of my life. In 1941 I was about five years old and we built this house which is now -- is one of the buildings is called Arizona [inaudible]. That was built, of course, in those days, see, my dad had planted 105 pecan trees to put us all through school. In the midst of the pecan trees, he built this brick house, a nice brick home and most of us lived there except by that time my older brother had gone to the army. Like each of the bedrooms, there were three of us girls in a bedroom, but still it was a new house for us. And it was not until 1950 I was already out of high school before we built. I graduated from high school in 1954 and it was actually '52 when we bought that home. So I think I was just there for two years and then I went off to college. So I really never stayed in that home except for a couple of years.

Aurelia: And that home was already built?

Shirley: Yes. It was a custom built home for somebody that was being sold and my mother loved it and decided ... Like I said she did get permission from all the neighbors in order to purchase that home.

Aurelia: Were there any other memories of the house here then you grew up in

Shirley: The main thing was that this was all fields and of course and this was where we played. Weeds grow of course grow like crazy and so my dad periodically like once a year had a tractor come in and plow up everything. Between time it go to be too much, so he hired a gentleman who had a whole herd of sheep and so they would come and maybe stay for a couple of weeks and it was the donkey that he had that was like a dog that would keep the sheep together. So we always tried to ride the donkey. But the donkey was too smart. He knew that if he didn't want you on his back, he would just take you to the lowest branch and just swipe you off. [laughs] So we always remembered that. My sister and I, and of course everybody dumped their dogs and cats on this corner, because it was so far out the city -- it was like a dumping ground. And so at one time we ended up with about I think my brothers said there were thirty-eight cats out here.

Of course we had ... in the old days we didn't have city sanitation, so we had this huge pit where you put all the garbage in. Of course all the cats and dogs were around that area trying to get whatever food there was. We had the chicken coop where we raised 500 chickens, ducks, turkeys and it was all for the grocery store. So we had our own fresh eggs. We would go get our fresh eggs everyday. We would put them in sack to sell them. At Christmas time, Easter time and Thanksgiving, then my dad raised all the turkeys and he slaughtered all that. And we did all -- my mother would butcher them and then we would feather, pick all the feathers out and put them in the grocery store and that was really fresh stuff that people got in those days.

In 1950 when we built the restaurant and that took away our big chicken coop that we had. At one time we had up to 500 ducks and 500 turkeys and 500 chickens, we had fan tail pigeons. What we did was, how we earned our money, my dad would give us five cents a pound to pick the cotton. So we picked the cotton and he sold it for what 45 cents in the grocery store. We could earn quite a bit. With 105 trees

Aurelia: Violet mentioned that your mom was quite industrious also. Do you remember shelling the pecans for extra money too? Because Violet talked about your mom figured out that she could make more money selling the pecans if you guys went ahead and shelled them first.

Shirley: Yeah, we did a lot of that, but mainly for us young kids ... it was mainly for us to swing on the trees, and knock all the pecans down and pick them, because that was back breaking work. When you're little, you don't care. You're just on the ground all the time playing. And then my dad -- of course, I'm an environmentalist now and that sounds horrible, but in those days the woodpecker would ruin your tree, so he would give us a nickel if we would kill a woodpecker with our slingshots. Well, that wasn't always easy to do. Because we said a nickel is a lot of money.

We used to swim in the irrigation ditch until at that time, polio was called infantile paralysis, and then when that became a big scare, then we didn't do that anymore. But on 20th Street there used to be an outlet, a pump so we would dam it up so that we could swim in it. That's where we would swim. The big swim hole was really nice. During World War II we had to conserve on leather, so we had to carry our shoes home and not wear them. Well, it was too hot on the pavement, so we just walked in the irrigation ditch all the way home, until we got across the street to Mel Clayton where they had forty acres of watermelon. So what we would do, we would kick the watermelons, eat the heart out and then just go on. Because by that time, they were just going to plow everything underneath. So those were the ones that weren't going to get picked.

I have great memories of doing things like that. Now all of us graduated, including my oldest sister from Madison Number One, which is now Madison Middle School. I think my sister graduated in 1929, my oldest sister. We had a little event there last Saturday and everybody said do you know the area? I said, "I graduated from this school sixty years ago. I know it very well." Violet ended up teaching there.

Aurelia: And she said that one of her nieces also went.

Shirley: My niece Deborah was there. And she now is a teacher. My sister Betsy became a teacher. She also taught under Madison School, but it wasn't this one. It was another Madison. And then my oldest sister, my next oldest sister, the one who died, was a teacher at I think that school is called Woodworth School, the old school was southeast Phoenix somewhere and she taught there for years. And then I had a sister-in-law who also taught in Madison and then she taught at Solano School, on 15th Avenue and Missouri. So we've had a number of people who have been in ... with the Toy name the people know ...

Aurelia: Well, Violet explained to me because I didn't want to assume that everyone with the same last name was related, but Violet told me that if someone is in Phoenix and they are a "Toy," most likely they are related to you guys.

Shirley: Right. Actually Toy, did she tell you about that? Our real name.

Aurelia: Yes, your real name is Kwan.

Shirley: A lot of people- the old immigration didn't understand any of that, but the Chinese always say your last name first, so it would be -- - so they would just think if you said "Toy" as your first name, I think the immigration just did not understand how the Chinese did things and so it became our last name when it really wasn't. It's interesting because in Hawaii as far as ethnicity and all the people -- you'll see a lot of Chinese names and it starts with an "A." Acana, Agana,

Agina, and it's because the Chinese have this habit of saying, when they talk, they go "Ahh" so the immigration people would just add "A". They would say Ah Gin. That would mean your name was Gin and you'd say Ah Gin Ah, that is the way you would say it to someone. And so they would just put Agena.

So their names are kind of anglicized or just completely a different name.

Aurelia: Speaking of immigration and citizenship, what are your memories about your parents' citizenship?

Shirley: Well, we thought we had assumed that for all the years that I was growing up that my mother was a citizen, that according to my dad that on the ship what had happened was the law had changed when she was coming on the ship. And so we didn't know. We had always gone down to Nogales and shopped and this was 1950 and we went down to Nogales to shop for tequila because my mother would make an herb, it would be like a liniment made with tequila and she put some Chinese herbs in. So we were carrying back our five gallons of tequila and the border held her. The border patrol held her. And we thought of course, we were, I was just in the 8th grade and I was horrified and we didn't know what to do, because none of us were going to leave my mother over there by herself in Nogales. At that time my brother was in the army and he called Goldwater. My dad called Senator Hayden. Fortunately, we had some of these people who were our old customers or that people that my dad knew. And they were able to release my mother after about four or five hours I think it was. I knew we spent quite a few hours down there. When she came back up, she became the first Chinese to be naturalized and she had to learn the whole -- now mind you my mother barely spoke English, but she had to learn the whole constitution and how a bill is passed. I was in the 8th grade so I was learning the same thing. So I was trying to help her. And she went to a [inaudible] that was taught by a friend of ours. I believe his name was Stanford. The Stanford [inaudible] but he taught my mother and she passed her test and became a citizen. Now because my dad actually came here illegally ... Did Vi tell you that?

Aurelia: She told me a little bit.

Shirley: In the old days in 1909 when the big earthquake happened all the records were demolished. What the Chinese did, they just declared that they had paper son. They had sons here and sons there. So that meant my dad had to memorize everything about that family in order to get that name. Actually the name that he bought was Dea Hung Toy. See the thing is, Dea would have been the last name, but again see as I told you

Aurelia: Turned it around ...

Shirley: Anyhow, Hung Toy would have been like the first name and Dea would have been the last name. But the Chinese always did the last name first. Anyhow he became a Toy. There was no clan. That's why Vi told you if anybody is named Toy, it is probably a relative of ours because it's not an actual Chinese sur name that you would normally have.

Anyhow, what was I going to tell you about that? Oh, yes ... So my dad had fought in the first world war, had traveled all over the world on a U.S. passport. When he was eighty years old the FBI came and gave him an honorary citizenship. I have it somewhere and I'm not sure what I did with it. But I know it is in this office somewhere. But it was an honorary citizenship that he got. We all had to laugh. All they wanted to let you know was that they knew about the status of the Chinese. And see all the Chinese came on false pretensions. We were all illegal immigrants.

And so of course now I'm trying to fight [laughs] for the immigrants coming here because I think we had our opportunity. I mean we just happened to have an earthquake to help us out. Not many people have that opportunity.

That's how all that happened. My dad, I can remember the FBIHe was so worried, because in 1955 I had a nephew that he was adopted nephew, it was my dad's half-sister who had applied, he was a brilliant, brilliant kid, who was going to Yale University, but he applied to be employed by the Atomic Energy Commission and because of that then of course he had to go through the FBI files and ... So he fessed up about what had happened with the Chinese. Of course, my dad was furious. Because he thought you might be liable for deportation even after all these years, you don't know. So he was not too happy with that nephew. And in the end he never worked for the Atomic Energy Commission, but he is the one that had discovered or invented or whatever -- holograms -- and he teaches at Lake Forest College in Illinois.

Aurelia: And what is his name?

Shirley: His name is -- it would be Sonny Sun -- that was my aunt who married -- I can't remember their last name. I think it was Jeong. It may be not. I'm not quite sure. He is a first cousin. We haven't kept up with him for years and years and years. I know he has been teaching at the college for all these years.

Aurelia: What are some of your memories of your mother?

Shirley: My mother was a very feisty and strong woman. Not only was she feisty and strong, but when we were little, it has been told many times to me she said, my dad said she gave birth to me and two hours later she had to get up and close the grocery store. So she put me on her back and I always tease, because I'm good at retail sales and everybody says the first thing I ever heard was a cash register. But my mother taught us from the very time we were little, by the time we were in the first grade, we were doing our own laundry. That was the old fashion, where you had to feed it into the wringer and of course we got our arms caught in the wringer. I was thinking about that because that would constitute child abuse these days.

In those days your whole work force were your children. She gets up early in the morning, we had the wood burning fire stove, so she had to get up and start it. It wasn't like turning on the electricity or anything. She had to start the stove to get it going. And so we all took our turns doing all the work, like working in the grocery store and everything. But when I was growing up, Vi was ten years older than I and she taught me a lot of things. She taught me how to tie my shoes, she taught me how to embroider. She taught me a number of things that my mother couldn't do, because my mother was always in the store. But my mother, she was not only feisty but she was very much engaged in the old Chinese customs. So we followed everything -- when the New Years came, at the end of the year, you had to make sure your hair was washed and all your debts taken of and all this stuff you had to do. And in the beginning of the New Year, when you had a big feast, everything had to be cleaned -- clothes, hair, everything.

During that time too water was rationed in Arizona so we would just put this much water in the bathtub. My sister Bessie and I both took a bath together just to conserve on water.

My mother made sure we did all this on our own. Every Saturday, once a week you got to take a bath. All the other days you washed your hands and your face and your feet for everyday. On Saturday we polished our shoes so that we could go to church the next morning. Always made sure we had a clean hankie to put our 15 cents donation in. My mother would tie it up so we wouldn't lose it.

Aurelia: And that was Presbyterian church?

Shirley: Yes. Of course everybody was a different denomination. I'm Catholic now. Everybody else is a different denomination.

Aurelia: Violet said that she thought she was the only one that was still Presbyterian.

Shirley: My oldest brother William and his family are still Presbyterian, but the rest are Southern Baptist.

Even though we went to Presbyterian church, we also went to the Baptist church in the afternoon, because that was the Chinese community. We did both. I remember my oldest sister, Jeanette, when she would play at the Presbyterian church and then she would go play the piano for the Baptist church. We were active in both because the church was the community, Chinese community, but mainly our worship was at the Presbyterian church.

Aurelia: What made you decide to convert to Catholicism?

Shirley: Actually I was working at the grocery store and this guy came up with a rosary and he as buying beer. Of course, I always talking to him -- you know beer is sinful and all this stuff. He pulled out a rosary and I said, "Um, you got a woman's necklace."

And he said, "That's not a woman's necklace." He pulls out and shows me the crucifix. Of course, my family was very bigoted. My mom said, "Oh you're a Catholic, that's awful."

I said, "You poor man." I thought he was going to hell. [laughs].

Of course I was a brazen fourteen-year old, I thought I could argue anything to anybody and save this man's soul. He asked me if I wanted to go talk to this priest -- to argue with a minister. I thought I was brazen, I said, "Sure, I'll go. I'll save you."

And he introduced me to a Jesuit at St. Francis. I think he was about the holiest man I've ever met. Very, very holy. Anyway I ended up going through a year's instruction. Because I thought I was arguing with him every week. It ended up that he was teaching me a lot of things. And the man spoke our dialect in Chinese because he had spent nineteen years in China. So it was kind of nice that he was a Jesuit who had understood the Chinese culture and everything.

Anyway, one day he said to me, "Why don't you go to high school over here?"

I said, "High School over here? I didn't know there was a high school here."

You know Xavier High.

This was in my junior year and it was October already. I had already gone for a month, a couple of months over here at North High.

And so my mother and dad are not going to like this at all. So I waited until my dad had all these customers around him and I had saved enough money, because it was \$35 for the tuition for the year. And I had saved enough money, because I was going to get retainers for my teeth, from picking pecans. I waited and when my dad had all these customers, I said, "Hey pop, I changed schools." So I told him where I was going to school.

He said, "How are you going to pay for it?"

And I said I had enough money. I paid for it already.

Aurelia: There was nothing he could do ...

Shirley: There was more to that and later on I went to a Catholic College as well. [inaudible] the Bashas used to trade with us and so they were all Catholic and that whole family, the Bashas, the cousins were very good customers of ours and so the woman said, "Well, you ought to go to the same school as her daughter." She now runs Basha's. She's the resource department for Basha's and her name is Camille Donaldson.

When I was baptized, the mother said to me, "Now you take Camille for your god mother. You go to Camille's school."

I said, "OK, that's fine." She had graduated and was going to Mt. St. Mary's in Los Angeles. So I just told my dad that I was going to Mt. St. Mary's and that was that.

Aurelia: So that's where you went?

Shirley: Yeah.

Aurelia: Am I correct that you're the sister who became a nun?

Shirley: Right, right.

Aurelia: What lead you to that decision?

Shirley: Well, early on when -- maybe about sophomore year I decided that I was going to be a nun. But I was going to be a Marynoll nun. A Marynoll was one of those that had missions in China. They are missionaries. They go all over. At the time when I wrote, they don't accept you unless you've been a Catholic for several years.

So the years go by and I'm dating this guy, he was a medical student at UCL.A. I just discussed it with him. In those days I don't think people were so up tight. We just discussed everything. I think, and maybe I wouldn't have married the guy anyway, but so I just told him at graduation time that I was leaving for the convent. And what I did I went to a cloistered order, which is kind of like [inaudible].

Are you Catholic?

Aurelia: I'm not. I have family that is Catholic.

Shirley: So it was just a stricter order. But by that time my family was really dead set against it. My oldest brother was very bigoted. So he had my dad disown me legally which he did. And for years afterwards, he said to the family, "We'll starve her of affection and she'll come home." So he told everybody not to write to me, not to do anything. But my mother always, she would have the neighbors mail packages to me. She was really funny.

Aurelia: Which brother is ...

Shirley: That was my brother Willie. He was very, the colonel ...and now he is just the opposite. He's gone to [inaudible] with another friend of us who is Catholic and I mean he's gone to these things that I would never do. I mean things that I don't believe in. To me they are a little too far fetched. But he does all that stuff now. But he is much more open and I think it is because his wife is a lot more, she's a very accepting, holy person, so it wasn't a big problem for me and my family. There are very few Catholic families here. The only one was Judge Thomas Tang and his family. So that was a very odd thing to have and it was big news.

Aurelia: That you were a Catholic Chinese ...What made you decide to leave the convent?

Shirley: There are many reasons for that. I actually now look back and I couldn't have led a 16th century life in this 21st century. And also I loved it. I learned a lot. I think five years is like -- you grow and you're another person. I did graduate first and I took my state boards, because I was in the nursing program before I left. Because I was thinking practically ...

Aurelia: Now Violet had mentioned that your mom was of the generation in China where education wasn't valued for women, so she was uneducated -- do you think that that impacted how she treated you girls or how she encouraged you?

Shirley: I don't think she encouraged us at all in the sense that you're thinking of doing whatever you wanted to do. My mother had the old Chinese idea that the girls marry and they are out of the family. They marry into another family. Maybe I told you this story, that when my mother dies she leaves everything for the four sons.

Aurelia: No. Actually, Violet made it seem like your mom was -- that everything was kind of equal.

Shirley: No, not at all. She was very ... she played favorites to the first son and he was the one who really didn't do much for the family corporation or family enterprise, because he was in the army. But she wanted to make sure that he was the number one. My dad fortunately outlives her and May said, "No, the ten kids get equal shares because they did everything for them."

In the end who took care of them was the girls. It was Ida who came home from California just to take care of him.

But anyway how that story goes is that my mother was the first child of the first wife -- her father had seven wives and possibly four more, because he was a merchant. In China the number of wives that you had was the criteria to say how prestigious and how wealthy you were. So if you had eleven wives, you're a wealthy man. So he was a fabric dealer who dealt in all kinds of merchandise. He traveled to Hong Kong from the village. He according to my uncle, he thought he had four more women -- concubine in Hong Kong as well as the seven wives in the village. Well, my mother was the first child of the first wife, which meant that she should of had some status, but women were nothing. They were drowned usually. But my mother felt that she had some privilege well, she married my dad and she gets some kind of abscess. My dad said that the abscess was draining and draining and draining. And she was laying on the floor because my dad said all this was leaking out and my dad bought a 100 pound sack of rice hulls to soak up all this, because they didn't have a drainage system and they didn't have mops and other things, so he bought the rice hulls to soak up all this draining. And her dad, in front of her, said, "Oh let her die, I have many, many other girls." And my dad said my mother never spoke to her father again. She was so mad. And she could not stand ... she was just the type of person who would hold a grudge for a long time.

She never really, my dad said, spoke to her father again. But then she comes here and what does she do? - she leaves all her money, her wealth to the sons. After having suffered the same thing. Pedagogically, when you think how women's oppression goes on, it's women oppressing each other. Because she didn't know any other model. Her only model was the girls are out of the family. They don't have the same name anymore.

Aurelia: So do you think then that that spurred you girls to do great things? Do you think it was almost a rebellion against your mother? Because Violet is unmarried and was a teacher and traveled and you from what I understand you had also adventures, your sisters both worked and went to school -- do you think that you were rebelling against your mom or was it just that your dad was so supportive?

Shirley: I don't see it as either of those and I can't tell you about -- as far as education goes -- I think in the Chinese family -- you're not taught to that you're going to be educated -- it's caught, not taught. It's an unspoken thing that you're going to be educated. Maybe because she's not educated, then she made sure that her children were. But It was never said, OK, you're going to go to college, don't forget you're going to go to college ... It was just assumed for all of us that we were going to college. There was never a thing like now when you graduate, you're going to go to college, it was just a given.

Aurelia: ...your family came here to do better, so ...

Shirley: And nobody ever thought that you weren't going to go to college. I never heard my parents say, "You're going to go to school. Or you have to go to school, or you need to be educated." None of that type of thing. In fact a lot of times I was too fatigued at school to concentrate. I would fall asleep. Because in the old days we kept this grocery store open until 10:00 at night. So you go to school at 7:30 in the morning. I couldn't stay awake, because we ate after we closed the store. I was fatigued. I couldn't, you know how the stereotyping of Chinese being so smart? Well, I was pretty dumb, because I couldn't get math, I couldn't ... I was just having a really hard time. It was never a thing like "You can do it, you can do it" -- no encouragement or nothing to say do your homework. -- Make sure the store is closed and make sure the produce is put away. I mean the practical things.

Aurelia: How old were you when you first started working in the store?

Shirley: Well, I can remember being in the grocery store when I was in kindergarten. You were given a little task to do and my task was to straighten out the candy rack. Of course, that's my thing. Candy rack you kept things going. I remember working as a cashier, I was like 6th, 7th grade. I worked as a cashier all my life. We learned how to count out money, we learned how to use the adding machine and the cash register very early. Vi probably had even more so than I. I was able to take off, like in high school, I would take off, because I had Vi's car. I would take off and they didn't have all that. They didn't have a car. They just stayed in the store all the time. And then on top of that Vi in her era with all the prejudices, they all had to go to Chinese school.

Aurelia: I was just going to ask that?

Shirley: The tutor had died when Betsy and I were ready to begin, so we never had any Chinese education.

Aurelia: From what Violet told me, they didn't get much Chinese education either. Your one brother would come and on Saturdays especially they would go to Chinese school, but leave and go to the movies.

She said the things that she learned, she didn't necessarily retain the information. Because you missed out on the opportunity to go to Chinese school, did your family send you to China to live? None of your family actually went. Because I know some of the other immigrant families would send the children back.

Shirley: Right. No. I married a man from Shanghai. So I went back to China quite a bit. But I never learned anything, never to read or write or speak Mandarin, which would be the language now that since Mao is -- the language that everybody speaks. Because there are 106 dialects in China. So it would be just like speaking a different language. But because he unified the country by making everybody learn Mandarin, just like Alexander did - making people speak Greek. I think that unified a great part of the world.

Aurelia: When was your first trip back to China? Were you an adult already?

Shirley: Oh yeah, 1975 I went back. Nixon had just opened up the gates so that you could travel back there and my husband hadn't seen his family for twenty-five years. So we went back in 1975 to visit his family. We stayed six weeks. I took my dad back. That was the first time my dad had been back in what -- sixty-three years ... He didn't recognize his younger brother. He left him when he was five. So when we got off the train, the Red Guard met us, we were only one of twenty-eight people allowed in the country that day, so they kept really hard tabs on us. The kids were asleep. My husband was asleep in the train, so I said, "Stay here, let me record this, take pictures of my dad meeting his brothers for the first time." And I got to the door of the train, this

Red Guard stands in front of me and she said, "Where is your husband?" in perfect English -- "Where is your husband and two boys?" And I said, "Well, they're asleep in the train."

She said, "Go back and get them."

I thought I was going to miss that first meeting. Well, he gets out and my dad is hard of hearing. He was in his eighties and I said let's go. And when I get out I see him with the one brother, that one brother was here in Arizona with him until 1933 and he went back in 1933 -- he went to high school in Los Angeles and he was here in Casa Grande with my dad and I think he went back to China in 1933 because he wanted to be in politics.

They all had uniforms on. Those are the days when Mao was still alive. And then this elderly gentleman that was right next to him, his eye had cataract and he looked shriveled and he looked very old and evidently he had spent nine months in a cage by the Communist because he kept saying he was a landowner. Anytime you were a landowner -- anything that was top pressed then you were tortured.

Aurelia: I've a couple of questions about this property. I'm going to ask it anyway. But does it still look the way you remember it being when you first saw it?

Shirley: Oh no, of course not. It's all asphalt now. It was just nothing but trees and you could walk through the dirt in your bare feet. We used to bury all the red ants that my dad would kill with cyanide. Betsy and I would get red ants, put them in a little match box to bury them. We did some crazy things.

Aurelia: You and Betsy are closest in age to each other?

Shirley: Yes, we're two years apart.

Aurelia: And the next one would be two years older would be ...

Shirley: We're all two years apart except for my oldest sister and the next one, which is 7 years apart. The next one would be Lewis, of course he did nothing but taunt us so ... We played together all the time when we were little.

Aurelia: Is Lewis the brother that just had a birthday?

Shirley: No, that was Willie. Lewis is having a birthday next month and he used to own the gun shop underneath. It used to be here. He sold it to his son and his son made enough money and retired at thirty-three and now he's doing other things.

Aurelia: I think we covered a lot of questions.

Shirley: I want to tell you about these early days and when we used to live back there. There is an irrigation ditch back there and there used to be a lot of cannon, you know those flowers, the old fashioned flowers -- cannon? And I see them now, I think they're coming back a little back. I can remember the frogs croaking. I can hear the birds. I can hear the owls. We used to have owls. And I can hear the owls at night. A lot of times even in 1941 my mother did not allow, we did have refrigeration, and we didn't have the fans, she didn't allow fans on us because she didn't believe on having you in a draft, so what we did was we took a cot outside, put a mosquito net over us and slept outside. So we did a lot of sleeping outside and I remember all the different sounds of the country that you don't hear anymore and sometimes people miss because they're so busy anyway.

But in the morning now I hear these birds and I think, "you know, we used to hear those birds all the time and we never -- they're so beautiful and people don't stop and listen to them." They're

singing away, squawking everytime you get too near to their babies. I remember all these wonderful things like that. Even the mosquitoes and being under the mosquito nets. A lot of times when it got too hot, then we didn't want to waste water, but after we did the laundry in those big, huge, galvanized tubs, we'd take the tubs out and we'd water our lawn with it. But a lot of times, Betsy and I would just sit in those galvanized tubs with the water. Especially when we worried about polio which was then infantile paralysis, then of course we would try to get cool any way we could and that would usually being hosed off or something.

Aurelia: I don't know really know very much about polio -- you keep speaking about staying out of the water -- was polio transmitted in water?

Shirley: At the time they weren't sure what was the cause of it and they thought in the irrigation ditch outside, people -- I told you this was so country and we were the furthest point out -- so people threw -- there were dead rabbits, dead chickens, dead things floating by all the time -- so we thought that's not safe. They weren't sure what it was caused from. Of course that was awfully polluted water. You didn't want to stay in it too long, because you didn't know what the cause was. Everybody said you got to get out of the ditch.

Aurelia: Looking at the picture, because you told me I understand that it is the same place, but looking at the picture it's just so amazing to see the amount of room ...now Violet talked about some of the things they would play, like rubber guns and also in the irrigation ditch ... What are some of the things that you remember playing around?

Shirley: Later on they added onto there was a feed store. So if you had 100 pound sacks of feed and chicken mash and all this other stuff and so Betsy and I would play on that. And also there is a basement underneath. In the basement there was, they kept all the groceries underneath there, but there was also rolls of butcher paper, the old fashioned butcher paper they used to wrap everything in butcher paper, so Betsy and I would take the rolls and we'd roll and walk on these rolls going down the aisles up and down. And it was the coolest place anyway to stay. That basement is still in existence, but it is just full of termites. The whole place is just eaten up by termites.

The Busybody people do not, I think they covered the entryway with carpeting and so you probably couldn't get into it.

You played with whatever you had out there. Paper dropped off dogs and we would try to rescue the dogs, some of the puppies. I do remember one time that we rescued a sack of cats. When we pick up the cats, the cats were full of worms on the bottom. So my dad didn't want us to touch them and he had the little boy who was working for us -- kill the cats because I guess he thought it was the most humane thing. Because the cats just had like open wounds. I do remember that horrible looking thing.

We played cops and robbers a lot. We played, you know there are mulberry bushes around, mulberry trees and we'd shoot each other with mulberries and then we also made -- Betsy and I made a lot of mud pies. One time my brother, Grey, pretended like he ate them so he got the name "Mudpie" for years. His name was Mudpie. We thought he ate it. Of course, I'm sure he didn't. As little kids we thought he ate our mud pies. We used to make mud coffee and we convinced my cousins to drink the mud coffee. I think that is part of growing up in a rural area.

Aurelia: I grew up in rural Arizona also and not Phoenix, in Cameron, I think that is part of world wide, too.

What are some of your favorite memories of growing up in Arizona, besides the ones that we've talked about? Anything else that really stands out?

Shirley: Well, I think, of course the swimming pools were not open to the Chinese at the time, so we couldn't go swimming. I remember this one customer that we had she was part of the Lincoln family and they were out at Lincoln Blvd. but she would allow us to use their swimming pool. And that was a big thing to go out to her swimming pool and swim.

Things that we were not allowed to do normally because of the prejudice that was around in Phoenix. So little things of that sort. Of course, I loved -- my sister and I would steal olives, Casserole Olives, little green cans of olives and my dad built this beautiful grill and there were little doors on both sides where the I guess the ashes would fall in whatever. Betsy and I would crawl in there and this is pretty new -- there is no dirt in there. We'd crawl in there with our Casserole Olives and eat olives.

I do remember swinging from the trees, jumping off the roof, we did all kinds of crazy things of that sort. We made all kinds of gardens. During the time of the war, we made victory gardens. We grew vegetables. We were so proud of that.

My mother said we had to go out and get the eggs and we were afraid of snakes. Because they did catch these huge King snakes out there and you could see them swallowing the eggs whole. Betsy and I would go out there and we'd be singing, "Onward Christian Soldiers" so that we could give ourselves ... because it was scary to go and pick up these eggs.

I do remember all the different animals we had. Everybody had a pet. Vi had a pet. Her pet was rooster. It was called New York.

Aurelia: Oh really.

Shirley: Each one had a different one and they had different names for all of them. I especially remember her rooster. Anyway we also had geese. And Geese are better than watch dogs. They honk and really hiss and scare everybody half out of their wits. We were always worried -- they also came to hiss at us -- to threaten you. One day my mother was feeding them and this one goose really bit a chunk right off of her hand. Well, she just grabbed him and wrung his neck and we had goose that night. My mother as I said was feisty and she wasn't going to take anything like that from a goose. He got his neck wrung.

There are all kinds of stories like that. Things were rationed and you didn't get ham every often. But one time we had ham. We couldn't figure out how come we had ham. Well, that ham was grabbed by the dogs off the butcher block and my dad had to cut that off and he couldn't sell it. So we had it.

Also I never ate a banana until it was black. Nor an avocado. I used to think why are people eating those green bananas because the acid was so horrible. When they get dots on them, that's when they're really sweet. And when they couldn't sell, that's when we ate them. So we were like the garbage cans. And what we couldn't eat, it went to the animals. Like all the lettuce, the shavings, we'd put it out there for all the chickens and rabbits and whatever else we had.

That was the fun of just growing life -- not farm like -- and having all the animals around.

Aurelia: Do you remember eating traditional Chinese food? Because when I was asking Violet about the foods that you ate, she said she remembers eating mostly breakfast at school, lunch at school and so she felt like she ate mainly American food for the first couple of meals of the day and then you guys always had a Chinese dinner.

Shirley: I don't recall that. Because my mom a lot of times made us eat the Chinese porridge in the morning or we had oatmeal or we had things of that sort. I don't ever remember eating meals at school except for lunch. Maybe during that time there was a program for her age group. But I don't recall that. We always had Chinese meals. But my mother would make so much and we'd

eat leftovers for days on end. That was just my mother. And of course it was helpful to her, because then she didn't have to cook everything everyday. And my dad rebels against that. After she died, he refused to eat anything left over. You know when you're growing up with things like that, I never -- it never bothered me at all. People nowadays, you serve it twice and they're not going to eat it. [laughs].

Aurelia: Part of it is just doing with what you had.

Shirley: Right. And I think as far as the Chinese meals -- I told you we ate sometimes at 10:00-10:30 at night, well that's late at night. I do remember the simple Chinese meals. It would be like smelly fish, it would be really smelly. And I know a white kid that worked for us, he'd see that same fish [inaudible] and he said, "Are you still eating that same fish?" He said, "It's rotten, isn't it?" [laughs] Of course, we thought it was funny.

And we'd say, "Oh yeah, it's the same fish." It's preserved fish. And we always had that because it was like the salt that went with your rice. So if you had nothing else to eat, you'd have a salty thing to go with your rice. We always had and my mother grew all the vegetables. Vi to this day grows all of her garden. And I grow all my gardens. We just learned that from my mother. All my life I've grown all my Chinese vegetables.

Aurelia: Yeah, that's what Violet says. She said she definitely got her gardening from your mom. That's probably why she loves it so much, because you guys were forced to go out there. Well, to hear Violet tell it, you were forced to go out there and she probably could think of other things that she should rather be doing.

You talked a little bit about the discrimination that the Chinese Americans experienced and when I asked Violet, she really didn't recall feeling that any of her peers or anyone directly discriminated against her. Did you experience that?

Shirley: I did experience it, but not until I was older. Don't forget, she was already in high school. During World War II anything to do with Japanese, most Caucasians don't know a Japanese from a Chinese. So they would taunt us. They would taunt us like "Ching, ching, chinamen, sitting on a fence." Things like that ... Somebody did that to my brother and he beat him to a pulp. In fact my dad had to pay for the hospitalization of this kid, because he beat him up so bad.

Aurelia: This was Gray then?

Shirley: No, this was Henry. Henry is the one who is crazy. He's [inaudible].

Aurelia: The way Violet said that Gray had a chip on his shoulder because of the discrimination. But it was actually Henry?

Shirley: Henry was very ...if you said the word "chinaman," to this day, he'll beat you to a pulp. He won't take anything like that. And for a long time for the Chinese that is a derogatory term. But a lot of Caucasians, a lot of my friends didn't know that. They would say "chinaman." Well, I said, you wouldn't say France man. You don't say England man. Why would you say China man." That's really how the old miners and people who were trying to get the Chinese out of the hair in the early days -- that's because they were coming to get the gold too. So that's how they discriminated against them. So it was a big thing.

I didn't have people doing anything to me personally, but I could hear the taunts on the way to and from school. Sometimes you'd hear parents, kids that were driving to school and they would yell out the different things to you. And on the playground people did.

But I'm very aware of racial discrimination and more so when I got to college and I recounted a lot of things that happened in Phoenix. When I gave the oral history of the family, I talked about a lot

of different things. You know the family, the house, the discrimination in the house and all this other ...very subtle things. I felt a lot of it a lot more growing up in college. Like right now I tell people you don't understand white privilege. For people of color you're always aware of things that you would never think of. For instance, if I go to a grocery store, I'm not going to go and get my coupons out while I'm going down the aisle. I'm making sure I'm either in the middle of the aisle or right near the cashier before I pull out my coupons. Because security is going to look at me before they look at you. You may be, you know ...so I'm very careful. See, you are not aware of that. A person of color is. I mean, I don't get out my Kleenex unless I'm in the middle of the aisle or right near the cashier. I'll let my nose leak until or when I get out because I just did not want ...even if the security guard is Chinese ...that's the stereotyping that people have burnt into your psychic so much ...we feel it in other ways.

Like going to Las Vegas. All my friends say they have a check, of the car. And I said, "You watch." Well four or five cars go by, when I drive up, watch they are going to stop me. They do that every single time. They did that and my friend used to say, "Well you were ..." Like coming back from Tijuana, five of us went to Tijuana, they said "No, you're just paranoid."

I said, "Just watch. I'm dressed like you are and I'm just as American as you are, but they are going to say something to me." I bet them a dinner.

And they come to me and they say, "Where are you from?"

Because they want to hear me talk.

I said, "Phoenix, Arizona."

Then they let you go. The thing is nobody was that. So if you are a person of color, you are going to be ... that's the way it is.

Aurelia: Do you find that your own personal values and beliefs have separated from the Chinese culture?

Shirley: Yes, a lot. A lot of that is because, first of all, as a Chinese woman, I was very much, I felt like I carried all this baggage that you're subservient to the men, you're second class citizen, you never speak out, you're supposed to be silent, you're supposed to be the subservient one. And I thought you know, after taking all these classes and all that, I got to speak up. At the family meetings, the women, we never spoke up. We let the brothers run everything. Well, my brothers would just have most of the brothers would just have women out of the way -- period, just out. So now, we're really speaking out. And because I've spoken out so much, it has made my other sisters speak out. Betsy is always defending the men. It's really, it's a real funny dynamic. She thinks we should honor the thing of honoring

Aurelia: She's kind of caught between cultural ideas and modern ideas. That's why I was wondering if you felt if being a liberal catholic that must also kind of separate you from the main branch of Catholicism.

Shirley: In a sense I think there is more of a feminist if people would really recognize. Like on the second of November I go to A Call To Action. There's about 3,000-5,000 people that come. These are the very progressive Catholics. There are people who do social justice, people that talk about women, but there is a lot of women who are being ordained and we're doing it clandestinely because the wider church will not recognize it. But more and more you will see pockets of women everywhere. If you just go anywhere and you can find women celebrating their own liturgy without going to the men.

And I won't subscribe to everything that the institutional church teaches, because when I was teaching they wanted me to sign up for what they call ????? teach things that are only Catholic.

Who is to make that determination? Who sets that? I felt like for centuries and centuries and centuries liturgists have never agreed when life begins. I'm not going to second guess that now.

Somehow or another I look upon this world -- on how we're increasing by millions every year. I mean how much can the Earth sustain? Those are things that bother me. Then people don't take care of Mother Earth. They don't care of the birds, fields ...there are so many other things that impact all, that we're not the only ones left. And then having taken so much in Buddhism, I also have a hard time now even getting rid of my snails in my garden. But I'm giving them a happy death. What I do is that they love beer. So you put beer in the little can ...I look at that and I thought "I'm not a very good person." There must have been about 200 snails in that.

Aurelia: Sometimes you got to do what you got to do to save your garden.

Shirley: What I was trying to do, I was trying to grow enough for the birds, the snails ...

[end of interview]

BARRY WONG

Interviewed by Isaac Manley with Adrienne Dudley
23 October 2006

Isaac: We are here October 23rd.

Barry: I'm Barry Wong.

Isaac: My name is Isaac Manley and I am with Adrienne Dudley. Umm, for the record could you state your name and spell it for us please.

Barry: Barry Wong, B as in boy-A-R-R-Y W-O-N-G.

Isaac: OK and we have your permission to record this interview correct?

Barry: You do, that is correct.

Isaac: Umm, can I get some background information, as far as when and where you were born and your family, how they came here to Phoenix?

Barry: Uh, born in 1959 here in Phoenix, Arizona. Family emigrated here from southern China, at the time called Canton Province. A little village there outside the city, Toisan, which is where most of the early settlers of Chinese origin settled in the Phoenix area are from and also that province. They came here like most of the early immigrants of their generation following the civil war in China.

Isaac: OK.

Barry: Communists took control of the country.

Isaac: Was there a specific reason they chose Phoenix, Arizona?

Barry: They came to Phoenix primarily because my grandfather came here to Phoenix first. He settled here ... he came here in the, around the twenties, 1920s around that time as many of his contemporaries came to America, for ... to find wealth. Even before then his father my great-grand father they came here as the wave of laborers to help construct the western leg of the trans-continental railroad. And uh, it was primarily the sons of the family that came to America because of the usually hard labor. And they also came as bachelors, primarily, save money and send it back home.

Isaac: Who was the first in your family to own land or have land?

Barry: Probably was my grandfather, and even at that time it was that there were restrictions on where you could buy land.

Isaac: OK.

Barry: Even as Chinese and Asians were subject to the same discrimination as African Americans, Hispanics, other Minorities.

Isaac: Right, do you recall the first house ... do you recall where it was located or anything of that sort?

Barry: It was located ... that was my grandfather's house, so he lived, we need to go back a few more years here, he came to Phoenix, he worked in San Francisco. He immigrated to this country

as well as his father. And all the different odd jobs around San Francisco, Chinatown area, so he came here to help his first cousin who had a liquor store business, liquor-grocery, a little liquor-grocery store in Phoenix.

Isaac: Do you recall where that was?

Barry: South Phoenix area.

Isaac: OK.

Barry: Seventh Street, just around, north of I-10. Just around where they call it the Brickyard.

Isaac: Right.

Barry: Actually businesses are still there just under different ownership.

Isaac: OK.

Barry: So he helped my, his first cousin, and until his first cousin married and brought his wife over. And they ran that business and my grandfather went on to open his own grocery business, and ... called S&W, the first one was called WW Market which was his first cousin, and he opened his own grocery store called S&W Market which was basically his first and last name initials, which was located on 16th Street and Durango. I don't think Durango is there anymore but that's also near I-10, just north of I-10. So that's the location that I am most familiar with since that's where I grew up. Durango that's basically just directly under the flight path of the uhh ... approach, the runway, Sky Harbor. So that's where he had his residence behind the grocery business.

Isaac: And your parents where did they grow up? Did they have a house there as well?

Barry: Well, we all lived there.

Isaac: You all lived together, OK.

Isaac: We lived there all six of us siblings, my parents, grandparents and my aunt. Until age, lets see, about six years old. I was six years old, my dad bought a grocery, his own house in Glendale, west side.

Isaac: Can you describe the building and that sort of thing?

Barry: Well let me, again, my grandfather's building, my dad never worked at my grandpa's, he built a grocery business for my father to work in when he came to this country. So that was also on 16th Street but on the other side of the freeway, south of the freeway. That was called New Moon Market, which my grandpa built for him. And he worked that pretty much thirty years. My grandfather's store, so they tore, its all tore down now, but ah, there's a Phoenix police department precinct there.

Isaac: OK.

Barry: Yeah, but at the time, this is pretty interesting they had a little tiny strip center with maybe three or four units, he had the biggest store, S&W Market. Its kinda, almost like a country store, I just remember it had wood plank floors. It had different dry goods in there, I don't think there were that much in terms of maybe, there were some like a meat, a meat market. It was just a small like a little country store. I don't remember much in terms of detail of it, but more after he closed it.

Isaac: Right.

Barry: He rented it out to some repair shops. Things like that, but next to it I remember he had like a little coin operated laundry mat, and next to it that was a barbershop, and at the end there was a pool hall. I remember that vividly because I'd always walked down there, at the time it was not a good reputation, there was like you know ...

Isaac: So these were all Asian American owned stores, or ...?

Barry: Oh no, no, not at all. This was the only one Asian here. So I'd sneak down to the pool hall, and he'd say, "Don't go in there's" ... like you know ... "bikers in there."

Isaac: Right.

Barry: I mean their not like bikers today, but these were like the really tough guys. Shooting pool and he'd say, "You don't go in there." So, it was pretty interesting. So, we grew up there and, you know, my grandmother -- traditional housewife -- she raised chickens in the backyard, and a huge garden which was pretty much self-sufficient in terms of all these different Chinese vegetables, and she was real proud of that. So I remember one time [inaudible] fresh chicken just like just grabbed it, grabbed the head of the chicken and just like ripped it. I just kinda cringed, but then think about it ... Hey, it's poultry ...

Isaac: Yeah, my dad used to kill the chickens and we had to pluck the feathers and everything else.

Barry: They did have this huge big plum tree in the middle of the yard. We were always looking forward to plums during the season. She'd always have these Chinese a ... like a pear tree that they had these little pear like, little pear apples, and she'd dry them up and use them for soup base and vegetables. She was very resourceful. Then my dad had his grocery business, I think it was around, my grandfather had his, and my grandfather had ... my dad had his and so, but they were far enough away that they didn't really draw from ...

Isaac: Where was your father's?

Barry: Also on 16th Street.

Isaac: Oh, OK it's all on there.

Barry: Same street but it's just on the other side of the freeway.

Isaac: OK.

Barry: So he had his brand new grocery business, he came to this country, and worked long hours just stocking it. You know it wasn't easy either, because in the beginning you have to build a clientele. There neighborhoods around that had to support him, and he had to make them feel comfortable, and that they are welcome as well. So, he had a pretty much full service grocery business, dry goods, and you know he had a butcher shop, a produce section. I remember as kid, that's just from the photographs my mom had the four of us born here in Phoenix, and then my two eldest sisters came in from China, at about age seven or eight. And then, so it was pretty much, pretty typical for her. We are all like a year apart more or less except my brother who is two years younger than me. So we got to see pictures of her, she's holding a baby in one arm and trying to cashier with the other hand got two babies in the shopping cart just like little, little bassinets. So its just you got to make due, survival in a new country, right.

Isaac: So growing up did you, were you around a lot of Asian Americans, or was it mixed or how was it?

Barry: You know it was different, I grew up a lot of the kids a lot of the parents, sent their, tried to send their kids to what they had at the time was a Baptist Church called the First Chinese Baptist Church. That was, it was a religious center, but also a community center, a social center as well.

Isaac: Where was that located?

Barry: That was around, just near downtown Phoenix, Culver Street, Culver and like Third, Third Street. Near, just off of Central, but interestingly that's being restored now because, I didn't know at the time but that originally was the Jewish Community Center.

Isaac: Oh right, I think I heard about that.

Barry: Then they sold it to the Baptist Foundation, which turned it into the First Chinese Baptist Church. And the first, the pastor that came here was this big Texan that was assigned here to do his missionary work. You know they found out there was a growing Chinese community here, so that was his missionary work, and he and his wife were beloved by the Chinese community and you know were just like your family. So that church became a lot of people grew up there and the community center as well as a religious center. And know it's a, well I should say after the Chinese Baptist Church used that for many years it was sold to a Hispanic community it became like another Baptist church but focused on the burgeoning Hispanic immigrant population, and know the Jewish community bought it back and is trying to restore it as a museum for themselves.

Isaac: So growing up do you recall any Asian American stores or places of ... people would congregate or that sort of thing is there any specific, you know, place that Chinese Americans or etc. would ...?

Barry: I think the Chinese community is pretty independent, they already have there little grocery business or restaurant business and you know, just a long day, long hours, sixteen, fourteen, sixteen hour days. So but I remember downtown Phoenix had this umm grocery, just a warehouse, this was before my time, but it's the Sun Mercantile building, it was built in 1929. Chinese Americans immigrant, he was an immigrant; his wife was born one of the first if not *the* first Chinese American born in Phoenix. So she was like second generation and he was first. So he built up his business as a wholesale grocery, in that he didn't limit himself to catering to Chinese grocery stores, but just in general. He supplied Basha's when they started Basha's and Safeway stores, were pretty much some of their major customers throughout the state. And that at the time, that one square block area was the old Chinatown of Phoenix. And the second Chinatown if I remember the first one was north of there and local business people wanted to, it was a valuable piece of land so they forced the Chinese into, further south, into a second Chinatown. And so that area was pretty much an area that was relegated for Chinese, to own land, it was the place you could own land. Again the discrimination laws, I learned recently that that the this elderly gentleman that passed away earlier this year, his son in law told me that his father in law had to live in the Chinatown area, but he worked in Gilbert so there was a long commute, and that was the only place he could live. So there was the Sun Mercantile building which was, is one of the sons of the owner, became also ultimately became a federal court judge, Judge Thomas Tang, who was appointed by then President Carter as a Federal Judge for the Court of Appeals, the Federal Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit. Then another son is a pretty high level Franciscan priest in the Catholic order, so they have a long history within their family. But another area within that area, Chinatown and probably more closer to my era, is that there is a Chinese Produce house that was near the railroad tracks down there, and that was where a lot of Chinese kind of congregate, and catch up on the news, stop by, pick up some Chinese produce or what have you, and chit-chat with the owner and I remember the guy always had a fortune cookie to give the little kids. Instead of giving them candy, say hey here's some fortune cookies. So we were always looking forward to going in there. And then another area that I think has since been torn down, toward the basketball arena, but that was all part of old Chinatown, was the like two or

three different buildings where the Chinese had umm ... like a clubhouse I am guessing like an association building.

Isaac: OK.

Barry: One was called the Ying Ong Association, which was so they called it the Ying Ong Merchants and Laborers Association. So it was almost like a Chamber of Commerce because they tried to mediate disputes between employees and employers of Chinese ancestry. And they, I remember they had a basement, you know, they all had a basement, you got to be careful what is in the basement.

Isaac: Right, yeah.

Barry: I remember they did some gambling.

Isaac: Yeah its funny we interviewed some Filipino Americans that have been here in Phoenix as well and they had a basement as well.

Barry: Really.

Isaac: Yeah and as little kids they would be like, we didn't want to go in there and we don't you know want to find out what is in there, but ...

Barry: So it was a social community center as well as you know it was gambling and I am sure they had some probably more than just penny games there. But it was well pretty locked up to get down there.

Isaac: Right, and this is all downtown, down where the arena is?

Barry: Right, right, it was around that area because that, in fact when they were building the arena they discovered some artifacts, part of the excavation. And then there was another building nearby I think Ong Ko Met, like one of the family associations which uh, the largest family in the Phoenix metro area, of Chinese descent, is the Ongs and Tongs it really just that one family name that's related but they had their own like clan clubhouse that most of the other family names have since then have bought their own little space but they are all kind of spread out. All along 16th Street, the central part of 16th Street, the Wong's family association, Yee Fong Toy, and Ong Ko Met kind of all in the general area. It's, some of them called them the reference in the old days where they call them Tongs. Uhh ... really describes a communal association, but back in the turn of the century in San Francisco the Tongs were really gangs. They were involved in drugs, gangsters, prostitution, back in the turn of the century. So they don't use that term any more.

Isaac: Yeah, so um, were did you go to school when you were uhh ...

Barry: I went to when we were still in South Phoenix, when we were growing up I went to elementary school, Ann Ott School, I think its still there but a different building. Umm then we moved first grade through eighth grade we went to Glendale Barcelona Elementary School, then Phoenix Alhambra High School in West Phoenix, Arizona State University, Business Accounting Degree, and then University of Arizona, Law Degree.

Isaac: OK um, growing up did you parents ever take you out to restaurants you know or where did they, where did you guys go for family time and that sort of thing?

Barry: For personal family time it was just more you eat just with your own family, we didn't go out lot you know but like I said we had the family business, they rarely took vacations and it was more just again a few holidays you close but even that you open a few hours a day just to be

accommodating to your customers. And I remember even as a family we never really had family time as a focal family eating dinner together because you had a business running so it's like you kind of took turns like eat in shifts and all that. It just you do what you got to do, but then those times that we do get together with the community we have community groups celebrate for example Chinese New Years. OK but then different family associations would have their banquets, it still goes on today. So it is really a series of banquets during the spring, and the primary restaurant I say, I remember is the China Doll restaurant. Which is since closed, Seventh Ave. and Osborn, that was a pretty good-sized restaurant and that we could accommodate a large gatherings. And they would have their Dim Sum, which is kind of a ... it's a special type of like, brunch meal they would have every weekend. So the China Doll was not only a place where you would have large banquets but almost like a community center as well. Kind of go and see people there. Another place was Toy's Shangri-la, which is 16th Street and Camelback. That since, the building is still there, but it's a different restaurant now. So again the Shangri-la, Toy's Shangri-la was named after Mr. Toy, T-O-Y, and uh ... actually my grandfather and Mr. Toy were best friends, so they met each other and were very close to each other. And he had his restaurant and would accommodate big banquets there as well, and they have a big extended family so my grandfather told me that Mr. Toy, he always told me this story that he had, Mr. Toy was here much longer than my grandfather, he was ... he would sell produce on the back of a horse-drawn wagon. That's Mr. Toy, D.H. Toy, and he'd always stop by, you know back then 16th Street and University was way out in the country basically because the city limits were pretty small. So he'd always stop at that corner, which was basically just a dirt road, 16th Street and Camelback as we know it today, and because there was always this huge shade tree so he vowed to buy that corner up someday when he saved up money. His family controls it all now, mostly half a block there. So that was just all a part of the legacy of Mr. Toy. And so then China Doll, Mr. Ong who built up China Doll, I think it's his father in law that started it, um, made, brought in chefs helped them immigrate to this country by sponsoring them, their employer sponsor. That spawned off many competitors I guess a lot of chefs worked there long enough meet there immigration requirements, so like their gone and form their own restaurants, its like they were the training ground for all the chefs that competed with them. But they were still the hub sort of the mother ship because they were the biggest one so they still had small mom and pop competitors but they were still proud of the fact that they brought them over here they did well as a community group, community employer.

Isaac: Right, did you used to work in the grocery store or ... work with your parents when you were young?

Barry: Oh yeah, we all did that all the siblings, that's just there was really no question about it, you just did it. And I was my two eldest sisters probably spent more time there because they came here and part of getting the business established, and spending long hours there. Um, I worked there during weekends and summers. I had the fortunate opportunity that my parents, whether it's fair or not but this is reality, they gave a little more preference to the sons in the family. So my Brother and I had a little more, few more privileges.

Isaac: Yeah it seems that way.

Barry: So what they, like during high school they, the girls, my two older sisters had to go help out the grocery business. And my brother in law ... my brother and I got to participate extra curricular activities, sports, student government, things like that.

Isaac: Now do you recall your parents' impressions or maybe your impressions as a young kid about Phoenix and what it was like?

Barry: Their, well my grandfather I don't really remember him describing Phoenix, he just worked in Phoenix. I remember my mom, my mom would say that she was really, she wanted to go back to China, go back to Asia. Actually she lived in Hong Kong for a year, after the communists took over she and one sister lived in Hong Kong, she stayed with her relatives. Then the other parts,

other family members came directly to the US so different immigration papers were worked out. But, actually former US Senator Carl Hayden aided in our immigration issues. Because at the time, his family: the Hayden Flour Mills; which was in Tempe, sold flour to my family. I guess my mom and dad talked to the salesman and the salesman put them in touch with the senator. So they helped us out on that, Yeah, but my mom I remember saying that, believe in little things like eating bread because in Asia they don't bread for breakfast right. So she's telling me that you know you got the four sides she says you know it's all bitter and she hates eating stuff like that and trying to become accustomed to eating breads and my dad would cut off the sides for her, she's just trying to make do here. But the business, I mean in South Phoenix they faced their own discrimination as well by other minor minority's, and so they had to, my dad was always very patient and he had to endure that because what are you going to do? You're going to survive right? Raise six kids and your not going to let somebody, you're not going to tick off your customer because they put you down. And you know he was one of the few of his generation that were, that were highly educated because first the Japanese invaded China, and then after World War II then the Civil War happened so China was always in turmoil, so a lot of people of his generation didn't have a chance to study, to get higher education. But, then maybe just by village ... village teachers. So my grandfather always insisted that my dad get an education so he got his degree in Canton University in Economics. So he was pretty well educated, and he and my grandfather, but especially my grandfather, were very talented in the art of Chinese calligraphy. And so my grandfather always made these huge, umm, long couplets in the scroll and just like freehand. Different characters for as gifts to people that were weddings or ... or big birthday parties, seventy, eighty-year old, ninety-year old birthday parties. And, so he was, people sought him out, and then my dad was gifted as being an intellectual person, and so wrote, people always sought him out to be master of ceremonies of their fancy galas, dinners like that. I picked up a lot of that from both of them in terms of their public service, community service work.

Isaac: Growing up did you feel any of that discrimination? Was, were you aware of it?

Barry: Well, I, I felt my share of it. I think my, in elementary, in kindergarten I remember it was primarily a Hispanic area and there was like one little punk kid that always had to beat me up after kindergarten, so hiding behind a tree so I trying to avoid him. It ends up as we got older he worked for my dad.

Isaac: That's ironic.

Barry: ... and I got to supervise him.

Isaac: Right, that's pretty ironic.

Barry: And the other actually which was overt, pretty outright discrimination was in elementary school. Because we were probably one of two Asian families in this all white area suburban, suburban area and then, so, we always have some smart aleck kids making fun of you, taunting you and all that. You can either choose to ignore it, or fight basically; I didn't want to fight.

Isaac: Yeah, that was my next question did, when you were growing up was it, you know what was the, primarily it was white people you grew up around or ...

Barry: Well it was just a mix, because of my dad's store was primarily Hispanic and African American. And so I had that experience growing up and then still I helped out at the store so I continued to have that experience, but then the school experience was, you know a primarily white population. I didn't really get to know that many Chinese, primarily it was Chinese, because there weren't very many other Asians at the time. And of course our parents would always try to drop us off at the Chinese Baptist Church and like you know, absorb something. So after awhile we thought "Ahh," we're not absorbing anything so we don't want you to just drop us off so we kind of resisted that and so we were given reprieve after awhile. But you know I still have friends from the church days and other people got more involved in the church in terms of socially. I

remember my dad had, umm, to show his patience. He would always get taunted by some big, this big African American guy, and one time he said, actually I was there, one time he said, he was trying to get him to discount the price or something like that and he said, "Hey, go back to China." So and I'm a little kid and I'm ticked off some guy even said that.

Isaac: Yeah to your ...

Barry: I mean he was telling my dad that, and then just watching my dad you know he was calm and cool, and I thought, hey, I was thinking, hey you going to take that. And then my dad turns around being the scholar that he is. He turned it around and said, and said, "OK I go back to China, but you go back to Africa, because we're both not from this country." So after he reasoned with the guy, the guy kind of just like backed off and became chummy with him. You know just like throw it back at him, right. So that's just, learning that from my dad in terms of his patience and more, more intellect rather than physical force or you're not gonna win so that's just like kind of Chinese philosophy I guess, that you know.

Isaac: Do you recall any other buildings that might be around or might have stood as far as Asian American ...Americans owning, or building, or that sort of thing.

Barry: Well, the primary one is the Sun Mercantile building, which I have been actively trying to get the city to properly preserve that. And we are still in the litigation mode right now waiting for the judge to make a decision so that is pretty much that entire project is tied up, developer is not going to turn any shovel of dirt until that issue is resolved. Which is probably to our advantage, but also we are trying to carve out clearly what the law should be in terms of who has the right to challenge issues like that. And frankly it is because we are involved in the community because the city owns the land. You know I think that if it was 100 percent privately owned that would be a separate issue here, we probably wouldn't have as strong of a leg to stand on. But other buildings, I can't think of any spe ... that are of the same caliber of historic, you know the history behind it, the historic preservation aspect of it. But there is some other Chinese grocery stores that are, let me see, along Washington, somebody called me not to long ago. It was like during the whole Sun Mercantile debate he owns it, some guy owns it, and I said maybe you let the be part of the survey and his house, it was a nice property that was originally a Chinese grocery building.

Isaac: Do you know the address, or anything?

Barry: I don't have it with me, yeah, I could find out for you. And you know my dad's grocery store is still there, that was built in probably mid-fifties, I don't know what the standard is of the store probably fifty years plus or something like that.

Isaac: Right, they were saying maybe like before 1960, so yeah, they are just trying to find buildings or you know that sort of thing. If they are still standing see if they might be able to do some sort of historical, you know, reconstruction or something of that sort.

Barry: And so you know that's my dad's building is still standing but like I said there is not really anything unique about the architectural design. Umm, I can't really think of anything right now but we can, I can make some contact's and see what is out there. But that's the most difficult part, you have your grocery and restaurant buildings and especially with ...

Isaac: So much has changed as well.

Barry: So much has changed and really most of the historic buildings are torn down, and that's another reason those are left standing that really the one handful should really be preserved, because its not just brick and mortar, in terms of the Sun Mercantile, its an era that depicts the old China town. You know someone wanted, suggest we actually physically move that building to another block somewhere near downtown, but you know you lose the entire reason for saving it,

right? You are not going to dig a basement out, how are you going to dig a basement out of there. It's just not the same. And you know I think the historical survey is important to the community. I think that you look at other Asian groups I mean I think the Japanese Americans probably also have a similar long history in this community and you know they were more into farming, I don't know if they have a physical historic structures like a grocery or warehouse district would be. And then other Asian Americans are still relatively new in this state as compared to the Chinese and Japanese. You know so I'm not sure if they actually have, because they were more, they came to this country more in ... in the job mode of more technical, professional as opposed to more retail business.

Isaac: Right, yeah a lot of the Filipino Americans that, like I believe, they date back to the 1930s, or so, but a lot of them were with the farming community so they would move around and you know ...

Barry: So they're migrants. So they weren't so much, entrepreneurs, as a labor force. I think maybe we need to work closer with the local Chinese American community and see what's out there. Umm, because, I think just broadcasting it by a newspaper article would be insufficient because you know these are elderly and you need more one to one contact as a culture of respect.

Isaac: Um, what's your most defining moment as far as growing up here in Phoenix is there a specific moment?

Barry: Community wise?

Isaac: Or personal, either one.

Barry: I think it's actually two different, two or three different periods one is I think when you are living you don't really think about it but in retrospect probably just spending time with my grandfather and observing and watching how he operates in community service mode and taking me around to his meetings and me observing and listening, seeing how they interact with each other. And that's also helped me gain a lot of respect for elderly too, elderly population because of that experience and being with an elderly population. And then the grocery store is another defining moment because its, going through it is a lot of work and kind of drudgery and none of the kids really want to be there but they got to do it. But again that builds I think that's really help building character, and a sense of business an understanding of entrepreneurship before they called it entrepreneurship. And probably the third defining moment was getting myself getting involved in the, you know, getting my higher education and getting involved in the professional public policy position. Elected official, both in the legislature, as well as being appointed to the Corporation Commission. I think it's defining because being in this position, not only do I open doors to uhh, Asian Americans, but I also introduce them to government and how they can play a part in it, and how they can be, how they can help their fellow citizen. But also broadening themselves and not ... educating them not to be limiting themselves just to their own specific community whether it is Chinese, Japanese, Filipino. I tell the younger generation that you shouldn't forget you culture and background, and you should be involved in your community affairs, but you shouldn't limit yourself to that. Because it is self limiting and you should use that to teach yourself leadership skills, to build confidence, to be active in the general community.

Isaac: What is your strongest memory of your parents?

Barry: I think just, just persevering in a new land, a new country, and not being dejected by rejection, especially in the outside community, whether it's your customers, or you have to, you know, they were innovative in how they worked with the customers. My mom was really she worked hard for a woman in terms of that culture and generation. She was not the traditional wife or daughter in law who would serve to the in laws. She had her own opinions and expressed them, and she helped, side by side with my dad in building up the business. Worked the long

hours, and supervised employees, and did all the work like we all did in terms of, what was it, butcher and cashier, and produce, stock person. On top of that she had to cook well and do the more domestic work as well. So, she had, raising four little kids, little babies was pretty tough, you know, she'd tell us about how at the time, she came to this country she didn't know anything about it. That's before these disposable diapers OK, so she didn't know about these diapers so she told me that she had to wash like six pairs of diapers every night and hang them up then they wouldn't dry and the kids were sleeping on grocery boxes that had just been emptied of their contents, and she's all worried some kid, then one baby rolls off on to the floor and she's all stressed out about that and finally she met some local Chinese lady that introduced her to diaper service, and so its like a godsend you know.

Isaac: Right.

Barry: So little things like that, she had to learn and she didn't have the benefit of a network coming to this country and I think that is where it is important to have these networks and welcome in new immigrants, because often times, hey, they don't know, especially if they come from a country that is not as advanced. Things that we take for granted in terms of very simple, very basic, maybe something that is revolutionary to somebody in terms of the product that is an immigrant.

Isaac: OK, well did you have anything? That you wanted to?

Adrienne: No, I think you got most of it?

Isaac: OK, is there anything that you would like to add, that I didn't ask or ...? Anything you would like to say?

Barry: I think you covered it all, its just the ... I think immigrants coming to this country even today, as you hear a lot about the whole debate about the illegal immigration and I think it's too broad of a brush I think the critics are lumping in the legal immigrants with the illegals and fueling this potential negative feeling of all immigrants. And that they're all, there is a label also that illegals are limited to the people that cross the border from Mexico but the fact is, and the reality is, a third of the illegals in this country are..., they call it "visa overstayers," or I don't know what the technical term is people that came here legally with either a tourist visa or a work visa are supposed to return after a certain period, they stay. And you know they may look like everybody else in the street if they are from Europe or Canada, or even Asians there, it effects Asians as well in terms of Visa overstayers. You know so, we need to be vigilant and focus on the issue which is broader than just border crossers, which is a just a nice sound byte politically these days.

Isaac: All right well, I guess that concludes our interview. I thank very much for letting us do this.

Barry: Thank you it was nice meeting you.

Isaac: It was nice meeting you.

Barry: It was a pleasure.

[end of interview].

MIUKI YAMAMOTO

Interviewed by Scott Solliday
6 October 2006

Scott: This is an interview with Miuki Yamamoto and this is October 6, 2006 and we are at the Arizona Buddhist Temple.

Scott: Miuki, can you tell me when and where were you born?

Miuki: I was born 1918 in Sunnyside, Washington, the southern part of the state of Washington. It was a little town. The population was very small at that time.

Scott: Farming community there?

Miuki: Yes, but we lived in a little town because we were not farmers and we had a small laundry and that was my father's business. There weren't that many Japanese except on the outskirts like in [inaudible] Canyon, Grandview and Whapatu. They have more Japanese farmers and merchants. Yakima was quite a large Japanese community and they had a Buddhist Church of Japanese and Christian Church, also separately.

I was born in July 31, 1918. I was born between my mother and father, both were samurai families. My mother's side father was in those days a samurai had education from the priest. And they have a class distinction and the farmers were the next and the artists and the merchants was the last class.

Scott: When did your parents come to the United States?

Miuki: Like I said my mother and father are both samurai family, but my father's side became farmers earlier. In those days I think they have a go between, they investigate the family background to see if there are any insane or strange illness or not and these are the people who search for three or four generations back.

Scott: Who did that?

Miuki: They are called go between.

Scott: So between the families?

Miuki: These are the people who does this as a business to check the background, investigate to see if there is any strange thing happening or not. That was a custom in those days before the marriage. So both sides -- my father's side and mother's side they investigated. And that's how come my mother had about five brothers, so she was more or less like a tomboy -- she climbed the trees just the boys. She had a sister, but she married earlier. One of the brothers, eldest brother, he worked with some government official in southern part of Wakayama called Shingu and I visited there one time. The other brother was a merchant. The other he became a policeman. I visited his home one time -- he was playing a symphony in a record and that's how I became interested in symphony music. Another one was able to graduate from one of the universities in Tokyo, but he wasn't as rich as Mr. Toshiba. They went to school together. But since he was not able to continue, he went to night school in order to graduate from that university in Tokyo. And later he became working in Western Electric Company in Osaka. I was rely on him more like a father because my parents were divorced and I had to live with my father because I was an elder.

Scott: It sounds like your parents were married in Japan before they came over the United States?

Miuki: Yes, that's right.

Scott: But the rest of their families were still there in Japan.

Miuki: Oh yes. My mother is the only one who came to America. My grandfather was very much in learning about America, so he agreed for the marriage, but after they were married, my mother was not ordinary Japanese woman, because she had concept of the boys because her brothers were boys. I don't know the real reason my mother did not have a good connection or relation with my father.

Scott: What brought them to Washington? Was that the first place they settled in?

Miuki: Yes, because my father had a business in a little town called Sunnyside. And most of the people were farmers. There were very few merchants in the little town. And some would become chefs at the hotel. One time I remember I think I was about four or five years old, we had a wooden building and we slept in the upstairs. And next door was a hotel. There was a big fire, so my mother threw all our belongings downstairs and the fireman was able to save our house and we were watching the fire from across the street. That was one of the demonstrating thing that happened to us.

Scott: Certainly as a child, that is pretty scary. When did you come to Arizona?

Miuki: Well, this is a long story, so it takes some time. I think my mother was -- in those days, divorce is a very unpleasant word, so she couldn't live in Japan, so she came to America. She had to make a living and finally she went back to the hometown and started a laundry business with help of her friends. My sister was with her, and I was in Japan to live with my father and he remarried. Before that he built a large house since he was able to have a family there. I was in Japan for almost over ten years, but we moved to different places.

Scott: So you moved around quite a bit in Japan and then you came back to the United States later?

Miuki: Since my father has a son, I did not have to stay because he is the heir, so I didn't have to.

Scott: So you were in Japan, you said for about ten years?

Miuki: Yes, I was able to do that.

Scott: And then you left Japan to come to the United States?

Miuki: Yes. I get into all these most devastating -- weather and everything because I was able to leave because my uncle's youngest wife was a schoolteacher and she took care of me as my mother because my stepmother was busy with her children. I visited with them very often to my aunt. My uncle was drafted and he went to Shanghai and he became an interpreter in Chinese and Japanese, I think. That was before the war with America.

Scott: You were not a child anymore at this time, you were a young woman?

Miuki: Yes, I was out of high school for almost two years.

Scott: So this is around 1940 maybe?

Miuki: Yes, before the war, it was '38. And I came and my mother wanted to see her parents before, because they were past ninety and I think both of my parents lived long. I think my grandfather is ninety-four and my grandmother is ninety-two, I think. She wanted to see them

before ...So she took my sister and went to Japan. It is interesting that when they were leaving the rumor was that Roosevelt already stopped the silk shipment returned, they did not want it. I thought that was strange. We did not understand why. And then the people did not able to come to America after that. That was before Pearl Harbor.

Scott: So you came back to the United States before ...

Miuki: Before Pearl Harbor. Yes.

Scott: And did you come to Arizona at that time?

Miuki: No. This is another long story. My mother and sister were gone and so I had to find myself a job. Through my librarian friend, I was able to come to Seattle. She knew some people, but I didn't know too well. There were quite a few Japanese people in Seattle. So I went to one of my people who had a hotel there. Interesting in Washington, if you come from a certain district, like Wakayama, they have their own group, own club, Wakayama Club and I was able to go to this hotel that came from Wakayama and I was able to stay. In the meanwhile I went to the employment agency and I was able to get a job to do his agency. I did work before Pearl Harbor came.

Scott: Were you by yourself then?

Miuki: Oh yes.

Scott: So no other family then?

Miuki: No. My mother went to see her father and my sister went with her. I was all by myself. That was why I had to find a job working as a maid in homes. I became a maid. That was very hard because this was the first time there was a maid in the family.

Scott: Still, you could speak English having been grown up here earlier? Did you remember at all or did it take some time to learn the language?

Miuki: It came naturally. Once you learn, you never forget. My enunciation is better than the people who came from Japan, because I was born here. I was first worked for a Presbyterian family and they had a lot of children, so I was quite busy. I did a lot of extra work. The work changed. I went to an employment agency. I said I don't want to work there. I wanted another place. I went to two different places. And the last place I worked, no the second place, it is interesting, I worked in a home, they had quite a large home and they had a piano. This young talented boy played piano and he wasn't afraid to be in that big house by himself because his parents had business next to the [inaudible] company and there was Dennison company, like can goods, that was the family that I was working for. Interestingly, a friend of theirs asked this owner's wife to see if they knew I was Japanese American and they thought I would be a spy, so I shouldn't be working. I said, "My goodness, I don't know anything about spy[ing]." They didn't prefer favorably for me, so I packed right away before they returned home I went back to the employment agency. That was the first time that prejudice hit me very hard.

Scott: And this is still before Pearl Harbor when it was officially war?

Miuki: Yes, that's right. I was able to work. Interestingly I wasn't afraid when Pearl Harbor came. I didn't have no fear. I never did have fear no matter what. The Chinese people wrote on labels, which said, "I'm not a Jap." They walked with that. It didn't bother me. When I saw those signs and made the Japanese stores had to close up and they had to either move and store their things in designated places.

Then they start, the evacuation notice came December and this is another devastating thing in my life.

Scott: Of course after that, living in Washington that was part of the area where all Japanese and Japanese Americans had to be evacuated.

Miuki: I went to see my hometown. I met a wonderful friend. I went to [inaudible] church and these people are neighbor who are church members. I went to say good bye. They had two little girls and I said good-bye to them. I had to get a bus to go. The girls couldn't speak. They were in tears. That was the first time it hit me that evacuation did that to me. It was very hard. I was from Yakima, so I had to go Portland and they took us into Portland. We didn't know. They didn't tell you where you were going to go. You rode on the bus with blackout curtains. We landed in and we didn't realize -- they kept race horses in what do you call those places ...

Scott: Stables.

Miuki: Stables in north Portland. Each room they had plywood partition and had a curtain for a door. They had close to 500 people in this stadium and it rained almost every day in Portland. This was in April. It was kind of hard because we never lived with other people before. So it was very hard. We could hear the neighbors snoring. We slept in an army cot. That wasn't the life we were used to. It was very devastating life. We were there for six months and they had a program for people who wanted to learn English, first generation people had to learn English because they did not ... So they had all different programs you could go. They had flower arrangement, tea ceremony, many others. And they have [inaudible] the Japanese class. The people that I knew who came from Seattle and joined us and knew us. I knew them otherwise we did not travel in those days, so we didn't know too many other Japanese people, just a few people that we met in Wopato where they had a Japanese Methodist church and they had an English and Japanese sermon and I went there once a year. I didn't know those people quite well.

We were there and they told us we had to travel. We did not know where we were going to go. They put us in a train and the train naturally had the black curtains. We couldn't see out. I don't know how many days we were on that train. We finally landed and when we did land we were so - - there was no word you could express. We saw the people when we got off. It looked like they were Filipino because they were skin was dark. It turned out they were from California, and we were Washington and we had pale skin, so we thought differently. We couldn't find our luggage. We finally found our luggage and then a big dust storm and that was one of the biggest devastating thing that happened. We never been to and this was the opposite of Yellowstone Park -- Heart Mountain, Wyoming. They have a shape of a hat with a heart with a mountain and they had to already plan where we were supposed to almost like ...

Miuki: I think I wasn't an obedient child you might say, I didn't like to stay there and I think a lot of people didn't. I was able to write a person if I could leave West Coast and go inland, we were able to do that. So this librarian I wrote to her and we corresponded off and on and she knew a friend, her daughter knew a friend in Iowa. God has a plan for us that I was able to go to this family in Iowa and I was over six months in Wyoming camp, Heart Mountain camp. They thought I should leave. They didn't know how they were going to treat you since we were Japanese American. It was pretty devastating in the west coast, so we don't know how they would treat you in the Middle West. But I did not have any fear. I knew God would take care of me. I think that hymn that you learn when you are young, stay with you. So I wrote to my grandmother and she wrote to me that she knew a friend in Iowa. I had to get permission for release from the camp. I took the bus and many people said, "Don't you want to change your mind and stay with us?"

"No, I think I'll be all right." And I went with the bus. I landed in Des Moines. We passed through the part of the Grand Canyon. We thought that was quite a scenery that we ever saw and it was surprising to see besides the west coast, to see part of the Grand Canyon and came to Cody and then I was able to get a bus to go to Des Moines. It was in Cody that I had a little problem.

Because that was the time when quite a few -- when Navy, Army and Waves were in that bus station. I missed the bus, so I went to find a hotel and I made a long distance call to say that I missed the bus, so I would not be able to ... but I will try to make a bus the next day from Des Moines to Atumba, this is the southern part of Iowa, almost to the border. I was able to stay overnight and I asked the clerk to telephone me, because I didn't want to miss the bus, because that bus is only a once a day bus. So I woke up before and it came and I was able to get the bus and came to Atumba and it was raining, it was in March. I didn't know what he looked like. The family did send me a picture when I was in camp. I knew the mother and the young son, but I didn't know the father. He met me and he was so tall. Japanese people are so short and I was so surprised to see such a tall man. He took my luggage and we came to Atumba and it turned out that this family was called Lowenberg Bakery. They had a third generation bakery family business. They had a home on the outskirts of Atumba about five miles outskirt and that's where they had a home.

Scott: So you were there in Atumba during the rest of the war. But how did you get here to Arizona after that?

Miuki: This is another long story. [laughs] Because my mother was coming back. I wanted to meet my mother. She came to California.

Scott: This was after the war then, right?

Miuki: No, no. Yes, it is after the war. I was in Iowa for four years. Then I went to ... I wanted to ... I'm in the Midwest, I thought I would like to see ... Oh yes, this is the family, excuse me, this is the family whose religion was Christian Science. Christian Science you may not know, but they do the healing by reading the Bible. That's why I wanted to see the headquarters is in Boston, Christian Science Church, Mother Church they call it. I wanted to go to that Mother Church before I come to the West Coast. So I went there on a bus. Lowenberg family was able to release me and have a recommendation letter to the Mother Church and I was going to stay there. You could work there in any job you wanted. They hired me. As long as you're a Christian Scientist, so that is why I was going to work there. So I did not need to work very long, because I received a telegram saying that I should return right away from the Lowenberg family, so I had to return.

Scott: To go back to Iowa?

Miuki: Yes, I stayed in Iowa, because it turned out to be the head -- Mr. Lowenberg was ill and he needed the help, so that's why I came, because they couldn't find a maid to continue with the housework. So I was there not very long, not very long. And then I was able to leave. In the meanwhile I received a letter saying -- my sister wrote to me from Japan and she was arriving at a certain time, so that is why I was able to get a release from the Lowenberg family and came to California. That's where she was landed with her friend. That's a long story. But I came to California and she was able to work in another Christian Science rest home. They had people who are ill, they were able to stay, not a hospital, but they could stay and be waited on by the nurses or maid. My sister became a working there for a little while. Through her friend she was able to stay. And I was able to meet her then. Somehow she wanted to go east coast and I don't know the connection, but she had a friend that she was able to stay. So she went to New York and I was able to find a job in Arizona.

Scott: What year was that? This is all after the war now.

Miuki: Oh yes, somewhere around '42. I was about '33. Somewhere around that time because in '45 I met my husband, yeah '42.

Scott: So you met your husband when you were here then?

Miuki: No it was kind of a strange way. That's another strange story. [laughs] In those days it was very hard to meet people unless you're in the same temple or religion. And he was not. I'm the Christian Scientist.

Scott: You said in Seattle there was the different -- from what part of Japan you came from, people would all get together -- was it like that in Phoenix where there would be a group of people from your same area?

Miuki: Not that much. They do have, but not that much unless they have certain kind of prefecture, then they do have. California has a lot.

Scott: Was Phoenix a much smaller Japanese community at that time?

Miuki: Yes. They were more the farmers and they were not, they didn't have time to get together, they were too busy. The farmers is quite different from Washington, because the weather is extreme. They did not have the weather to raise a crop. They had one-year crop in Washington and that's why ...

Scott: Here it is warm all year round.

Miuki: ...going back when my mother, after she came back, she had to continue with her laundry business because she didn't know other trade. And then she lent money to farmers, because farmers in those days, like I said, is a one year crop, not like Arizona. So they couldn't get a loan from the bank because they couldn't make the payment, so they couldn't borrow anymore. So they came to my mother and my mother helped out because she was very good with taking business. She had to anyway. She was very good with that. So she lent the money to several farmers. When they were able to pay back. One day I came back from school, I noticed in a small place there were about 10-20 watermelons they returned -- they were so happy my mother lent them money, so in gratitude with the money, they bought the watermelon. That was before evacuation, way before.

Scott: What job did you have when you came here to Phoenix?

Miuki: I was married so I didn't know anything. I was a city girl. I did the housework, that was all I knew. I went to California to find a job. Some employment agency said, "why don't you -- there's a guy from Arizona looking for a wife to be."

I guess it was OK, I said. I didn't know. I said casually, "OK, it's all right." It turned out that he came to Los Angeles and I think he had three proposals and they didn't agree. So he wasn't too sure if it would work out or not, but he sent a picture. He was just out of the army. He missed World War II -- 442nd from Hawaii -- he missed that. So he went after that. So he was an occupational force so he was able to make friends with a Hungarian. He was good with language and he was able to speak German to the Hungarian. They could speak, the Hungarian people could speak German. And he made friend with German prisoners of war, and he gave them cigarettes and whatever he had from the GI and he gave it to them. They were so happy. They gave him for gratitude, they made him a hand made fork and knife. So my husband and I still have that.

That was the way he was. He made with almost strangers.

Scott: What was his name -- your husband?

Miuki: Sam Yamamoto.

Scott: And so you met him when you came down here ...

Miuki: We met and he's a Buddhist and I'm a Christian Scientist. I told him that I am not going to be a Buddhist, I'm going to be a Christian. He said that was OK. So we agreed. He made two or three trips. The second time he came with his brother. I got to know both of them. And we agreed that it was OK, as long as I was able to keep my religion. He said, that's fine. I was able to get married to him.

Scott: What year was that?

Miuki: Oh boy. It must have been after '42.

Scott: Was he a farmer?

Miuki: Yes, he was a farmer. He had quite a life too. He was born in Hawaii. Japanese people quite a few came to Hawaii. And his whole family made enough money so they went back to Japan. But that was just before the war with Manchuria. His instructor said he better go back to America, he told him because you're going to be drafted and you're going to go into the army again. So he came -- in the meanwhile this uncle, his uncle wanted to leave, he was in Sacramento and he wanted to leave Sacramento because he knew the war was coming and he couldn't stay in California. There was not a good work for him to stay there. So they were planning to come to Arizona. They came to Sacramento first and stayed there for a year or two. And his brother came a year after that. He came from Japan. So they all came to Arizona after that.

Scott: Now of course at that time there were restrictions on Japanese being able to own land, so did they lease farmland?

Miuki: They had to do that.

Scott: Where was that at?

Miuki: I think it was in Glendale. Some of the people had to go to the camp. I think they had to go. But when we came it was OK we didn't have to go the camp.

Scott: So they were north of the line?

Miuki: Yes, they had the restriction that the railroad -- you had to go to camp. I forgot the exact location. But the railroad place was restriction. North they had to leave. East side they had to go to camp. Wait a minute, it was opposite. East side they were able to stay but the west side ...

Scott: So what kind of crops did he grow on the farm?

Miuki: He was working for his uncle for twenty years farming. They didn't know anything about farming so they had to learn from other farmers how to grow. So he helped out for twenty years, helped his uncle and his family. He had two boys and two girls. He was more like a maid. He was like a servant. He had to work hard.

They made enough money after the mistake of the farming, because they didn't know farming and they had to learn from other farmers how to ... they had to adjust because of worms, disease or insects. And they had to learn the hard way. They were together for over twenty years and they were able to accumulate enough money, so they took all the money even my husband and his brother did most of the work, they were able to sign the pay on his checks, but this uncle they were now so, they were able to do that, but they didn't know the balance of the check. Because when the mail bring the check, they open their bank statement, they know how much is in the bank. My husband and his brother they just write the check, but they didn't know the balance of the check alone. So they took all the checks, I mean the cash and they took the whole family and went to California. So my brother in law and husband, the only thing they had was a broken down

tractor they had to make a living with that. It is interesting that people helped out and they were able to make a farming. I don't know anything about farming, so I had a hard time because I had to learn how to pick strawberries. In those days Arizona had quite a farmers making strawberries. Like Glendale Avenue they had nothing but strawberries stands that people were able to buy the strawberries. But later on the weather changed so much that they couldn't have the strawberries, so they changed to grain, wheat.

It is interesting -- God has a plan for us even my husband who didn't have any money. His brother married an Arizona farmer's daughter and her real father had a car accident and died. So the stepfather he was very intelligent. He was merchant marine. He learned about farming very quickly and he taught my husband and brother how to make crop -- fast crop, planting greens they call it, mustard greens, collard greens and all the greens instead of having broccoli and all that. Because you would get quick cash. And that's how come they were able to train the nephews in farming, vegetables.

Scott: They did all the farming themselves or were there hired workers?

Miuki: Yes, we had to hire, when the harvest time, we hired Mexican and they were able to speak Spanish. I don't know a word, but they were able to speak. Yes, we hired Mexicans.

Scott: Most of the Japanese people who came to this area were farmers, so was there really anything in Glendale or in Phoenix that was like a community -- a Japanese community?

Miuki: Yes, they did have. Just like Buddhist church.

Scott: Like in this area right here, also the Methodist church across the street -- did people live in one general area here, like certain neighborhoods?

Miuki: They changed. This place has been changed. This was not the original Buddhist church. But they did live on Indian School Road before Grand Avenue. They lived around there and had strawberries and had different crops. They did live over there.

Scott: So was there a Japanese community that was not really involved in farming?

Miuki: In South Mountain they had a flower garden ... They thought that was ideal to have a flower and they had a whole almost a mile of different families with flower garden. But now that is all gone I understand.

Scott: I think last month we went to look at the very last -- George Kishiyama's farm.

Miuki: Oh George, I know them.

Scott: It's gone now.

Miuki: Yes, yes.

Scott: No more of the old flower business.

Miuki: That's sad. Because out of state people come and enjoy looking, just to see the flowers. People, not many, they have orders to send flowers to outside of state and that was where they made a lot of money. Because of Arizona warm climate and other places are not warm, so they were able to ship the flowers.

Scott: I remember as a child in the 1960s on Sundays we would go for a drive on Baseline Road and see all the flowers there. That seemed like it was very popular for a lot of people. It seemed

like it changed a lot since the time of the war- maybe not so much prejudice by that time once you get to the 1960s, was it really changing a lot by that time?

Miuki: I don't think some of the people had to evacuate because of their location. Like we did on the west side, so we had to go. I think the fear is what made the evacuation. They thought we were going to communicate with the Japanese army or something. I think that was the main -- fear -- that evacuation started from. Even the war is when the fear started.

Scott: Were there any other special activities or events that were for the Japanese Community?

Miuki: Yes, they do have a festival in Buddhist Church and I do attend because my husband was a Buddhist. My husband even came to our church even though he was a Buddhist. And one of the ushers became friend with him. When my husband passed on, quite a few members of our church came to the service. They had a small church at that time. It was small so they couldn't attend to the first service. Just because we were Christian -- it's not like the Jewish people who have trouble with Iraq -- it's not like that. We became friends. But some people like my friend's daughter did not want to meet my son because they were Buddhist and we were Christian. They did have some , but that's gradually changing. They still have second generation and third generation so my son would be third generation. So they are gradually -- a Christian girl married a Buddhist, but it is very slowly.

Scott: But earlier it was almost, it sounds like it was almost two certain entities.

Miuki: It was.

Scott: Didn't talk so much? Or you could still be friends?

Miuki: Oh yes. This man had he was a Buddhist man, he had a shop on Grand Avenue, he had a Japanese Oriental Shop. Because I was not that prejudiced, because my husband was a Buddhist but he came to our church and he was open minded. It depends on how the family is being brought up. I notice lately, gradually intermarriage [inaudible].

Scott: On the farm most of the time, the farm is probably not there anymore now.

Miuki: Yes. We moved to -- Camelback Road they call it now, Camelback Road and 91st. They were all farmland. Russo the big operator and they start selling land. He had a second marriage. They had to give a little bit of land. So you call it Camelback and [inaudible] 120 is one section they seem to call it. Somebody bought this land. The second wife wanted part of the land and I don't know exactly -- so she had this land -- that's where we bought the land on Camelback. On 91st was the city limit at that time. So my daughter had to go to Tolleson, because this district was not in Glendale. So we bought the land. We went through a lawyer and able to buy the land. My brother in law was going to buy the next doors, but the decided to sell their part to us and we sell our part for [inaudible] in Glendale 75th, so we exchange place and we bought [inaudible]. Not a whole acre, it's a narrow slit, strip, but we were able to -- - we didn't farm there, we just built a house there.

Scott: So when did you get out of the farming business? Do you remember what year that was?

Miuki: My sister in law knows, but I can't remember that. She's good with that. I'll have to ask her.

Scott: Like the sixties or seventies?

Miuki: It could be the sixties. I'm not very good with memories.

Scott: It seems like by that time there was hardly anymore farming going on anywhere. It was really disappearing quickly.

Miuki: Because Davie he went to school in Maryvale High. John F. Long bought all the land in one year. He didn't buy all the land, but he bought the land all around there. He went to school and that's when he built that Maryvale High. He might know.

Scott: OK, I think that's all the questions I have here. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Miuki: This is when I was going to grade school in Japan. It's in the country where my father Over there in the country there was extreme cold and you walk close to the mountain because in order to go places Japan is surrounded by mountains. When I was going to school my father's side we had to walk close to the mountain and one steep hill and when it snowed and ice melted we couldn't climb this hill. And I think one of the board members, somebody helped us and he bought ashes to help melt the snow and we were able to climb this pretty steep hill, almost straight hill. I remember that because that didn't happen not all the time. Once in ten years or so. I enjoyed living in Japan because we walked ...the seasons, the first is plum, like I wanted to see my uncle and he was in the southern part of Wakayama and I would ride the train and you would see the whole mountain was white plum and next to it -- pink, and next is a red. They have three different colors of plums. It is just beautiful- what do you call it, almost like pattern, it's kind of hard to explain.

It's a whole section at a time. In Japan it's like that it's an artistic country. That's what I meant to say -- artistic country. And like I was going to school I was walking and you see the plums, the wild ones and next to the wild strawberries, it's done having berries, it's cherries ... Cherry and samurai is a very short life and I'm trying to get that story why. It bloomed and in the city they have a cherry tree, you cannot plant in a private home, has to be in a temple or in part or castle. Cherry tree festival the people enjoy they really are nature lovers. And you have picnic and even if you don't have, they have a caterer right there and you can buy lunch and you enjoy. Some people bring Sake and drink. A long time ago what they did in the Royal family was each season they have a poetry of artists who have a painting and that's where they started to enjoy the nature each season. Next was azalea, wild azalea growing in the mountain. I went to my friend when I was in high school. My friend's second cousin had a friend in Wakayama city. They lived by a park. This was quite a well to do family. And they had a different kind of azalea, mountains and mountains of short bushes of different kinds of azaleas you ever saw. I never saw anything like it. And they loved flowers, the Japanese people really love flowers. And so in a big city when they have a cherry time, people take time off from the office, they have a lunch there and all enjoy it. That's what we don't do, Americans, spend time to enjoy nature.

Scott: Everyone's in a hurry.

Miuki: And then they have an Iris after the azalea. They are in a pond or castle are surrounded by water

Scott: Moat?

Miuki: Moat, that's it. And so they have a bridge and they have iris pretty big. I wish I know the flower name in English, it's a big flower and Jewish people use that flower.

Scott: Is that a lily or?

Miuki: No, no it's bigger than that. It's a great big flower. They have that in moats. People learn to enjoy the nature. I understand that in some of the mountains they making the cars and everything -- pollute and I understand they don't have many cherry trees in the mountain ... And then when I was in Japan it was unusual it was a lily, they call it bamboo lily because the leaf is in the shape of a bamboo leaf. This lily is very unusual. They don't have it in America yet. It is a very pale pink, but the scent is very pleasant. If you have the whole room you could smell it. You don't need to

come here and smell it. It's a very pleasant. And when I was going to high school, I gave these and went into the mountain and picked up these and gave it to my friends in the city. Because you don't have it in the forest. But I think some part in America they are trying to have this bamboo lily. So that's the way they are. And then winter time what do they enjoy. They enjoy their chestnuts and the mushrooms. Now they don't have the mushrooms, especially pine mushrooms. That is the gold like. We come to America in Washington State , we go to this fern place, it has to be a certain kind of pine tree and if you have that, you have gold, a treasure. They sent these restaurants to America Washington State and then they would go back and have this mushroom [inaudible] with shrimp. They used to have this in Japan, but now it's polluted, so now they don't have it. So they come to Washington to buy this mushroom.

Scott: Because they certainly grow very well here.

Well, I think we will end our interview here. I thank you very much for sharing your memories with us.

Miuki: I want to mention this. I had a friend when I was going to school and he couldn't pronounce my Japanese name Miuki. He was the one who called me Kathryn, so my middle name is Kathryn, his official name. I am Miuki Kathryn Yamamoto.

Scott: That's my daughter's name.

Miuki: Miuki is a very unusual name especially their character. The Japanese use a lot of characters. This is most unusual. My mother before I was born or after I was born, she asked one of the ministers, she didn't know what the name mean. So she asked the minister and it's in that Japanese Bible, I understand. I haven't found it yet. And it's character, it means fortunate. I am fortunate even after I went through devastating life. But that's what it means. And the Japanese everything has to have a meaning.

They're not like Chinese, very different. They use the same characters, not all of them. Interest to me about the Japanese Buddhist went to China and they wanted to learn -- they are the ones who started the easier writing characters. See they have three different way of writing, two simple ones and then the character. See they made the character simply and made the 1st and 2nd grader so they could easily write.

Scott: And then they gradually learn the more difficult ...

Miuki: Yes, when you go into 3rd or 4th grade, then you start adding characters gradually. So Japanese -- they do use easier characters, but simple one is for the 1st and 2nd graders.

[end of interview].

AL YEE

Interviewed by Christina Wong with Macy Phung
23 April 2007

Christina: This is an interview with Al Yee on April 23rd, 2007 at 8:20pm at ASU Main by Christina Wong. Also present at this interview is Macy Phung. Do I have your record ... For the record, do I have your permission to interview this tape?

Al: I assume you do.

Christina: OK, can you please state your name and spell it?

Al: My name is Al Yee and it is spelled A-L. Family name is Y-E-E.

Christina: And where were you born?

Al: I was born in Phoenix, Arizona.

Christina: And when was your birthday?

Al: My birthday is August the 2nd. I'm a Leo.

Christina: [Laughs] What year?

Al: Year? Year is 1948.

Christina: And when did your family come to the U.S.?

Al: My family came to the United States in probably in the late thirties.

Christina: And was it your parents that came?

Al: My father came first, as a single man, and later came my mom. As a matter of fact, after my mom, this is about five to six years, but I think my father, I believe, if I can recall he came here probably in the mid thirties, and probably went back in the late thirties get my mom.

Christina: And what are the names of your parents?

Al: My father's name is John Fook Yee, and my mom is Lum Gum Hoi.

Christina: When they came to the U.S. did they come to Phoenix?

Al: No, they came directly to the West Coast off of San Francisco, and I think my mother, too, in San Francisco. Oh I better I take it back. My father went to Seattle, I believe, and then my mother went to San Francisco.

Christina: And what did they do in San Francisco and Seattle?

Al: Well, it was a very difficult time those days if you could recall for the Chinese coming over. They were detained, interrogating. You know, I think Ellis no, not Ellis Island; Angel Island out of San Francisco. I forgot the other place out of Seattle. I believe my father there for at least two, three months, you know, before he came, he works; now I think it was one of people that I don't know who they were, in the store, back in those days. Then he came over to Phoenix because one of the, my father's relative has a business store back in those days in Glendale, Arizona, and the name of the store at that time is G. W. Sing Market, where my father worked for many years.

Christina: And did you have any other family immigrate to the U.S?

Al: Beside my father and mother?

Christina: Beside your parents?

Al: Oh yes, I have a couple of my mother's side. Her niece came over. And it was a couple years later, they departed here and she came over and she stayed a couple times, come here a couple years, with my mom before she migrate to New York City.

Christina: Did you have any siblings growing up?

Al: Yes, I have two sisters. One's younger and one's older. I'm right in the middle like a sandwich. [Laughs].

Christina: What are the names of your sisters?

Al: My youngest sister named Suzanne Yee, and my oldest sister named Lyola, but nickname Betty. Betty Yee.

Christina: And what city did you grow up? Did you grow up in Glendale?

Al: No, we grow up in Phoenix in the south side of Phoenix.

Christina: OK, where did you ... Do you remember your address?

Al: Oh good question. You know what? If you asked me that yesterday, I could remember, but today ... I remember it just now. It came to my mind here. 1451 West Buckeye Road.

Christian: OK.

Al: God, how amazing. See what you girls does to me? You bring me memory back.

Christina: And where did you go to school?

Al: I went to school, elementary, went to school, school back in those days Lowell and Grant that was the name of those two. High School was good o' Phoenix Union High School.

Christina: Were there other Chinese people that went to school with you when you were growing up?

Al: Oh yeah there were some. Very few, but you know mostly my classmate were Spanish and black.

Christina: So then did you feel different because you were Chinese?

Al: Uh, yes. You know, yes you do. To some sort of discrimination, you know, being a Chinese. You always make fun in those days. Use to say, you're Chinese, you know ching ching china. Some thing, some sort of thing, all those sayings and make comment remarks about but I use to have a couple of my friend, my Spanish friend protect me so ...

Christina: Did you know some of the other Chinese kids in the area growing up? Were you friends with them?

Al: Oh yes, those days we've lived on Buckeye Road. See, back in those days there were a lot of Chinese grocery stores in those days, OK? So on Buckeye Road, I believe it's about two, three, four Chinese stores and then a couple that were close together.

Christina: What were some of your extracurricular activities that you did when you were growing up?

Al: Growing up?

Christina: Mmm Hmm.

Al: Extracurricular? Oh my god, I wish I could say because my folks make me work back in those days, you know, you work in the store. You know, you don't have much time to get out, but I use to do ... I use to back in the [inaudible] play baseball. I use to get out every chance I could get out, and the other thing I use to do, of course it was kind of crazy ... flying kites. So I use to get on top of the store and fly a kite on top of the roof. I figure it worked, most of the wind up there than down. But unfortunately one day it was raining and the day after that was raining and I got on top of the roof. I tell you this is a very funny story because I ... flying the kite up there was out in the [inaudible]. There was a weak spot and the roof there and I penetrated right through the roof into the ... landed on top of a bunch of rice and beans and so forth. [Laughs] That was very shocking.

Christina: Did you hang out mostly with the other Chinese children in the neighborhood or did you hang out with mostly your Hispanic friends?

Al: I most, those days here, I mostly hang out with was Spanish people and mostly Spanish of the sort, a few black, but mostly Spanish.

Christina: And do you remember Chinatown? That was downtown ...?

Al: Yeah that was a memory as a kid, yeah I remember Chinatown was on 2nd Street and Madison and it was a couple restaurants there and so and so, yes.

Christina: Did you ever go to Chinese school?

Al: No, I did not go to Chinese school at all. I haven't the opportunity. Those days there were some Chinese schools here, but I didn't get the chance to go at all. As I said before, you know, our parents came to this country very poor. In fact, my mother, my father, you know, only had one or two years of elementary education, and so and...you know, a lot of the Chinese back in those days came over looking for better opportunity here, you see. They came to this country; they work and hopefully make a few bucks and go back to China, OK? And so, I had to stay in the store and work between my sister and I would work, you know? Very few opportunities to go out and do anything. Of course one of the highlights use to be, I remember those days here one of the highlights is that my folks once in a while we go into the car, just ride around town and just the weekend like every Sunday or another highlight is to go see a movie. In fact, I just talk to somebody else who was one of the founders of the theatre downtown called Fox Theatre. An old theatre, in fact, the guy is a one of the pioneer behind the Fox Theatre. Oh really? So we started talking, but those were the highlight going to see a movie here, and another thing I tell you, very interesting too. Is that I use to my dad take me to get a haircut, and so after we get a haircut, we always get me a couple of comic books, so that was one of the highlight was getting the comic books. That was a fantastic thing. Comic books.

Christina: Where did you get the comic books from?

Al: Oh, comic books you know, they use to sell right next door to the barbershop. There was a comic book stand right next to the barbershop; couple minutes away. That was the highlight and I use to have a lot of collection of a bunch of comic books.

Christina: Who would take care of you at home when you guys were younger? Since you had the store and both of your parents were so busy?

Al: Good question, you know, It use to be my sister take care of me and my older sister, Betty, and actually there was more probably discipline. My mom say, "Well, OK, you kids you can you stay in spot. You stay there. [inaudible] Don't move. [inaudible] That was it." We're, our folks were very disciplined and not only disciplined, and they were very also frugal. You know, China when you come everything gotta save everything and I tell you I use to wear my sister clothes and stuff like that.

Christina: What kind of responsibilities did you have at the store? When you had to work at the store?

Al: What responsible. A lot of it. I use to clean the store, mop the floor. Back in those days clean the refrigerator. See those days; we had soda pop in the ice box with cold water, ice water. That's how I had to clean the ice water, and so forth. And I stack up the groceries and other can goods. I did all the hardware and my sister did nothing. Just a cashier, you know, collect the money.

Christina: What type of customers did you have that shop at your store?

Al: Well most of people were customers surrounding the area was Spanish and black majority. I think, oh half and half. I would say about 40 percent of Spanish and about percent of black. In those days, that time there were a lot of black people live in the area, so ...

Christina: Did your parents pick up English working at the store?

Al: You know, that's the question. Very funny you ask because my mother spoke better Spanish than English, 'cause you know doing the environment in that area. Tell you she spoke Spanish better than I did, but my mom her English a little bit here and there, the common language you use in the store. "Buy." "Sell." "How much price?" So and so. And my dad, my dad was very studious type. He use to study English every night and was good. He was very good at it.

Christina: When did the store close finally?

Al: Oh god, the question you had to ask me that? The store on Buckeye Road ... I believe and I just think in the fifty ... in the mid fifties somewhere along there, OK? And we finally move to another store down in Chinatown, and that's on Madison Street and 2nd Street and Madison. That's where the Chase Field or wherever the basketball, OK? The stadium, OK? And that's where 2nd Street and Madison on the Southwest corner. Our is called the Sam K Market been there for four, five years. Before, I think the early sixties they closed.

Christina: How come they closed?

Al: Uhh, I think the reason here. I think ... I don't know why they closed because I think my mom at that time she was not feeling well; health-wise, OK? And I think another thing here was happening here was there were a lot of crazy people, thief and robbery. Really hard to handle, you know, and so you know those black people, Spanish, they were more ... they're not harmless, but they always steal the stuff and that you know. So my mom decided that well it's time. It's time to retire. It was best thing they did that. I'm glad they did that though.

Christina: Do you remember while you were working in the store, people coming in and robbing the store?

Al: Uhh, not robbing here, well, what do you mean robbing here? They steal the stuff from the store OK? We see that here. Usually those people that don't work in the store in those days here,

I mean customers those days here, are people who work out on the field. Work out on the cotton field or the citrus, so forth, and they have a lot of Spanish and black carrying these big cotton sacks. They use to bring to the store here and steal stuff and put the stuff in the cotton sack, so finally we decide you can't do that so leave the cotton sack outside the store, OK? At least these people who steal, I warn my sister kinda watch the customer, you know, make sure they don't steal. And I more or less kinda watch it to here. That's one of the things here, but as for robbing the store ... I don't recall we've been robbed at all of all the years.

Christina: OK.

Al: Which is pretty fortunate. There were some mischief and some fight going on and so forth, OK? But there were no particular major as for robbing the store.

Christina: Since your parents didn't have very much education, did they stress education growing up?

Al: Good question. They sure is and I was not the best child to be. Want to go out and I wanna play a lot, OK? I would have fun, but they emphasize education, like any Chinese do, they emphasize education. OK, one of the things they did my father and mother don't know English right? Every ... oh I say once or twice a week here, I go to the library and get a book and read the whole book or half of the book in front of my father. Even though my father don't understand what I read in front of my father, read the half of the book, or whatever was OK. And that was it. Emphasize education. Finish high school and go to college.

Christina: What about college? Where did you go to school?

Al: Great school. Great school here. As I've mentioned to Macy. Guess?

Christina: ASU?

Al: Oh my god, University of Arizona. The Wildcats. Come on! Of course at the school, one of the best parts of the University of Arizona, back in those days, they were very good engineering. I wasn't going to majoring in engineering, I was going to go major in architect, and I found all my friends in engineering, so I decide to. I think back in those days architect take about five years to go through, but I majored in electrical engineering at University of Arizona. Good school. I had a great time.

Christina: Were there any other Chinese people that went to U of A that you knew?

Al: There were few, yeah. There were few from Phoenix here that went to school down there and it was funny because I wanted to go to U of A and of course at that time, you should go close to home, go to school at Phoenix College for two years college and then go to ASU, but just about twenty-three years ago is a lot different and but what happened was I would get away from home, don't wanna work in the store, but unfortunately I had to come almost every week, I had to come back home for the weekend; Saturday, Friday and work for the store and leave Sunday again, and of course one of the thing I bring back home was all my dirty laundries and take it home.

Christina: How did you get back home? Did you drive?

Al: Yeah.

Christina: And did you pay for your car yourself? Or did your parents buy you ...?

Al: Well, I'll tell you. While I was in school, I had four jobs, OK? One of the things is I did not want to use my parent's money. I may be traditional, but they work hard. I said, Dad, Mom, you work

hard you have some money, you should use it and enjoy it, OK? I'm going to work for it. So I had four jobs. You want to hear about the four jobs?

Christina: Yeah.

Al: You do? Oh, OK. Well one of the job was answering the dormitory, the weekend, Friday, Saturday, answering phone, OK? That was not bad at all, OK? Then the other job I had. I worked in the cafeteria early morning, especially seven o'clock and we got only the athletic people coming in all the players, so I was the cashier. Oh that was the best, my best friends come and instead of charging four bucks, I charged him a dollar. You know, you know what I mean, but one day supervisor behind me. I said, "OK guys, four bucks, Buddy." Oh god, what happened? That evening they came to my dorm. "Al, did we [expletive] you off," something like that? "No, no no, I got the supervisor behind me. I couldn't charge you a dollar." That was fun, OK? The third job I had, I worked part-time at a Chinese restaurant. Either that or a very high-class restaurant in Tucson parking cars. That was fun driving all the fancy cars, OK. But, Christine, Macy, the best fourth job I got, I was working at a sorority house.

[Laughter]

Al: That was the best part, OK? Because you get good food, you know, It was the, you see Pi Beta Pi, Yeah Pi Beta Pi sorority house. Fantastic. You know the house monitoring. All the [inaudible] great! Great! I think they paid me \$150, \$100 a month, but you, you know what the usher is. You set up the table, about fifteen, twenty girls. You know what sorority house is? I'm sure. That was the best. And [inaudible].

Christina: So after you graduated from school, what did you do?

Al: After I graduated from school, OK, after I graduate school I work and I was going to work for a company and an electronic company back East. They also send me back to Sierra Vista, Fort Huachuca. Worked there for a while and I finally decided I wanted to go after my M.B.A. degree and I did part of it here. Not all. Columbia University back East and so that changed my job. And another thing here I went from electronic because why is that one of my buddy here, his uncle work at Wall Street.

This guy is about late thirties. Unbelievable, got all the fancy, safari hunt, this guy is very safari hunt, successful, you know, at Wall Street. I'll be like him. You know, I wanna be like him. So I did, I change my job. Become, spend some time in Wall Street and investment banking, and of course I took a half pay from a twenty something thousand dollar job to about eleven thousand.

My mother say lecture me, "Why son? After all these years go to school, you took a job with them?"

I go "Mom, I do something I like and enjoy more than I do. If I don't like it here, I can always go back to the original job, 'cause a lot of people today in the street, drive their car on the street every morning hate their job, and the reason why they survive because, they got car payments, house payments, kids go to school, survival."

You know that, kids out there today, people out on the street every morning, I bet 60, 70 percent they do not enjoying their job, so I enjoy my job. I like it.

Christina: How did you spend holidays? Growing up here being Chinese American?

Al: You mean spending holiday when? What are you talking about? When?

Christina: Like how did you celebrate ... Did you celebrate Christmas and Chinese New Years?

Al: You talk about growing up or going back to the younger day?

Christina: Just when you were younger?

Al: Well, holiday we had to work in the store. On Christmas, work in the store. Any holiday. The store open on holidays too, OK? Later on, you mean like college, you mean. Oh, well I got. The holiday, OK? When I was in college, I use to bring a lot of new foreign students back to the house. A lot don't have a place to go, you know, like Christmas and other holidays. Thanksgiving, special holiday. I bring the kids, the students back, spend three or four ... My mom fantastic cook. Cook great food and they enjoy. Because no use being in the holiday if where to go here.

Good education. I played a lot of tennis, you know. You got all kinds of sports. A lot of fun.

Christina: What type of foreign students would you bring home?

Al: All kind. I had a guy from the Middle East, Pakistan, Asian, from Japan, China, from Hong Kong, all over the place.

Christina: When you were older did you celebrate some of the activities all the Chinese people would celebrate? The get-togethers that the Chinese people would have together?

Al: Oh, you mean the ... talking about Chinese holiday or the American holiday.

Christina: Just ... I heard that they had, the younger Chinese people had get-togethers every month or two. All the younger Chinese people would hang out ...

Al: I don't understand what your question. What do you mean by "get-together?" Family or get-together as a holiday, of a Chinese holiday, New Year, Chinese New Year, Moon Festival?

Christina: No, just hang out for fun.

Al: Oh.

Christina: With some of the other Chinese people.

Al: Oh, we do. We use to have a group many years ago, Christine. It's called the Wamei. The Wamei is a club that only young people get together dancing here and doing kinda thing. It was fun, but I didn't have that much opportunity because I said all my life I had to work, but every chance I had, you know, I would love dancing. In fact, back in those days I form a dancing group, learning how to dance, and have an instructor. It was fun. Meet a lot of interesting people there, and one other thing here I might bring up also part of the religious. As part of back of those days, you know the activities, Chinese Baptist Church. They been here for many years and head up by an American; a Caucasian, man ...

Christina: Brother Stanley?

Al: Brother Stanley, exactly him. Good guy. He's one of the best, you know. And I was baptized though him. Use to, [Laughs] I use to go to church to get away from the store. A couple of three hours, you know? It was fun, but I was not active. I got out. Other people.

Christina: What about your sisters? Did they stay in Phoenix to go to school, or did they go to Tucson?

Al: Um, no. Let's see, my oldest sister, she went to ASU, OK? And after that she taught for a couple of years in California. She got married, so she spent most of her entire life out in California. My younger sister, Suzanne, she went to U of A. Her major I think was education.

From education then on she taught also in California up in the Bay area, and she finally decided she got tired of teaching. Then she went to law school in San Francisco, so now she become a lawyer, become a prosecutor for the city of San Francisco. Now she has her own law firm now. Very successful.

Christina: Did your parents hire other work after you guys went to college and there was no more kids to help around the store.

Al: No, oh um, lets see... yes OK. Yeah, we did have a couple friends of the family. A guy that clean the store, particular store the one on 2nd Street and Madison. Got young kids here and they got married. In fact, now come to my memory that we finally sold our store to him. We finally sold our store to him. Exactly, that's why my mom decide to quit. Sold the store to these people here. Very nice people. And so that's what happened.

Christina: Did your parents stay in the house that you grew up in? Or did they buy a new house when they became more settled?

Al: Yeah, well we use to live in like any Chinese family stay in the back of the store. Sleep in the bunch of flour and sacks. Later on, they bought a house up in the northwest and that's why at that time my mom decide to retire and spend some time. In fact, her hobby is growing Chinese vegetables. That's her hobby. She enjoys it though. Unbelievable.

Christina: Did your parents know some of the other prominent Chinese families that were around town?

Al: Yeah, my mom, well of course later on in life you get more active, you know, but in those days, with the store, you don't have much chance to visit too many other family, but they get-together somehow, and they get-together here. Later on, once my mom retired, my mom and she get involve, you know, the popular game that Chinese play, you know. You know what that is right?

Christina: Mahjong?

Al: Exactly.

Christina: Did your mom cook Chinese food when you were growing up?

Al: Do you know any Chinese mother that doesn't cook Chinese food at all? I bet your mom can cook Chinese food.

Christina: Yes, but we can go to the Chinese supermarket.

Al: Yeah.

Christina: Was there a Chinese supermarket when you were growing up?

Al: Uhh, yeah there were some ... well Roland's Market. That's one there on Van Buren. For many years was a Chinese grocery store in those days.

Christina: Is that where your mom usually bought the Chinese groceries at that store?

Al: Uh, yeah. I think so but see at the same time, OK? The store we had on the 2nd Street and Madison here, we also sell Chinese grocery there too. They bought one of the Chinese ingredients from Los Angeles, but use to have a lot of Philippine. A lot of Filipinos, they came over and buy stuff and from the store.

Christina: Did you have a distributor in L.A. that would come and ship it to Phoenix?

Al: God, I don't know. Maybe did. Maybe had some distributor that deliver. I know we have guys that come in once a week. Bring all the different foods, you know. Can goods, dry goods, stuff and all that you know. Use to have them over at the, I remember, the Mexican south of the border, Mexican bring a lot of seafood and shrimp, you know and we buy from them too. So, and so, in fact back in those days, in college, I ship a lot of seafood too. I shipped to Roland's Market too. Two places for distributor. One was Roland's Market for wholesale and one is to the restaurant, China Doll Restaurant. People wanna go get ... Oh god, I should become my ancestors, you know, is a fisherman back in China. So Al you follow your grandfather, you know? And I use to ship bunch of fish in San Francisco and crab, whole bunches. Yeah, unbelievable.

Christina: Did your parents ever go back to China even to visit?

Al: Yeah they after, no wait a minute, lets see here, I think before they resign two, three years, you know, they went back to China. I remember that. I had to take care of the store. My sister and I had to take care of the store here, and then they went back to China to visit all the ... my father hometown, and so forth, and after that they went back quite often.

Christina: When they came here, were they planning to go back to China after a few years?

Al: When they came over?

Christina: Mmm hmm or did they know that they were going to stay here?

Al: Oh, gee. I don't know they plan to go back. I don't think so. I think they decide to stay here. I don't think they want to go back at all. I think all these years ... I think my mom wanted to go back, OK? But since my dad's over here, so I guess she got use to the environment here, so it doesn't make a difference. I never heard, anything they want to go back, but they go back to visit. I think, the thing is, back in those days, China the poverty and so forth, you know, compared to over here you have much more free and comfortable living here. As compared to China you see, that's one of the reason.

Christina: Where in China were your parents from?

Al: They're from Toishan¹. A city called Gonghoi.² Gonghoi is a place for seafood; very famous for seafood in Toishan like in Canton. And they have these solid fish. Very famous salted fish "*hamyu*" you know *hamyu* [?]. *Hamyu* is very famous from Gonghoi. Ask any Chinese, *Gonghoi hamyu*. That's where I'm from, my grandfather, my father side; he was very famous for that he was one of the top fishermen in Gonghoi.

Christina: When you were growing up did your parents emphasize dating Chinese people and marrying Chinese people? Rather than marrying white people?

Al: Yeah. Yeah. Tradition yes. Yep, but I didn't. Got some funny story, share the story. God why am I doing this? Uh, I was dating a Japanese girl from Los Angeles and she was a pharmacist, OK? But she's more conditioned Chinese than I am, and one day I brought her over here. I brought her over here, and of course my sister knew about it, but my mother didn't know, my mother thought she was Chinese, and of course she spoke a couple words in Chinese, so we'd have dinner together and she speak a few words in Chinese, my mother started speaking more. She was happy and she'd keep on talking more. I said, "Mom she's a Chinese-American born, so she know a few words Chinese though, don't confuse it." "Oh, OK." Thank god, I don't think she know to this day if she was Chinese or not, but it was so funny. Once in a while, my sister would

¹ Another version of the name Toisan.

² Also called Kwong Hoi.

kick under the table. OK, be careful. But she was a nice girl, and the reason why I found out my mom would not let me go out with Chinese, I mean Japanese, was because back in those days, it was dirty, if you know the war between the Chinese and Japanese, she was ... she and her sister, somebody from her group or somebody, they all were kidnapped by the Japanese and tortured for many days. She was tortured.

Christina: Oh wow.

Al: And back in those days she would never ride a Japanese car.

Christina: What was it like during the Vietnam War in Phoenix? Is there any anti-Asian sentiments since it was against Vietnam?

Al: To my knowledge, I don't recall to the anti ... Asian-anti Vietnamese anywhere. 'Cause maybe, 'cause I've been meaning to associate that much at all during the ...during the Vietnam War what? During the? What year was that?

Macy: Seventies?

Christina: Sixties?

Al: Sixties? I uh, God no I was just going to school there. I don't recall any anti-Vietnamese or Asian ...

Christina: Did you ever think about moving somewhere else? Getting away from this little town Phoenix?

Al: Many, many times. Many times.

Christina: Well how come you stayed?

Al: Good question. Good question. Well you know I travel a lot, OK, more so after the, never mind, but you know, when you grow up, you know, in the place where you're born, you know, and the environment, but, I'm the type of the guy, most of my friends here were born here. I'm more flexible and wherever I go I deal with people, you know, I enjoy those people, you know, and I many times have thought move to California and, uh, move to Hawaii and uh, then another place I was thinking of moving was to Seattle, Washington, and you know, but later on I said well of course in those days, I had to take care of my parents, so I went to live with them, and I had a lot of opportunities, job, you know, like in Japan. Was given an opportunity, but then my mom said my dad, someone had to take ...as I said I'm a more traditional, I had to take care of my parents and all, who else is going to take care of them? So maybe it would be a different story if my parents was not here it would be a different story, OK? I won't be here today, I wouldn't be in this interview, you'd take someone else? But, on the other hand, I feel, you know, it's my, as a tradition, as a voice and oldest child in the family that I have to take care of my mom, even today. When she passed away, my dad, I take my dad too when my mom passed away too as my responsibility.

Christina: Did Phoenix change a lot in the seventies and eighties when there were a lot more Chinese people moving to Phoenix? Than when you were growing up and there were only a few major families?

Al: Yeah, well you see back in those days in Phoenix, the older days, like in the sixties, seventies much more closer, you know the Chinese were much more close knit, OK? And then always had more immigrants, you know, coming into new, use to walk into a restaurant, you know almost everybody had, almost everybody, everybody you know who's who. Today you walk into a restaurant you got a lot of newcomers, you know, new faces, especially the trend falls into, began

in a lot of Hong Kong and Taiwan, and they fall from Taiwan and they fall the last five, six, ten years from China. Hey, I'm sure I had to deal with the immigration law, and so forth, OK, but the change in here is more so I see in the last ten years.

Christina: So then how did you learn Chinese since your parents are from Toishan and they speak Toishan at home.

Al: You know, very funny that you ask me that because I didn't know Chinese at all. I speak a little bit and always respond in English to my mother and dad, but I ... very funny you ask me that. Back in those days here I got a lot of students from Hong Kong and of course being in school here, lousy food. You know, it's cafeteria, but one of the students has a house. Every Friday we go to someone's, OK? They've got a bunch of guys and some girls there. So what we do here is spend an hour on teaching English and teaching Chinese, so I learned from that and so I learned too myself, because I'm Chinese here. I don't care what, and so I pick here and there, and probably watching TV too, you know. I start watching a lot of the movies and stuff like that and pick it up here. I know very few Chinese American speak Chinese here more so than many. I'm not honestly good here, but I can carry on a conversation. I don't know about you here, Christine. I'm sure you can speak pretty well.

Christina: I speak Cantonese.

Al: [In Mandarin *Ni jiang Guangdong hua ma?* Translated: You speak Cantonese?] [In Cantonese *Gongdong wah?* Translated: Cantonese?] I speaking Mandarin, you know. You speak Mandarin?

Christina: I understand a little bit.

Al: Yeah, you [to Macy] should probably understand the Mandarin pretty well ... *Guoyu? Yi dian. Yi dian* [Translated: Mandarin? A little bit? A little bit?].

Macy: *Yi dian.*

Al: Yeah, but speak Mandarin, too, at the same time. Got my work, my job, I go back to China back and forth. Yeah I got two or three youngin's translate for me. I got a girl, she's very sharp in Canton, she speaks Cantonese.

Christina: So then, did you learn, when you exchange the Chinese and English, did you learn Cantonese or did you learn Mandarin from them?

Al: I learned Cantonese from [inaudible]. Of course, my parents, they speak Cantonese also. Well, Toishan, OK and so I pick up here and there. And I joined, like I said, a lot of friends, Chinese, they are from Hong Kong. And they're all from Canton; I don't know everything in the whole world. I can carry on a conversation. You probably can speak better Cantonese than I do.

Christina: When you were growing up did your family go to any Chinese restaurants? Were there any Chinese restaurants in Phoenix?

Al: Oh yeah, yeah. Well we probably went to ... Later on in the years, you went to Chinese restaurants, China Doll, later on. Before that, I don't know if they were good or not and my mom is a good cook. She's one of the better ... I miss all the cooking. Typically I like is a Chinese, you know, a typical Chinese night. Thanksgiving like to cook soup, OK? You know she, walk into her house and the whole place smells particularly like Chinese herb soup. That's very important for your health, OK? She use to make all this herb and bitter ... I say I can't drink it, no, I don't drink it, no; because her parents come from a family of herb medicines and so forth. I went back to China to visit them. All her aunts and uncles so forth. That's good. I believe it. I believe in Chinese herb. There's certain fundamental behind the drinking of Chinese soup for your health-wise.

Christina: So then how did you get involved with different Chinese organizations in town? I know you're involved with a lot of different organizations.

Al: How do you know that?

Christina: Because somebody told me. [Laughs].

Al: Oh is that so? Hope it's not Barry who told you that. Did Barry say that?

Christina: Yeah he did. [Laughs].

Al: Oh, OK, Barry. OK. [Laughs] Yeah, I'm involved. As I said to you earlier before. You know if you, expose yourself and get to know people. You got to join. Become a joiner. In my field of work, I became a joiner or another words I got to know different organization. Get involved with different organizations. Especially, sales, you know when you're in the stock market, you know you gotta sell, you gotta involved in different organizations, so I get active and I'm probably one of the few that were active not only the Chinese organization, the Asian organization, also the American organization. Certain number born here in the non-Asian, CCC³ concept-form relation and also the, Arizona commissions bureau, Arizona tourism board, so I meet those people, very active.

Christina: Are you involved with the different family organizations like the Wongs have their own organization. The Ongs have their own organizations. The Yees have ...

Al: Well you see my name probably say Al Yee, OK? I don't know if they know, and now I'm sure, Peter know, your father know. My family name is Lew, OK? So my father's name is Lew, OK? You know, years ago the Chinese bought papers you know so forth. Oh you know the story. Anyway, so I'm a Lew, so there's an organization here in town called Lung Kong Association. L-U-N-G K-O-N-G Association. Lung Kong, I didn't know what it mean before, Years ago, someone got me involved. I know that Lung Kong is something, some, Lung Kong, something like a opposition gangster, or mob. I didn't know nothing else There's a lot of meaning behind it.

Lung Kong has four surnames: Lew, Kwan K-W-A-N, C-H-U-N-G, and Jew J-E-W. Four surname. A lot of history behind that. That's something in Chinese literature that I mentioned earlier. The Three Kingdom. You know the ...that's part of it, and so I'm part of the four family organization. Here in Phoenix, not that much compared to the Wong, the Yee, and Ong, OK? In fact, you're a Wong right? So Wong you have a big party this coming Sunday.

Christina: Yeah. [Laughs].

Al: You know that, huh? So anyway, Lung Kong is a big headquarters in San Francisco. The North American Lung Kong, it's in San Francisco Lung Kong, OK? I ran the chapter for many years, OK? Now they get a lot of young people get involved. But you know, a lot of young people don't get involved because they always sometimes speak Chinese here, you see. Especially the whole organization we go to the national meeting they will speak Chinese here. Well, that's a major headache I can understand, you know, by that token here is for the family organization. There's a lot of things behind, culture wise to hold the family together. Oh you're a Lew. You're a Kwan. Oh by the way it's an open door and no matter where I go, Chicago.

The Lung Kong invite me for dinner and I find people ... people I had to give a talk. I talked in Chinese for five, ten minutes, and I can order. One guy, it's so funny my name is Jing Lee. We met about twenty-five years ago in Taiwan. Oh my god, how could you remember? This guy is the liaison for the mayor Daley in Chicago. He said to me, "Let's get together for dinner tomorrow night and meet some friends." I said, "OK" "I'll be in Phoenix in May." I said, "Why?" "We have

³ Chinese Chamber of Commerce

forty different basketball teams, Chinese American basketball team will participate in Mesa.” I didn’t know about it at all. And it’s gonna be here in May, and then that other guy who opened up a number of restaurants in Chicago. When he came to Phoenix area, call me up. “I’m in Phoenix here, attending some kind of Jazz festival here.” So he’s could be one of the basketball players. It’s amazing you know, but getting back to organization there’s a lot of culture behind it. I learned a lot from here. I just came back in December.

The word Lung Kong is based in Taiwan, but also in Hong Kong and was held in Bangkok, Thailand. I was, was amazed, about three to four hundred people all get together and share their ideas of family and so forth and I feel like I’m part of a family there. You meet people from all over the world and that’s why you make connection here, you see. That’s why, how you open up doors here. I got some guys do some business, political, or social. A lot of fun. The only sad thing about the family organization here is sort of dying out like the Wong, Yee. You got to bring the younger generation into the picture. How do you do that? I don’t know but you don’t get involved in the Wong at all.

Christina: [Laughs].

Al: And the negative part I understand is that the young generation here, particularly cannot speak Chinese at all they go to meetings I don’t know what they’re talking about. But you can speak English too, I believe it though. Maybe traditional, but there’s a lot of culture behind it involved.

Christina: Do you know when the Lung Kong chapter in Phoenix started?

Al: Yeah. Lung Kong is about thirty-three years old, so take that and minus that today. It’s back in the seventy-something.

Christina: And were you one of the founding members that start it?

Al: I was one of the founding members, which I didn’t know it and I study it up and it was started by Mr. D. H. Toy. And he’s been here a long time and he got me involved and a couple of other guys like David Kwan, Joe Kwan got me involved and I was one of the ... probably the last understudy by Lung Kong. My understudy, and books, and so forth and throughout the years I’ve picked up here and there and I learned a lot. I appreciate it and that’s the start. We just had a Lung Kong dinner, annual dinner, about a month ago and it’s the thirty-three years anniversary, and fortunately this year was a young lady is the president. Very good. We’re probably one of the few, we’re probably the only family organization that female runs. The others, the Ong and Wongs are all run by males, so we’re pretty open. We’re pretty flexible.

Christina: Are you involved with any other organizations in Taiwan? In regards to the Chinese community?

Al: The Chinese? The Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the OC, Organization of Chinese American, and what other Chinese organizations there are ... oh the United Association, you know, different people from different organization here. I run it. I run the United Organization for, oh ten, twenty years ago, before my wife passed away, and so I was very ... and but you can do so much, but I also said to you early, I also get involved in non-Asian organization, [inaudible] I think more and more should be involved. Get involved with your local non-Chinese organization. You know with people like, Gary Ong here in town, and Barry Wong so and so.

Christina: How did you meet your wife? Did you meet her in Phoenix?

Al: No, met her in New York.

Christina: Oh, wow.

Al: She was an airline stewardess, you know [inaudible], great gal, unfortunately she passed away. She died of cancer. We were married about ten years.

Christina: Was she Chinese?

Al: Yeah.

Christina: So your mom was very happy.

Al: Yeah, I might say so. She was happy.

Christina: Was your wife's family from ... did your wife immigrate from China?

Al: Yeah. Actually her family's the Tang.

Christina: Was that different then, her mindset versus your mindset since she immigrate here?

Al: Wait a minute; you said she was from China? No, no she not born in China. She born in the States. She was born in New York.

Christina: Oh OK, so her family's from China.

Al: Yeah, yeah I misunderstood you there.

Christina: Well, is there anything you would like to add? Any stories that you have?

Al: Oh my gosh. [Laughs] I'll tell you what, I really enjoy this interview because it's sharing some of the thing to your people here what's happened so far. I just see that more and more the Chinese get involved. Different activities here, not just academic here, but also outside. I've been out there and I've seen out there and we need that. We need people like you people here to get involved in outside activity in the not only political, but social structure. I think the important thing I'd like to see is retain of culture. I see some become more and more can fade away here. Especially some of the family, particular second, third generation. Like I say before you know, maybe I'm a little traditional, but I don't believe 100% traditional, but certain things should retain. That's what keep the basic, the culture. Some countries don't have a culture at all.

You know like Hong Kong doesn't have a culture at all. And Taiwanese and more culture and the inner Chinese families. I'd like to see again here, like I said, not only the culture itself, get involved more, and the education, is also very important to continue. I'm glad people like yourself and get all this together interview and various people get different ideas, in the end. That's good. That's very good. You get more in diversity and different backgrounds too. One group from this part. Someone from this part and so and so, but I again here appreciate very much giving me this opportunity here and ...

Christina: We appreciate your time, too.

Al: Oh, thank you.

Christina: You think that Chinese American here in Phoenix have a very different culture than other Chinese Americans around the country?

Al: No, I don't think so.

Christina: You don't think so?

Al: I don't think so. I don't think so. I don't think no more different than San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, it's about the same, OK as far as the Chinese American, probably more so in the bigger city here like San Francisco is more closely in the cultural or in the traditional, OK, but no different than [inaudible]. Again, like I said Vancouver more traditional because the majority of the people are from Hong Kong , but oh, we're all human beings you know involved in different backgrounds you know, people Chinese from Mississippi and Louisiana are a lot different here. It's always amazing how Chinese speak southern accent, southern accent in Chinese.

Christina: [Laughs] Yeah. Well, I just want to thank you for sharing your thoughts, and your memories, and your time with us and so we're going to end our interview now.

Al: Thank you very much. Thank you.

[End of Interview]

BETSY YEE

Interviewed by Aurelia Bradley
18 October 2006

Betsy: That's four boys, seven girls. And I'm number six.

Aurelia: OK. I'm just gonna start with some basic information. This is an interview with Betsy Yee on October 18th 2006, at her home, in Phoenix. By Aurelia Bradley. For the record, do I have your permission to tape record this interview?

Betsy: Very definitely.

Aurelia: If you could please state your name and its spelling?

Betsy: Betsy Quan Toy Yee. B-E-T-S-Y. The Quan is Q-U-A-W-N, Q-U-A-N. Toy, T-O-Y. My married name is Yee, Y-E-E.

Aurelia: And when were you born?

Betsy: August 12th 1934.

Aurelia: And where were you born?

Betsy: Phoenix, Arizona.

Aurelia: And were you also born like Shirley at the 16th Street and Camelback house?

Betsy: Correct.

Aurelia: And, I'm just gonna kinda skip over some of the basic family information, like where your -- I already know your father came from China. And kinda some of that background information. But do you know when your father came to the United States? What year?

Betsy: Yes. There's conflicting information. Because some records read 1909. The paperwork reads 1913.

Aurelia: Oh, OK.

Betsy: Now, have you had the ability to see the paperwork?

Aurelia: No, not yet. I know that there's some documents and some photos that Shirley was going to round up and, and let me look at and make copies of, so.

Betsy: Oh good.

Aurelia: If you have any additional photos or paperwork or anything that you'd be willing to let me also make copies of, that would be appreciated.

Betsy: Oh, I'd be happy to.

Aurelia: OK. See ... Maybe you can tell me a little about what you know, then, as far as the difference in dates. As to when your father immigrated. You said that ...

Betsy: You know, they have -- and Shirley was able to locate it -- so it could be well documented. I think more than the minutia of the exact date, I think the most incredible fact is when he would be so young, and that he would have this frontier spirit to come here. Not really knowing anyone,

or really having kinfolks. And I think it's incredible, because as one educated as my brothers and my sisters, I don't think any of us would have the courage, the tenacity, and the ability, and the faith to do what he did. To come that distance to a foreign country. Not only that, from the onset, where that little village is, which is near Canton, China, in the old days, they called it. But now they've named it Guangzhou, is the new name for Canton, China. And outside of that was his little village, near, they call it, the Three City. And from that distance, though, he actually walked from there -- *walked*, now -- from there to Hong Kong to be able to catch a boat. I mean, when you think of somebody that has that kind of courage, it's just overwhelming. It's hard to even believe, it's hard to fathom. Because as convenient everything is to us...

Betsy: This generation is really a throwaway generation. And things that we valued and held dear, is no longer valued. You know?

Aurelia: Yeah.

Betsy: People are more excited about going to Ikea, than owning something like that that's, you know.

Aurelia: Got history and tradition.

Betsy: Oh, yes. But the things that were made back in the old days required discipline.

Aurelia: Yeah.

Betsy: And it was more than just making a statement with a piece. Like many artists now just make something to tell a political statement or some ideology of theirs. Without the real discipline of really starting from scratch, you know. And those are the things that your really enjoy from, in terms of art pieces.

Aurelia: Right.

Betsy: Whether it be that Waterford. 'Cause it withstands time. It, it, you know...

Aurelia: The aesthetic value doesn't, doesn't change. Generations can come and go, but that's still a beautiful piece of ...

Betsy: It will remain beautiful. Not that the generations will appreciate it for a monetary value. It isn't that. Or even the beauty. Because I think that is what is lacking in society now. They have not even the discipline. Like you can't take a young person to a symphony 'cause they'll squirm. They haven't been taught how to appreciate the different instruments and how it can come together and make an incredible sound that somebody composed. You know, if you don't have sufficient knowledge to appreciate the beauty of something, you really can't. 'Cause they want an instantaneous, vibrant color ... thing, yeah. And I think that's the most valuable legacy that my dad left -- and my mother -- are values that are so incredible, in terms of honesty and integrity and ... I'm sure my sisters told you, we took an ash tray once, from Las Vegas.

Aurelia: No.

Betsy: And we, we thought it was advertis -- you know, we told my dad that, you know, they put it there in the room so we'd take it so it'd advertise them. And we couldn't convince him. He drove back and we had to take that ashtray. And we had to give it to the manager.

Aurelia: Really?

Betsy: Yeah.

Aurelia: Your sisters have both stressed to me the importance of hard work in your family.

Betsy: That's a given with all Asians.

Aurelia: What are some of your memories of your mother and father?

Betsy: You know, not only in terms of their integrity, but they always thought of others before they thought about themselves. My father could have a lucrative business on 16th and Camelback, but he didn't sell liquor. Because on 12th Street and Camelback, there was a Baptist church. And out of respect for them, he, he wouldn't even consider the thought of selling liquor in that little grocery store.

Aurelia: Oh ...

Betsy: Because there was that camaraderie, everybody was concerned about each other. And that even carried in to World War II. Because I'm sure my sisters told you that we never ate meat.

Aurelia: No.

Betsy: No, we didn't.

Aurelia: No.

Betsy: Well, because we saved all of the coupons for our best customers, our dearest friends. You -- you're much too young to remember this -- but you had to have coupons for meat. You had to have coupons for sugar. Bubble gum and things like that you couldn't get. Nylon hose, those old fashioned hose where you had a seam and you'd put 'em on straight. All required a coupon.

Aurelia: Vi, Violet did mention she, that was one of the things that she mentioned remembering, was waiting to, having to wait in line to get her nylons, so.

Betsy: Correct! And so, and it, not only with my parents, well you had a tremendous sense of nationalism. We went out as kids to save the newspapers for, you know, and all the tin or all the aluminum, so that they could use it to reprocess. And to make ammunition or whatever. But the only time we ate meat during World War II is, one of our customers, one of our good customers, came in with her dog and it bit the ham and got chucked, chucked it down the, and took, grabbed the ham. So it had the dog mark in it. So then my dad brought it home and we had ham for the first time in years! Because normally, again, all of that would have gone to our very good customers. And we had some tremendous customers in the grocery stores. And in the old days, you know, it was just by word. They just would come in for the groceries and we'd mark it in a little book and it was always a charge. And they paid us at the end of the month or end of the week, yeah. And you don't have that personal interaction anymore. I mean, it's hard to get even to train personnel to say "hello" and "thank you." It's just like, you know, everything is so automated that if you do get even a little bit talkative they think you're holding up the line.

Aurelia: Right.

Betsy: Yeah, everything is so impersonal. But the key things about my parents, again, is not only thinking about others, then they would always think about the children first, you know. And would always be more concerned about our well-being, or to ... I know my dad was always so worried about my brother Gray working too hard. That he actually gave the restaurant -- the rent was so low it didn't even pay the taxes -- just to get my brother out of there. 'Cause my brother worked eight days a week, thirty-six hours a day. There was just no stopping for him. He was really one that was just such an incredible chap. And we were really isolated from, and I know from the history you've studied that the Asians that did come, or the Chinese, were really provincial. And they really stopped with their own clansmen or their own, you know, family name Ong. And we

were the only Quans here. And another thing that you would get from people that come from other countries and become a citizen, is that they would have a sense of loyalty and nationalism that's unsurpassed. You know?

Aurelia: Right, right.

Betsy: My, my brother, to this day -- Colonel Toy, Lieutenant Colonel Toy -- he hangs up a flag everyday. You know, that, again, is a legacy my dad really, I think, inculcated. Is that, always that patriotic "what's best for the country, what's best for the state." And, to this day -- and you, and I'd love for you to confirm it -- on Camelback Road, my parents gave that property, didn't demand from the city any money, because they thought it's for a 'cause that the community benefits by having a wider street. And I don't know if whether the people that handled it exploited it, because we didn't ask for money, but they, we had five acres, no longer is it five acres, or whether they took advantage of it.

Aurelia: Right.

Betsy: And it brought, and it brings to mind, right now, why am I living here on Central? Or why did I live here thirty years? When I came back, whether it's on an unconscious level, but my father would have had, where Park Central was, there was a farm. And he had the contract, everything. And the night before -- I'm sure my sisters told you this -- they told him, "Toy, you cannot live here," telling my dad, Mr. Toy, "you can't live here." So my father got upset and he called off the deal. Because Asians were not allowed to live on Central.

Aurelia: Oh, no. I, I, Shirley had mentioned when your mother was interested in buying the home that Violet lives in now, that she had to check with all of the neighbors. But no, I didn't hear anything ...

Betsy: The deed, our deed still reads it. But after President Kennedy's time, and the only time Asians were allowed -- and they, it's, the word, I think, is "Oriental," they had in the deed -- as if we were domestic help.

Aurelia: Really?

Betsy: And, so when I came back from California -- I lived in France and then I lived, came back to California, I came here -- that's why, on an unconscious level, I bought three pieces of property out on Central.

Aurelia: Just to, just to kind of stick it to them.

Betsy: Oh, I wouldn't know if it was that. But you, there's something, there was no doubt a cry in your throat from pain. And not that I'm not a forgiving person. But I think the key thing is that most Anglo people don't realize the discrimination that we encountered. And so when you hear this and you hear all of this, you know, now, now today I'm upset, they're thinking of a lower SAT score if you're an African American. And that to me is so bizarre. Because I don't think of myself as a Chinese American, I just think of myself as an American. Because you've never heard a French person say, "Hey, I'm French American." Or you've never heard an Italian say, "I'm Italian American." Or Swedish American. Why do we want to segregate ourselves? We're either Americans or our citizenship. And then, to this day, I get all these questions, "What is your nationality?" And I always say, "American." You know, it can't be anything else or you need to deport me.

Aurelia: Right, right.

Betsy: And they, then they, they're taken back. What they probably are really wanting to know is what my ethnic upbringing is. And sometimes it's not what you ask, but sometimes how you ask it, too. Doesn't really matter, 'cause I didn't ask you, "What was your ...".

Aurelia: Nationality.

Betsy: Yeah, yeah. And so, so we still haven't gone all that way. That one should view us any differently because ... And there's not really too much Asian about us now, you know, come over in the second generation.

Aurelia: That's what, with Violet, I like kind of brought that up. And she said, "People used to ask me all the time if I was Chinese American, and. And then I got to thinking, 'Am I Chinese American or American Chinese?' Because I just don't know where I fit." And, and I, so I think that's interesting, that that's something that maybe throughout your family, you...

Betsy: Well, it would because, see, we've experienced it. During World War II we had to wear a seal American pin.

Aurelia: OK. I was asking Shirley and she didn't recall ...

Betsy: Oh, I still have that pin.

Aurelia: Really?

Betsy: Yeah. Even just as recently as this move. And so that designated that we were not the enemy.

Aurelia: Right.

Betsy: Yeah. So that, and she was a bit younger, but I still have that. And I still remember the kids at Madison School would just say, "Ching-ching Chinaman sitting on a fence." And things like that. Not, not that it has any significance. But the irony of the whole thing, it's the little things in life you remember. The little things become big things.

Aurelia: It, it must have really stuck with all of you and your siblings, because Shirley mentioned that exact same taunt, "Ching-ching Chinaman." I had never heard that, but it obviously was something that must have stuck with you back then.

Betsy: Well it was not stuck because everything in the ... the comic books would have that Charlie Chan as the sneaky sly guy. And that all Asians had a queue. I think it was part of the majority culture that made it very, you know, what little kid would ever have learned it? Where did it come from? And why would they even be saying it? Because they never meet that many Asians and they don't know of us making money. But, see, I, I'm saying, more than doing that -- not that we're affected -- but I'm saying that majority culture must have, by their depicting Asians as very - - you always get this, the slyness and then sneaky kind of thing. And it was portrayed that way. And so ... Now, I don't know if they had any malice, you know, I'm not one that's to hold grudges. But I'm saying these things don't happen. Little children don't go out saying something now. I mean ...

Aurelia: Right.

Betsy: Would they say anything about a Swedish person? Or would they say anything about the Irish? 'Cause nobody said it or would they talk about, you know ...

Aurelia: Right. It has to be taught somewhere.

Betsy: Yeah.

Aurelia: You were born in the house on 16th Street and Camelback. Could you tell me a little bit about growing up there and things that you remember?

Betsy: Oh, that, that was the fun, that's the greatest part of my life. Because you were always busy. We picked pecans. You know. And it was one cents a pound, and a half a cent, and one cents, and two cents. And you're always busy, because there's something to do. And we didn't have toys, 'cause Asian parents really didn't buy toys or dolls. So we had to create toys and create ways. And we used to play hide-and-go-seek down in, with our dear dear friends across the street. The Sudicums, and they had a daughter my age, Anne Sudicum. And it was just real precious. They'd come over and play and they'd always mother if my mother was scolding me, 'cause she would speak in a much faster and a higher tone, in Chinese. And then, well, in fact, my sister named me after the cow. One of the neighbors had a cow. My parents didn't speak English, so they called me Betsy. And that was because she liked the name of that cow.

Aurelia: And which sister named you?

Betsy: My sister Jeannette, the one that passed away, yeah. And so, not only were you creative, but you were expected to contribute. Even when we were young, we all worked in the grocery store. Or we had to stack up bottles, empty Coke bottles that you returned. And we'd stack 'em up so they could take 'em back. We sold ice by the cubes. And then it, it was a family thing, so you really wouldn't have time. And if we did culturally go back, every family did this with their own family. And we always ate together. I don't care how late it was, when the store closed we all ate together. And then we didn't have TV during our era and all of that. We did have radio.

Aurelia: Oh.

Betsy: So I can still remember, you know, hearing the, you know, in the morning, Saturday morning you'll hear [singing] "Cream of Wheat is so good to eat, you have it everyday! / You'd sing the song, it'll make you strong, it makes you shout 'Hooray!' / For all the family's breakfast ..." This is that Cream of Wheat ad. And then you could remember. My mother, during World War II, all during World War II, we had to be silent during the news. 'Cause, you know, two of my brothers were in the service, so she was always listening. And so you'd hear that ad [singing] "Call for Philip Morris!" So that was just before the newscast. So, there's many beautiful memories, 'cause you did things as a family. There wasn't anything that you didn't do as a family. So you couldn't even fathom any convenient drugs or anything. I mean, if you had to be part of the family and really ...

Aurelia: Help each other out.

Betsy: Out, yeah.

Aurelia: Yeah, what is your first memory of working in the grocery store?

Betsy: You know, it just seemed like a normal and a natural thing. The checking out. Just at the check stand, I just remember. And I remember vividly the customers and how they dressed and wearing gloves, you know, coming in. And I remember those that didn't pay as timely as they could or should have. And I can remember those. And we did have an Anglo lady work for us for many years. Mrs. Ray Allen. But this is long before, you know, if you're going back to the period when I was a young girl. Because it was 194 -- December 7th 1941. That was when the war broke out, you know. It, I'd be approximately about seven, seven years old. Yeah, yeah.

Aurelia: Now do you remember -- Shirley, because she already said that she was five -- do you remember when the war started? Or, do you, I mean, or do you have any memories?

Betsy: Well, I remember it goes back because my brothers were in the service. So my mother would listen and we were always concerned about my brothers coming back alive. They were in the Burma-India thing. And I have so many interesting stories on my brother. 'Cause my brother saved some pilots and they thought he was Japanese. And he, they told him to look 'em back up. My brother's not in the best of health now, we just celebrated his 85th birthday. And I always wanted him to contact those fellows he saved. Because the irony of the thing, his, his officer told him to go look for food. So he went and this, and when he was looking for food, he found where the Japanese had abandoned some weapons. So he picked up the weapons, threw it in the truck. And then when this plane that was going to crash came down, he ran to get, to help them. Well, he looked [inaudible]. So they were all very reluctant, they were reluctant to get in. But he took 'em back and he really saved all of 'em. But I put it in the St. Louis paper, 'cause they always said, you know, you'd look at something and say, "Louis, we'll always remember you." But we were never able to locate 'em in the veterans' magazine or in the St. Louis paper. And who knows, they might have passed on by now. They'd be in their eighties.

Aurelia: Now is, is the Colonel, I know that one of your brothers, they thought that he already spoke Chinese. Was that the brother?

Betsy: Yes, that, yeah. [laughter] And they sent him back.

Aurelia: Yeah, and he didn't [inaudible].

Betsy: No. See that's why I, when you talk about a generational change. I mean my, the object and why the difficulty for Chinese is because the American people and the immigration wanted us to assimilate. That's why they put the Indians at the Indian school, so they would assimilate. We assimilated so well we don't even speak our own mother tongue, yeah.

Aurelia: Now, you, you also didn't go to Chinese school.

Betsy: My father had a private tutor for us. And I went just for a little while because I was the youngest. Or younger than ... But, but I just remember briefly. And that was kind of a very rigid thing, it was a very traumatic thing. Because he had hired, hired this male teacher and I remember him saying in Chinese, if you didn't hold your pen right, it wasn't like this progressive American *doo-ey* [?] education that you could harm the kid. They'd hit your hand with a little, you know, a somethin' that you really felt because you didn't hold your pen that straight. And it was pretty much rote, you know. And, but I went for a short while. But I really am not, I don't recall. And I would say I'd be pretty ... illiterate.

Aurelia: Violet said that she went to the Chinese school and she doesn't remember much either.

Betsy: Well, but she, see, she's much older.

Aurelia: Yeah. She's ten, ten years older than Shirley, so she's eight years older than you? Or ...?

Betsy: OK, Violet will be eighty. And if I'm born in '34, there should be about ... She'll be eighty in January.

Aurelia: OK. And then you were born in '34, so that makes, OK. So you're, yeah.

Betsy: So she went to school with my sister Katie and my brother Gray and ...

Aurelia: OK, so then, then it's you and Louis and Shirley that are kind of real close in age. You're, you're ...

Betsy. Correct. But we're all two years apart, interesting enough. See, Shirley should be two years younger and I'm two years older. Melissa's two years older, Nancy's four years older than I am.

Aurelia: Oh, OK.

Betsy: Yeah.

Aurelia: Now, did you also attend Madison School?

Betsy: Madison Number One.

Aurelia: Uh-huh. What are some of your memories of going to school there?

Betsy: It's an, again, without bringing the negative aspect, is that we could never ride the bus. And that bus, whether it's rain or shine, hot or cold. And it was a big walk for us from Central to Missouri. I mean, from Camelback to Missouri, yes. And then my, my brother told us this ghost story about the Hunter, that Mrs. Hunter died there, and we'd always run past her house. And then he told us about the next home, the weird and all. It wasn't a fun thing. And I know, all during, and, and even at my young age, I recall going in and ask, "Couldn't we please ride." 'Cause one day it was so cold, really. And the bus had to stop right on our corner before it turned on 16th Street and Camelback. And it, and, and I recall the lady saying it would take more gas to open to door.

Aurelia: Oh my goodness.

Betsy: But see, in those days I didn't have what most Asian children wouldn't have had a parent that went down and demanded we be allowed to ride. But I, we were not ever, all those years, eight years. And I never missed a day of school. I have that Madison, the little emblem from it. And then, many of the teachers were very good to us. That was a Mrs. Jane Hinton thought I was the greatest penmanship. Back in the old days you had penmanship. So I have kind memories of, of a few good teachers.

Aurelia: Is that why you ultimately went back to teach in the Madison District? Or ...?

Betsy: No. Oh, went to the Madison. But culturally there wasn't much for women to do our age. It was either nursing or teaching. And so I went back to teaching, and I did teach in the Madison District.

Aurelia: Do you think you chose that district because of your memories of the teachers there? Or was it just that's where the job was?

Betsy: The Madison School, the interesting thing, you know who I remember, as far as educators? The ones that were the toughest and the most strict and the most stern. That Mrs. Hinton was a tough cookie. She, precious, you held that pen right and you did that penmanship and it had to be so. The others that made a lasting impression is Mrs. Kaiser. She shook a kid by the tongue because he talked. Yeah, you would have a lawsuit right now.

Aurelia: Right. For sure.

Betsy: She, she meant this as, you walked in there and you went in there to learn. But I don't know if it was the strictness, but, or the fact that you felt you really learned something. And that made a very impressionable thing. And her name was Mrs. Kaiser and she was a sixth-grade reading teacher. And I felt I learned a lot from her. You know. It was very, very interesting. And those are the kinds of instructor, and I don't know if that's true with other young people of who they recall as their teacher. It isn't one that was so kind or that pampered you as it was that,

maybe this is from an Asian perspective, I don't know, I'm not ask other youngsters. But I loved 'em because I learned somethin' from 'em.

Aurelia: No I, yeah. I think that that probably depends on personality-wise, too. If you are hungry for knowledge you're going to probably remember the people that fed that hunger. Or demanded that you feed that hunger.

Betsy: Sure, because, isn't that funny, you couldn't go back to ... second grade, I remember a teacher named Mrs. Jones. She taught me so much about the American Indians. And I could still remember a song she taught me. And here I am in my seventies!

Aurelia: That's just great.

Betsy: Yeah.

Aurelia: Now, your, your neighbors and the people that lived, because I understand you were the only grocery store in, for seven miles, I think is what Shirley had told me. Your neighbors, what was their ethnic make-up? Because it wasn't all Chinese.

Betsy: It was all Anglo people. 'Cause we were the only Chinese this far north and this far east. And they, all the Chinese community that my father was, didn't have, the elevator didn't go all the way up that he would even go over that far. They were all Anglo people. I'd say middle class or upper-middle class. Yes. And, and we played with their children and the older ones.

Betsy: You're going to write it in a book? Or ...?

Aurelia: I am. I'm gonna start, I don't know about a book, but I'm gonna start with a paper. It's, it's a lengthy paper. I have to write a paper on my internship experience. And so I've decided -- Violet kind of sparked my interest in your family -- and so I've just decided to write my paper about your family and about your father. And just every, everything that I can. So Shirley's been really great. She's agreed to kinda help me get everything that she has together. But any information that you can share with me about your family would be absolutely wonderful.

Betsy: For what class?

Aurelia: It's not for a class. It started out, we're, I'm working with Dr. Karen Leong at the Asian Pacific American Studies department at ASU. And we're working with the, it's called the Arizona Historical Property Survey, with Vince Murray. They're trying to put together, for the City of Phoenix, a, a record, a survey of all of the properties that were important within the Asian American community. Here in Maricopa County. Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, everyone. And, so right now they're trying to locate some of the buildings. Specifically like Toy's Shangri-La. The area on 16th Street and Camelback where your family's grocery store was. They're trying to find out what buildings are still standing. What buildings have been changed. What buildings have been demolished. So that future generations have a record of the rich Asian American history that Phoenix has. Because I have to admit, until I got involved in this project, I was unaware, blissfully unaware of the amazing things that, especially because my focus has been more on Chinese Americans. But just the amazing things that your community has done here in Maricopa County.

Betsy: Interesting enough to show you that my dad's character was that, was something so incredible and free-spirit and having courage, that he would move way up north, when all of the, his, you know, other colleagues thought he was out of his mind. But it wasn't unusual for Chinese people to have within three blocks three Chinese stores. Because they felt the camaraderie and the safety. Because, you know, Chinese were really paralyzed in L.A. and there was real rude discrimination. When they felt that the Chinese were doing too good, you could tell 'em, "Be fearful of a lynch mob," in L.A.. So that was, those things, I'm sure, were prevalent in their mind. But my, I think my father obviously had to be a very positive, up-forward, and he had a lot of faith.

My mother was saved by a, you know, a missionary. And then when she went to Casa Grande and they started the first thing, she was so ill my sister took her and she went to the church, and this is Mrs. Albright, a lady that told us about my mother and how ill she was. And then one of the ladies in the church really took care of my mother. So along with that faith, I think my dad really had the courage that the Lord would provide. And he would, he, he went into territories he shouldn't. Nobody would go into Sunnyslope to sell the things on that cart. I mean, you were fearful. As a little kid and you'd close your mouth thinking you'd get the TB germ. You know. Because, again, it was that stereotypical thing that this is a TB sanitarium. This is where they came. There wasn't penicillin to cure 'em. And you think the person that coughed in your face, you would have TB. Just like you think now if you get near somebody that has AIDS and they're serving you, and the saliva or anything or if you have an open sore, you get AIDS. It's that same kind of ... It's ...

Aurelia: Talking to Shirley, it's almost like the fear of the unknown.

Betsy: Yeah.

Aurelia: Causes people to ... You know, what you don't know about, you're afraid of. And so I can see that ...

Betsy: But the reverse is true of my dad. Obviously he wasn't afraid. He had that courage to, to go right in. That was what he needed to do to make a living, to have this many children. But the children object really was the more children they had, the more that could help you in the grocery store. And as one grew on, went up to the service, you could have additional younger ones to help. I'm sure that was a, well, we know that's not a spoken thing, that's why I have. But that's why most families had big, big families.

Aurelia: Now, I was asking, I asked your sisters ... I understand that your mom was of the generation, especially in China, where women weren't educated. Women were not, they were not the favored, the sons were the favored offspring. Do you feel like you experienced anything like that in your family? Or do you think that your mom was more encouraging to you girls because of that? Anything like that?

Betsy: Behind every successful man, there is a woman. And I think a lot of credit is due to my mother. You know. She, she really was the silent partner that really worked. And often, daughters remember their dad more vividly. Because mom would be, you know, nagging you or telling you. So, but it is without a doubt, my mother played a stellar role. Without her, you know, I, I, you know, I wonder how, if my dad, just the fact that she could hide all this money from selling pecans and buying that home, I'm sure my sisters told you that.

Aurelia: Actually, Shirley just told me, yeah, yeah, that, about that.

Betsy. Yeah. And she's coughed up that money, it didn't come in for ... But she did it on her own, just selling pecans at one or two cents a pound. And so she, too, had the tenacity and the, you know, and the get-go and the, just that stick-to-it-iveness. And she, just think how hard it was for her. And all during the war, not only did she work in the thing, but cooked for all of us, took care of all of us. But every Saturday and Sunday she'd cook this humongous meal for the Chinese fellows that came in to the United States to be trained at Thunderbird Air Base, Luke Air Base. And she, graciously, you never heard her complain. And I don't know if they had that much money, 'cause even during the war years we were, it was, it was a tough time. But she never, she would pick out, have a meal out there. And a lot of time they say that Asi -- a Chinese lady from this southern part of China is more matriarchal, that it's a society where the women really make the decisions. And I, I think my mother must have been instrumental in so many of the things. Now my dad really had the gung-ho spirit. He always wanted to invest in real estate. And that he did. But I'm sure my mother always put her foot down. Yeah.

Aurelia: Let's see ...

Betsy: But a lot of credit, don't ever diminish it, that, you know, it's a struggle for two and it's a struggle for both. And that they really had what it took to be successful.

Aurelia: So you think that, probably then, both of them...

Betsy: Oh, without a doubt.

Aurelia: Just instinctively.

Betsy: Without that it'd be virtually impossible. You know, a woman's role is so difficult, you don't realize it. And to take care of a household, to feed everybody, to get the food. Just think how hard it was for her. And then I think about how quickly oftentimes she had to go to work, back to work after giving birth. Isn't you have a maternity leave and all of that. You know.

Aurelia: Now, do you, you, no, you must have been too young. Shirley said that she's heard that your mom, right after giving birth to her, your mom was right back at the cash register. And that you guys tease her that the first thing that she heard was the, was the sound of the cash register. Do you remember, or have you been told that it was the same way when you were born? That she was just right back at work?

Betsy: I think most people, any other, because who else would be helping? If my dad was back at the butcher shop, who would be there to help at the front counter?

Aurelia: Right. Yeah.

Betsy: I don't, and I don't think, and I don't think it would be because it was the almighty dollar that dictated. That would not be complementary nor accurate. If that's what you were suggesting she heard the cash register.

Aurelia: Oh. Oh no, no, no, no, no. That, just that it was such a familiar sound because your mom was so dedicated to keeping the family strong that she would go and immediately go back to work because that was what she needed to do to, to take care of the family. Not because, not, I'm sorry.

Betsy: When you said that the cash register ... [laughter].

Aurelia: Not implying, not implying that it was just about making money. Just that I think Shirley, what Shirley was saying, was just that the grocery store was, because the house was attached, the grocery store was just as much a part of your house and growing up as actually being at home. So I think, did you, did you feel that as well?

Betsy: Yes. And then, you know, we had a home built right next to that afterwards.

Aurelia: Right.

Betsy: Shortly there. Unequivocally. Because there, again, back to that whole thing, the need and the requirement, there wouldn't have been somebody else to really, you know, take over. Particularly when Shirley because, you know, my eldest sister was married by then and had moved on to Chicago. So, you know, with each progression there's a challenge at each stage. I know that the doctor was Dr. Ericsson.

Aurelia: Now he's the same doctor that delivered all of you, but were born there. Because Violet was the last one not born at the 16th Street and Camelback house.

Betsy: She was at Buchanan, right?

Aurelia: I think she said it was 11th Street, or, and Monroe.

Betsy: Monroe, yeah. In that area.

Aurelia: When you ...

Betsy: Then that goes back to time. And that's good to know the doctors came out. Again, it's that personal kind of, you know, a real concern. Not, not all the Asian population were able to afford doctors, you know.

Aurelia: Hmm. I, I didn't, I didn't realize that there was a doctor. I thought that your father delivered ...

Betsy: No, Dr. Ericsson.

Aurelia: Yeah, OK. I was mistaken then. I was under the impression that your father had actually delivered and that the doctor just came around to issue the birth certificates. But I may have read that wrong. So there was actually a doctor present, then, for the birth and everything like that.

Betsy: To my knowledge, yeah.

Aurelia: OK. I'll have to ask Violet. I'm gonna try and meet up with her again and see if maybe she can answer some of those other questions. I know that, that she's going to see your older sister soon, Sue, also, soon.

Betsy: She's gonna be with Sue and her family.

Aurelia: Yeah, yeah. So maybe I can meet with her after that. There seems to be some, some different memories as far as food. So like, I'd kind of be curious to know, what are some of the foods that you remember eating? And, other than the ham. Some of the ...

Betsy: Oh, you mean that we ate everyday?

Aurelia: Yeah, like some of the dishes that your mom...

Betsy: You know why my parents lived eighty years old? Because they ate healthy. They grew their own vegetable. If you go out of Shirley's yard it's like that. Even look at Vi, she does that. We, we always had vegetables. And I don't care what it was. And you know, you never saw my mom and dad eating potato chips. They hardly, you know, to go to McDonalds probably was a treat for them in the later days. But they would use incredibly discretion. They wouldn't eat French fries, they wouldn't eat candy, they didn't eat any of this junk. And they never drank a Coke. And most of the things that they did eat or drink, they boiled the water 'cause that's what you did in China. And you think of us, how not only that God has blessed us, but all of us are over seventy and we haven't had major illness, major accidents. Those are things that we take for granted. But obviously, my mom had to have a, eyes like an owl to look out that. But none of us were scalded, none of were burnt, you know. Because I get discouraged when I hear people drowning. I'm beginning to believe some of these mothers pushed the kids in. You know, you have a pool, you watch 'em. And here, most Asians have that philosophy "don't get a headache that you don't need." And when we bought this home, I'm sure my father thought, "This is a headache. That swimming pool in the backyard." The first thing I did, when my youngest was sixth months, I gave her swimming lessons. Because my parents inculcated this thing. And I would have had horrible guilt. Why would you get a pool, and open invitation so your kid could fall in? So I was doubly cautious. It's those things that we often overlook, of the legacy that the folks gave us. And what a

blessing, you know, that they had. And, and when I think of it now, I can think of my father, this blueberry pie. And if you did indulge in a pie...

Betsy: If the things didn't sell in the grocery store, like tomatoes, they got them from them. We had tomato beef at night, you know, for dinner. If we had the ripe tomatoes, or if there was squash. And my mother would have some of those very traditional things. A very salted fish. And it went well, they call it *hon-muy* [?]. And it was one of those appealing things. Right now, in, for festivals and Chinese festivals, my mother would make, we rarely ate fried food, that's just not part of the Chinese, you know, way of cooking. But to this day, whenever I go for *dim sum*¹, I order this, knowing it's not good for me. But it brings back sweet memories of my mother, how she'd make it. She'd roll 'em real good, put sesame seed, and it had some sweet filling. She'd do it for New Year's and everything. And that, too, has remained with me. Because my kids always joke, you know, what did we have. At Christmas, New Years, we were very, very Anglo tradition. We always had, you know, for Easter we'd have ham. For Christmas we'd always have turkey. And open presents Christmas morning and things like that. So my parents were really quite westernized.

Aurelia: OK. So ...

Betsy: Some other Asians in the city, when they celebrate these holidays, but still have Chinese food. But I couldn't imagine a turkey chopped into little pieces, I still [inaudible]. Well, but my dad was a cook, that explains it to. He cooked for the Army or, yeah, and so. We had that good gravy and mashed potatoes.

Aurelia: Now what were your favorite foods? Besides the *dim sum*, is that what it's called?

Betsy: Oh, that my mother, favorite food then, when I was young? Or favorite food now?

Aurelia: Just in general. Any of ...

Betsy: I think traditionally, if I had a choice of going out, it's always would be Chinese food. One, it's healthier. Two, you get more for your money. And three, you always get greens. So, you know, you think of that Chinese green, and Shirley grows it. It looks red and you just boil it with garlic. The two things I think that adds also to longevity, is my mother. They didn't believe in a whole lot of greens because, in excess, because they'd say it's *leung* [?], in the *ying* and *yang*, it would be too *leung*. Fried food would be too *nyit-hay* [?], it's not good for you. They'd make, put ginger to take away all of that *yin* away from the food. So I'm seeing vegetables. You'll always think of Chinese food, the minute you see white rice, oh man, you have a great, it's a carry-over from your youth.

Aurelia: OK.

Betsy: You can't ... Fried potatoes, French fries just can't take its place ever. Once you've been brought up on, you know, on Chinese food.

Aurelia: I think that, yeah, it's that way for anyone, that you have that one food that reminds you maybe of being a child. Is that ...

Betsy: We always ate rice. And then, then that would be the filler. Because right now if you go out and eat it, you really don't have something solid like rice. You feel that you're still hungry in a few hours. Yeah.

¹ A variety of small dishes served with tea.

Aurelia: Let me see ... Some of the questions we've already kind of covered ... Maybe you can describe the Fourth of July picnics to me. Your experiences or what you remember of that, the Fourth of July picnics.

Betsy: As a community, the whole Phoenix community, not as children, we were, OK. You know my father was instrumental in that, because of the different, and he got the different various groups together. And they used to have it at the Ramada Inn on Van Buren. And that was just a, a great function to get all of the Chinese together and then they forgot about that provincial kind of thing. It was just a happy occasion. And that really brought the Chinese community together. I think that was the, the key thing for that reason. And it was always good. Because, one, it was free. But it was because of good-hearted people like my dad, he provided the food from Toy's Shangri-La. And my brother did all the frying of the chicken. But it was a very festive, happy time. But a tremendous sense of nationalism, you know. You'd go out with a flag, the little kids would have the flag. You know, it's just not a get-together, you remembered and you were grateful that you're Americans. I think that's one thing that Asians always exhibit, the gratitude that they're in America.

Aurelia: So ...

Betsy: You can see us, Shirley and I, in the little parade, we're carrying that flag.

Aurelia: I, Shirley said that she's going to look for the parade pictures for me. She asked me about the parade pic -- if I had seen those, and I haven't seen them yet. I'm very excited. Do you have any memories of your father's involvement in the Chinese Chamber of Commerce? Or any, any other organizations that he may have been in?

Betsy: Well, he was really active that way. And people really respected him. And he would always go to these meetings. Well the hardest part about doing anything, whether you're in any organization, is that you need money. So he was, they would always get him on the committee to go to various places to collect some funding or contribution so they could do these things or do things for the community. And my dad was quite active. He [inaudible], because of all of his older friends that were his good friends and they really had a lot of respect for each other. And when I was a kid, it was interesting to me to hear what elderly men talked about. And then my dad would always have them at our restaurant, at Toy's Shangri-La. And he would feed 'em. And it was always for a community goal, for the common good of everyone. It wasn't, it didn't ever become a self-seeking thing or for your own ego or that he got, you know, credit for it. Because oftentimes, these are the things that are most challenging in small minority community. There's kind of a rivalry for the credit. OK, my father is not one of those recognition-seekers. He was just a humble, sincere, quiet worker. He's just not a boastful. I think that's why he had so many friends, whether they be White or Chinese. He was just really more of a doer than a speaker.

Aurelia: What are some of your favorite or, or cherished memories of your father?

Betsy: I think his kindness. His love for travel. And I don't care, he never had a negative word. One time we didn't know what to cook for him, my mother was gone. We gave him, cooked him artichokes and he couldn't get full on that. He said it was so good. He's always give a positive comment. You never heard anything negative. And we, poor guy, he didn't have anything to eat. And then I know one time I cooked for him, and I didn't salt his steak, 'cause my sister scared me to death that he's taking a high blood pressure, and that's the worst thing for him. And I served this poor guy -- my dad! -- a steak without any -- can you imagine how horrible it'd taste? But he said it was so good. And I believed him. [laughter] But he'd always say, "Ohh." And he'd always say, "You made the good choice."

He loved traveling and he was game for anything. I'd gone around the world with him. And we had gone through real hardship, he'd never complain. I mean, I went through Pakistan and it was so hard. We'd gone through Korea, it was terrible. Because they were unkind to Chinese descent

with American passport. Pakistan -- oh my -- I was just scared we wouldn't get out of there. And, and because I was so, and I'm surprised, when I was so young I would have that courage. But I just got out of there. The [inaudible] we were traveling on, there was a Monsignor that gave us special privilege, and that was with the Pan American airline, we belonged to a clipper club. And that was for, you know, they really gave you royal treatment. And generally if you're a clipper club member, you'll travel first class. We did not travel first. But, but we were clipper club member, members. And we had a hotel, in Pakistan. All we had to do was get off the plane, catch a cab, and go over to the hotel. But it was so hard. And I had read in the guidebook, you tell 'em what you had. The rings and everything, so you won't be assessed and taxed on it when you left. It, it, the man wanted us to grease his palms. And then he said there was no taxi to the hotel. And then they weren't sure of where the hotel. It was just, so I, I just, my intuitive sense just wasn't the right. And we had just left India, where we saw all the children with very, very, oh, it was sad. But, but we had a delightful time. And you could see the people out in the street. And it, you know, traveling third world countries.

Back in the old days, when they didn't have tour guides and all of this, you were doing it on your own. That's one country we just, I said, "We must leave." And so we just stayed at the airport until we could get the next flight out. And I'm glad we had the foresight to do that. I was there with my mom and dad at the coup, when Diem was ousted, from Vietnam. And I was at the Caravelle Hotel, a very well known hotel. And I was, my parents were in the, their room. And I had gone down to the lobby to get some information. And here I'm in this elevator, and I'm approached by this man. He has a whole basket of money. And, for a little bit of my American money, you know, inflation was so incredible. And I didn't know what to do, because I'm blocked into the elevator with him. And I said, "No, no." I don't know why I'd carry a basket of money. And so, that was, we had many interesting things. But my dad never got upset, never said anything negative. We just moved on to the next city.

Aurelia: Do you think that you and your brothers and sisters got your sense of giving back to the community from your father, then?

Betsy: Oh, I think without a doubt. Look at Shirley. That's all she does is charity, community. Whether it be going running water out to the desert. I mean, and, and look at my sister Vi. My goodness, with the, you know, the NARF and all of that. I think all good things, you reap what you sow. And my parents did a tremendous job of that. You know, my brother Gray gave of himself so incredibly. He gave of his heart, he gave of his pocketbook, he gave. He gave people money. He never got, they didn't return it, you didn't hear him complaining, and he didn't lose sleep over it. But it, it's just, sometimes, inculcated into you. And without a doubt, it comes through by osmosis. You know, where people ...

There's two kinds of people in the world. There's just givers or takers. And the majority are takers. I was blessed with two parents that were just givers. My dad, and not only that, my dad is not only, and my mother, not only givers, but they were thankful, they were grateful. They were always grateful to be in the United States. They were always thankful for whatever they had. They were thankful for their friends. You look at how many parties my dad had. And his philosophy he said, he said, "You just count your blessings, your friends will come. Because it costs 'em a present, it costs 'em their time. And without them you wouldn't have a party." And where, whenever he gave a party he says, "Please no gifts." He really didn't want to and he didn't want any gifts. But he was just that kind. And the same with my mother, on their 65th anniversary they just pleaded, "No gifts!" And they, they were just always giving. My mother taught us, when we were three years old, I remember, Shirley told you, no doubt, how she put us all in one bathtub or we'd take, it's just a little round tub...

Aurelia: Yeah, she, Shirley did talk a little bit about that.

Betsy: And you'd have to pour hot water and we'd wash outside of the mulberry tree. The next thing my mother did to get us ready for church is put a dime or quarter, whatever coin they had,

and she knotted it in this little hanky. At the corner of our hanky, this was a perfect knot, that was a coin for us to take the following day to church. I mean, it that's not teaching you about tithing and giving at a young age, that this is just part of worship. And I'm sure Shirley can remember doing that.

Aurelia: Yeah, Shirley did. She actually recounted exactly that.

Betsy: Really?

Aurelia: She said, "And you used to all get a clean little hanky. And then she would put ten or fifteen cents in the little hanky and that was our hanky to take to church." And, and Shirley...

Betsy: That was the day before.

Aurelia: Shirley made me believe that it was part of the money that you guys earned, though, from picking pecans. It wasn't that your parents just gave you money to tithe. It was, that was part of your earnings. Is that the way that you remember it?

Betsy: I, I don't recall. But I know that from the day before -- Isn't that an incredible blessing? If mothers did that. That going to church wasn't just blindly taken. And contributing. And then I recall my mother, on one of her big birthdays, gave all of her old silver dollars. And my brother was distressed. He wasn't ... Yeah, but it was these silver dollars that were really collectibles. And so that was interesting. But it, you just think of that one act of how incredible that is. To this day, obviously, we wouldn't know how to tithe. That this is not just taken lightly. But further think of it, she'd roll our hair in curlers. We'd have these long curls that looked like Shirley Temple. We didn't have the straight bangs.

Aurelia: And from what I understand, you were all very involved in not only the Presbyterian church, but also the Baptist church? Is that ...

Betsy: Correct. There was an incredible minister. Is, his name was G. Stanley, Lawrence G. Stanley. And he really transformed the Chinese community from their pagan ideas. And it took an Anglo pastor that got many of the people away from their provincial and the rivalry, and really lead 'em to the Lord. And so when my sister was quite ill they contributed to, to the ... But the Baptist church was part of the Chinese community. So, traditionally when you have any happy function, you contribute to these organizations. And we've always been part of the Presbyterian church, over a hundred years now. It goes back to Po Ling. And that pastor, that was in the thirties. He always says that's how he got his name, from the Toy family, Po Ling, the Chinese name. And he was an Anglo man. He said, "I should have called it Ling Po."

Aurelia: Now, I have a question about -- I, I think I read about your having, you have a restaurant -- correct? -- downtown...

Betsy: Correct.

Aurelia: The Blue Fin. And you're having some issues with the city and the light rail. Are you, have your dealings now with your current restaurant been impacted by the treatment that your father may have received in regards to Toy's Shangri-La? Because I, like you said, the land was just kind of taken. Has that experience impacted how you're ...

Betsy: I think not. I think it's totally unrelated. If I didn't get a good sum, I'm a poor negotiator. And I, we don't have the experience and I don't think I negotiated well.

Aurelia: I just, I would just, actually, I don't even know exactly what the situation with your current restaurant is. I just noticed that your name was in the paper about and I just wondered...

Betsy: Oh, some time back?

Aurelia: Yeah, it was ...

Betsy: Well, if you have that article I'd like to see it.

Aurelia: I'll -- do you have an email address?

Betsy: Yes.

Aurelia: I actually found it online. And if you have an email address I can email you the link to the story if you'd like.

Betsy: OK. Howard-dot-Betsy. At-Juno. Dot-com.

Aurelia: Is that B-E-T-S-Y?

Betsy: S-Y, uh-huh.

Aurelia: At-Juno-dot-com. It was just a little article. 'Cause I was doing, like I said, I was doing some research on your family online. And it was just a little article in the Republic that you're quoted in, about the light rail and. And so I was just wondering if you went into that ...

Betsy: No, and I never would mention any of this. It's totally.

Aurelia: Totally.

Betsy: You know, those things are in the past. And it takes negotiation skills. I had an attorney but it was so costly that I negotiated with the ombudsman at the end. But I think this is all part of life. Human greed is limitless. You always want more. What, and you can document this. When they wanted to build the library, I, I was the first one that gave the property. I didn't, I didn't ask for, there's a very *named* attorney that can help get you more. And he's on 24th Street here. But I didn't have it. I, you know, I was happy 'cause it's for a cause. I wanted a library so the masses will be educated. And I wanted an art district over there, so that would be great. OK. And so, I just ... And that Terry Goddard was a good guy. He really, you know, put the bond up for the library.

Aurelia: I was, not, not even on the financial. And I, I guess my real question is, were you distrustful ...

Betsy: No.

Aurelia: Of the city at all?

Betsy: No.

Aurelia: Did you ...

Betsy: No. No, not -- don't ever use the word "distrustful." But I'm saying the city is not the biggest, best buyer, because they have the best attorneys. They hire the most named attorney, and the most named for "so what have you got?" You're gonna hire a little attorney? Then you'll be feeding the attorney. The reality of it., that's part of life.

Aurelia: Part of big business, too, right.

Betsy: But you're a part of the bureaucracy, they can hire the best. But I think on a whole, they've been kind. Why? Because one day, I read in the news article, and I took it up to Phil Gordon. It

said, the northeast corner of Central and Willetta, they are looking for a developer, or a buyer. And it was 1401 North Central. *My address. My address!* And I ran up to Phil Gordon like a madwoman. I said, "Phil, it can't happen in America. That you're gonna buy my place, sell it to a private developer. And nobody even had the courtesy to tell me? I got this news article!" And I hand it to him. I wish I kept a copy of it. I might have it my file now. I said, "You know, it'd be over my dead body before you get it." Because I give it to the city for the library. I was the first. You know, that's for a good -- But to give it to a private firm? No way. I would just ... And so I think that cautioned him, to be more cautious with me. Because if I let that out in the newspaper, boy, that'd make a big squawk.

Aurelia: Right. But that's not how you, not how you choose to do things anyway.

Betsy: No. Because that's how my dad brought us up. We are not troublemakers. And when I was quoted that day, because they said at that meeting that the little guys went under in Colorado and Utah. I'm a little guy! And I'm saying, you know, that's what I'm worried about. Business has dropped now because Central on the south, Central on the north, is so congested. People don't come. There's a penalty, there's a price. But the city didn't pay for loss of business. They just give you straight value for the real estate. And it hasn't been that great and I haven't gotten the money. [laughter] But, you know I was -- But that's totally a separate issue. But I'd never say anything unkind about the city or the city officials. It's oftentimes that one person you're working with. But I think that was a grave injustice to my dad, losing that much property on Central. But that's not the first time. He's given to other causes and other things and. Where you, but it takes two to be exploited. The one that allows the exploitation and the one that's doing the exploiting.

Aurelia: But I, I think that, like you said, you know, your, your family is, is, you know, proof is that you were willing to give the land up, you know. It's often the people that have the best intentions and are willing to work for the community that are taken advantage of.

Betsy: Yeah.

Aurelia: So ...

Betsy: Yeah, really.

Aurelia: Do you ... A lot of the things we've kind of gone over. Are there any other memories, or anything that you would like to share? Or anything that stands out? Oh, I'm sorry, I do have one question. Did your mother ever share with you experiences about her immigration? Because I know that your father shared a lot of experiences. And everyone has memories of your father talking about coming to America. Do you remember your mother talking about coming here to America?

Betsy: The difficulty in being scared and giving the right answers. Because she was intimidated by these guys. And if you gave the wrong answer, they deported you. That gives an interesting slant for us, how we would feel, if you made all illegal immigrants legal. When you think of how hard it has been in the past for Asians, particularly Filipinos, now, they come in. They drilled 'er about her home. To make sure that there is no untruth. I mean, about a plant in her home. About the door, where it's located. Where a window is located. And, you know, that was incredible. That she didn't really complain. She did mention, and I vaguely, vaguely, but I don't remember her sitting down and ever telling us. But just think how scary it was.

Aurelia: Oh, I can only imagine.

Betsy: It, and she never talked about her bound feet, either.

Aurelia: Oh, her mother ...

Betsy: Her feet was bound, and, yeah. And apparently, I'm under the impression my mother came from a, a kind of a well-to-do family. Yeah. But she never complained.

Aurelia: She never talked, she never talked about it with you at all?

Betsy: Uh-uh, uh-uh. That, that's interesting, you know. When my father, we talked with him about his war stories, 'cause he loved this Colonel. We'd go to Santa Barbara and we'd talk about and he'd tell us about how he's so starving and how he ate the potatoes raw out of the ground and things like that. It was just, you know, things that, automatic. But my mother didn't always, I don't remember her sharing about her ...

Aurelia: Yeah, it seems like that she, that, that's kind of what your sisters also said, was that they remember, you know, little things that she said, but not her ever talking about the experience. Do you remember her talking about her life in China before she came to America? 'Cause from what I understand, your father, your father immigrated first. Then he brought your mother and Sue over later.

Betsy: Correct.

Aurelia: And, and so, did, did she talk at all about living with your father's family and her life in the village before she came to America?

Betsy: Well they went back to China, apparently, there was a, a sister that either was, claimed to be the sister but my mother said, "That's not my sister." Whether she was unkind or what. But other than that, not. But you know, my mother had some kind of sore and was very, very ill. And her dad was willing to provide the second sister -- did they mention this to you?

Aurelia: Shirley, Shirley did say a little bit, that that kind of isolated your sister.

Betsy: That was, yes. But you know what? You really admire, and there's a lot to be said for that Chinese kind of matched marriage. I'm not, I just think it's incredible. Because when you marry that person, you don't believe in this mystical, you know, the prince coming on over and saving. And that forty, only 40 percent, less than forty are married in the US. People are just cohabiting. They're hardly even marrying. But, which is so, and if they went back to matched marriages, it would be great. Because you're resigned to accept the better or for worse. You're gonna love 'em through health and through death. Through life or whatever. You're, that, just think of the positive traits of that.

Aurelia: I, I agree.

Betsy: And now, you know, the guy offends you, you're gonna take off, you go back to your mother. And, well what is the commitment? But if you went and the guy wasn't the most handsome but you were ... you're resigned to accept it. Isn't that something beautiful about that?

Aurelia: I think there's something, definitely, to be said about tradition. And, and it seems like in arranged marriages, the child's best interest -- it, it, to, to an American, it's a very ethnocentric viewpoint to assume that it's not in the best good of the child. But I think that most parents viewed it as beneficial to their children because you, you got to choose who your child was going to be married. And you knew that your child was going to be, you know, if you had a daughter you knew your daughter was gonna be provided for. So I, I can see the value of that.

Betsy: No, 'cause you know what? It wasn't just taken that lightly. They studied your family's history. The health, and that health, and the health. So if you had one that was prone to having these degen -- these generations of disease passed on. Diabetic, you know. They wouldn't match you with that one.

Aurelia: Really?

Betsy: It wasn't just a, you know, romance or two friends or, together. They really study your history. That matchmaker knows everything from three or four generations back, what these people. So if you had one that is prone to be a, you know, a pedophile.

Aurelia: "You're not gonna match with this."

Betsy: Yeah.

Aurelia: Now, how did you, then how did you meet your husband?

Betsy: Well, because there's nothing Chinese about us anymore. We're, we're the first generation here. Born and raised. We don't even speak the language.

Aurelia: Right.

Betsy: Yeah. Particularly us younger ones, now, are less. And we don't know any of these other ideas, or Chinese New Year and my kids ask me and I can't tell 'em.

Aurelia: Yeah, one of the things Violet said was that if any of your siblings wanted to cook a, some of the foods that your mom cooked, you would have to go get a cookbook.

Betsy: Yeah, and you'd have to read up.

Aurelia: Because your mom loved it so much, she loved cooking so much that she did it all, all the time.

Betsy: Oh, but everything had some meaning. She, it, you gave chicken at birthday. Because, you know. And you served long noodles at your birthday 'cause it's an indication of longevity. You didn't cut the noodles. You know, you serve each dish, it had some significance or meaning, or some health value. So, but, to us it's alien, we don't even follow on that. But I wish we did. And I wish we could've. But again, you know, you look back and hindsight is so great. But to assimilate in the majority culture, I'm sure that's why they wanted us to be Americanized. They wanted us all educated. To put us all through college, that's incredible. You know.

Aurelia: Is your, is your husband's family also from Phoenix here?

Betsy: They're from Phoenix. But originally they're from China and he's from a family of nine.

Aurelia: Oh, OK.

Betsy: Yeah. And again, it's still pushing education. He was a pharmacist, his brother's a doctor. You know, it's the whole, the whole nine yards. Every, every Asian, you know, those values are the same. But, but I think the blessing that we have, the pressure isn't so great, like it is in Japan now. You have kids jumping out of apartments. They, they make condos, and real wealthy condos, so, that has a net to catch you in case your kid goes out indeed, then he can jump in a net. And there's a high degree of, you know, where they're so withdrawn and they don't even interact with. It, it's sad. But see, to get the balance, because they tried to become so westernized so quickly, so fast. And they did, because when General Stillwell there, after the war, they all had to speak English. There was no ex-scape from that.

Aurelia: Do you feel, do you feel stuck between two cultures?

Betsy: No. It's a blessing. You delineate the best. And I got the best of both cultures. You know, I got the Chinese food. Sure. You have the American way, the freedom of speech, and you can expound on things you believe on.

Aurelia: So you really consider it a blessing to be bicultural.

Betsy: Oh without a, oh without a doubt.

Aurelia: Do you, do you have anything else that you'd like to add? Or ...?

Betsy: Yeah, you be sure and tell the whole world they broke the mold when they made my mom and dad.

Aurelia: I am ...

Betsy: You just don't think of any other way.

Aurelia: I am hearing that.

Betsy: If you think of a young guy that can come. And that can have eleven kids, send them through school, never complain. You know. And whatever it is. And how, you know, God was so good to 'em, and was full of mercy. Because they never really had any, whatever hardship, it never resonates with us because it was -- You think about going through that depression. My sister tells the story and tears come to her eyes. She didn't even have a biscuit. And on Christmas she had a biscuit, Elaine brought her a biscuit.

Betsy: It will just bring tears to your eyes.

[end of interview].

MARY ANN YEE

Interviewed by Kristin Yee
3 November 2006

Krystin: Mary Ann Yee, just for the record do I have your permission to tape this interview.

Mary Ann: yes.

Krystin: alright, uh, for the record can you please state your name?

Mary Ann: Mary Ann Wal Yee.

Krystin: All right and when were you born?

Mary Ann: what year? 19 ...

Krystin: The whole date.

Mary Ann: January 31, 1945.

Krystin: And where were you born?

Mary Ann: Phoenix, Arizona.

Krystin: When did you... or uh, your parents come to Arizona?

Mary Ann: My father came to Arizona when he was eight years old and my mother was born here, in Phoenix, Arizona.

Krystin: Do you know when her parents came to Phoenix?

Mary Ann: Her parents came probably four years before that. Well my grandmother did, my grandfather was here, oh ... probably ten years before working with the railroads and the gold rush from California.

Krystin: What were their names? Do you know?

Mary Ann: Ong Xi Yee and Jing Dong.

Krystin: Those were your ...

Mary Ann: My grandfather and my grandmother's names.

Krystin: on your ...

Mary Ann: On my mother's side. And my grandparents on my father side were killed in China during ... the wars and so I never did know them.

Krystin: How did your dad come over?

Mary Ann: My father came over as a son, adopted son, of an aunt and uncle, from Canton, China.

Krystin: Do you know ... like, did they come over on a boat? Did he come with someone?

Mary Ann: They came over on a boat ...and ...uh... he was suppose to be their son. I mean it was probably, if he was eight years old, it was probably the late ...well 1916 or somewhere around there.

Krystin: Do you know why they came to Phoenix?

Mary Ann: They came to Phoenix for a better life and so they started a grocery store.

Krystin: What was that called?

Mary Ann: And it was in Chandler, eventually then they moved to Scottsdale: my uncle, my father's uncle that supposedly his father but not really. Um ... and it was called Jade Chu and Company.

Krystin: Where in Chandler was it?

Mary Ann: Now, I don't know exactly where in Chandler the grocery is, but the store in Scottsdale is on Main Street and Brown, just south of Indian School Road in Scottsdale.

Krystin: Is it still there?

Mary Ann: It's still there but it's not the grocery store. It's an import/export store and uh... bar and grill. The house part is the bar and grill and the grocery store part is now an import, an Mexican imports.

Krystin: Do they own the building?

Mary Ann: They own the whole building.

Krystin: The whole street?

Mary Ann: When they first were there, there were probably only three commercial buildings in that Scottsdale area: the Basket House, Saba's western wear, and then the grocery store. And the grocery store ...uh did real well because of the Native Americans that lived in that area. And I'm trying to think of what ...who they were...anyway they would come and trade and barter. They didn't always have money, but they would barter their flour or their ... animal or something and my uncle gave them credit eventually through the years. And now that grocery ...he raised eight children, sent them all to college. And um... my father was there to start to help them at first. Today one of the sons is running the import/export store and another son is running the bar and grill.

Krystin: Do you know how they acquired that property? Like, were they able to buy it on their own?

Mary Ann: I'm pretty sure they were able to buy it on their own from the profits that were the earnings from the chandler grocery store and probably help from relatives.

Krystin: Do you know if they ran into any problems like going through the buying process through the government?

Mary Ann: I don't think there was a lot of problem in Scottsdale, because in those times around 19 ...the early parts of 1900, it was a pretty desert area: desolate, not much of growth at all, and people were really surprised how it eventually evolved into what it is today.

Krystin: So did they build that building on their own?

Mary Ann: Yes they did.

Krystin: Designed it and everything?

Mary Ann: They had the home first, the house first. And then the grocery store designed, probably with help of an architect of some sorts.

Krystin: And your dad grew up there?

Mary Ann: My father grew up with his aunt and uncle and eventually when he was old enough to be out on his own. And aunt and uncle didn't need him so much in the grocery store anymore then he ventured on his own.

Krystin: Where did he go after that?

Mary Ann: Well he stayed in the Arizona/Phoenix area, became a salesman then owned a nightclub/restaurant, then eventually retired as a grocery store owner.

Krystin: Where was the nightclub/restaurant?

Mary Ann: The nightclub/restaurant was right on Central Avenue just a little bit... uh ... I wanna say Willetta, where the Spaghetti Company is right now, today, is approximately where he had this big um ...restaurant/nightclub. And I mean big movies stars like Esther Williams um ... I can't remember any of the others, who were there.

Krystin: What was it called?

Mary Ann: It was called, um ... [Laughs] I can't remember.

Krystin: All right if it comes back to you ...

Mary Ann: It will come back eventually, but I don't remember what it was called. Cathay Garden!

Krystin: Oh.

Mary Ann: yes, and at that time we lived in the back, in the um...some apartments in the back of that big restaurant.

Krystin: How old were you when that ...

Mary Ann: I was about six years old then. And it was a big adventure for us. We never realized the Hollywood status, etcetera ... And actually the restaurant was ahead of its time. Phoenix wasn't ready for such a big, elaborate, restaurant, so eventually it collapsed. But ...as children, my sister, brother and I would run and play down in the ...I guess it was like the basement areas and peek through the um ... vents and watch the people, and play in the kitchen and so forth. My grandmother was the one who peeled the water chestnuts for the restaurant. And my mother was um ...a hostess at the restaurant. So it was a big family affaire.

Krystin: How did your mom meet your dad?

Mary Ann: Well the Chinese people from Phoenix and the Chinese people from Tucson use to meet half way at uh ... this little town called ... I can't think of it right now. But half way between Phoenix and Tucson, so there was a large social group, and through these social activities my father and mother met.

Krystin: So your mom was from Tucson?

Mary Ann: My mom was from Phoenix, but there were a lot of social activities because of the Tucson people and the Phoenix people wanting to socialize.

Krystin: That's interesting. Do you know how old they were when they got married?

Mary Ann: oh ... I think um ... my mother had just...was graduated from High School um ...not too long. She was in her early twenties I think, and my dad was about twelve years older, so he could have been in his late twenties and she was just barely into her twenties.

Krystin: What did your mom's family do?

Mary Ann: My mother's family had another interesting history. My grandfather, on my mother's side, like I said came because of the railroads and the Gold Rush. And went back to China and married my grandmother. My grandmother was raised in a girl's home where her feet were bound and she had servants and maids all the time. I don't think she even knew how to boil water. And so when she came over to America, my grandfather died when he was twenty-four, and she was left ...when they were ...as soon as they were off the boat, I think my grandmother was already pregnant with my...with her first son. They had four children right in a row. And then, when they were young they don't even remember their father because he passed away. He got sick and passed away. So my grandmother didn't even know how to boil water, couldn't speak English.

The Chinese, in this community, that had come from Canton, China. Of which ... you know how clans gather together um ... helped her to survive. And she started with a grocery store, they told her just get some groceries and put them in your living room and your neighbors will come and buy from you. And that evolved to a big grocery store that my uncle ran on Central Avenue and Thomas, called Central Market. But there was a smaller Central Market on Central and oh ... um ... just a little bit south of Grant. And then eventually the big grocery store on Thomas and 16th street. But my ...uh because of ...rel ...family and because of friends and family that helped my grandmother, that's how she was able to survive. And in those days you could really trust people.

She couldn't speak any English. She had never really worked. My mom says that she and her sister use to go sit on the doorsteps of the neighbors during dinnertime and hope that they would invite them in or give them some leftovers. And that's one reason why they like Mexican food so much, because there was a big Hispanic population that lived in that neighborhood. So grandma would open up the till in the grocery store, the cash register, and the salesman would come and she's say "put whatever you need on the shelves." And she would just open up her cash register and they would take out the money they needed to pay for the ... whatever she bought. But today you wouldn't be able to do that, and that's primarily how mom survived. And eventually ...I mean, eventually grandma became a really good cook and she learned how to really survive. She was a survivor, a really strong woman and very flexible.

Krystin: Do you know what families helped her out primarily?

Mary Ann: Yes, uh ...aunty Jet's mother and father. Um ...You know what, I can remember their names. But Yaun Ong, Y-A-U-N Ong, he had a grocery store right there on Tonto and 3rd Avenue. And so then he was the one who encouraged my moth ...grandmother to do that, to help support herself.

Krystin: did she just have an apartment and then ...or?

Mary Ann: Well they had a little house, a little dumpy house, a little small house, [laughs] right in that neighborhood. And that's how it started, and then her...she relied on her two sons and her uh, two daughters to really help her deal with whatever they ...whatever happened. She never did go into much detail into all that.

Krystin: Is the house still there?

Mary Ann: The house is still there, but the grocery store they had on Central Avenue and ...is not.

Krystin: Where's the house at?

Mary Ann: The house is probably on 3rd avenue, a little bit south ...north of Tonto.

Krystin: Is Tonto still a street?

Mary Ann: Tonto is still there, because Auntie Jet, her parents, who helped my grandmother, um ...lived in that house until about twenty years. And those buildings are still there.

Krystin: Do you know the exact address.

Mary Ann: no.

Krystin: 3rd Avenue and Tonto?

Mary Ann: mmhmm ...around the corner.

Krystin: Right on the corner?

Mary Ann: 401 West Tonto or something like that.

Krystin: Have you gone by and visited at all?

Mary Ann: um... I haven't visited since Auntie Jet had to leave that uh ... building, probably a good ten years ago or so, I've driven by just to see what its like. There were apartments and then the grocery store. And when we were growing up, her uh ...auntie's Jet's daughter's my age, Wendy, and I'd so spend the weekends with them or visit with them and um ...we would work in the grocery store. I learned a little bit of Spanish, qué quierde, which means, "what do you want?" [laughs] ...to the customers.

Krystin: what was that grocery store called?

Mary Ann: You know I don't think it had a name, and if it did it was so worn out we couldn't read it.

Krystin: How big was the store?

Mary Ann: It was a pretty nice size store, not huge. Probably the size of um... a living room and a family room and a dining room area. Small.

Krystin: So do you know where your parents went to school?

Mary Ann: yes, my parents uh ...well ...my father, I don't remember where he went to school. He went to school in Chandler and in Scottsdale area. But my mother and her sister and her two brothers went to Lowell's school.

Krystin: Where's that?

Mary Ann: In um ... South Phoenix, I don't know. It's somewhere around um ...somewhere around uh ...oh I can't think of the street now. Buckeye Road! Somewhere around Buckeye Road and 3rd avenue, in that area.

Krystin: What was it called?

Mary Ann: Lowell School.

Krystin: Like Fort Lowell?

Mary Ann: Like Fort Lowell. And then they went on to ...all graduate from Phoenix Union High School. And my two uncles and when they were nine through eleven or twelve or thirteen or fourteen; I'm not sure about the definite age. My grandmother sent the two boys to China to live in China for the four to six years so that they could learn to read and write Chinese. And she spent ... she sent money back, every month. So the grocery store must have survived. And ...either people were helping her out or whatever she was doing was thriving.

Krystin: And she ...

Mary Ann: And of course the daughters didn't get to go to China to learn to read and write Chinese, they stayed home ... in phoenix. [laughs].

Krystin: [laughs] ... learned to cook!

Mary Ann: Yeah!

Krystin: And her grocery store was the Central Market?

Mary Ann: Eventually it became Central Market, which her oldest son Walter Ong owned and used that for his career.

Krystin: So did she expand it or did he?

Mary Ann: No, he did.

Krystin: He did.

Mary Ann: The two brothers did when they came back from China and started the little grocery store on Central Avenue and then evolved into a big one. And then the brother, Uncle John went on to do his own ... his own career in the insurance business.

Krystin: And what did your mom and the other sister do?

Mary Ann: My mom married my father and so then she became um ...a cashier and worked in the grocery store because my father was in the grocery business, most of their 60 years together. And my Aunt Mary was one of the first Chinese show girls in the San Francisco night club in San Francisco, CA. When she graduated from high school she wanted to get out of Phoenix and there was a lady from Phoenix that had moved out there, Rose Sing, who encouraged her to come out and stay with her. And Aunt Mary was in the chorus line and enjoyed it so much. Today she's eighty-two and she still doing round dancing in Tucson. She goes to round dance conferences to learn the routines. And then she goes on, has the regular meetings in Tucson. And she's gone through three partners. [Laughs] Uncle Bob died of lung cancer, and then she married one of the partners of the ... of the ... of the ... of the square, the foursome. And then Garth passed away and then now she's got her third partner. My father always said that Aunt Mary would out dance all of her husbands. So it's, it's really great.

Krystin: Wow, how did your grandma feel about that? Do you know?

Mary Ann: You know, my grandmother was ...when I said flexible and so understanding of ...of human nature I guess and ... and life that she ... she wasn't really negatively affected. Of course they were worried and of course they were concerned about welfare of their daughter leaving, or her daughter leaving uh ... her um ... leaving Phoenix, but she was happy that she was doing something she enjoyed. And then eventually after two or three years she met Uncle Bob and they got married, had children, so she had to stop dancing anyway. And then they moved back to Phoenix and eventually settled in Tucson.

Krystin: What did they do in Phoenix?

Mary Ann: They were in the grocery business. Chinese people either had grocery stores or restaurants in those days.

Krystin: So your family had a big monopoly of grocery businesses?

Mary Ann: Well, I think all the Chinese had a big monopoly, in those early days.

Krystin: Were there other stores around your store?

Mary Ann: well...um ... you know I don't think there were ...um ...yes there were. There were little grocery stores all over the whole area there within ...I'd say ...a twenty-mile area, from ...oh where the ...um ... U.S. Air Arena is now. It used to be Chinatown. So there was a restaurant and several grocery stores and then as you go south and go east and west a ways many, many grocery stores.

Krystin: Do you remember Chinatown?

Mary Ann: um ...no I don't really. I didn't really participate in a lot of the activities in Chinatown. They even had a Chinese school; my husband Rudy attended that Chinese school when he was I think, teenage years. But ...I ...we never did.

Krystin: How far away were you from Chinatown?

Mary Ann: we ...

Krystin: ... your store.

Mary Ann: our grocery store ...um ...we were probably way north, probably fifteen miles or more from Chinatown.

Krystin: So did you have much other interaction with Chinese?

Mary Ann: We didn't through Chinatown, but we became active with the um ... through the Chinese church. And then we also ...

Krystin: sorry, is that First Chinese?

Mary Ann: First Chinese Baptist Church. Right now it's located on 48th street and Earl, but at that time we started as a mission on Central Avenue and about ...um ...south of Virginia on Wilshire, one of those streets, because we were a mission Central Baptist Church. And Central Baptist Church is no longer in existence. And then also the different age groups had social, Chinese social groups. And even our age group in high school and college years we had ...uh the Wah Mei club. And once a month we would get together and have special activities.

Krystin: What did that stand for?

Mary Ann: You know I don't know what it means.

Krystin: You just went?

Mary Ann: We just attended; we just participated because it was a fun time to get together with everybody.

Krystin: Do you know who started it or when it started?

Mary Ann: Well I'm not really sure when it started, but I think Lem Tang and his brothers John and Ben had a big hand in it. Because most of our social activities were dances, ballroom dancing and so they would bring their records ...and their ...what you guys call sound systems now but they were just called uh ...phonograph players. And set up and we'd do ...we would just dance to the records they had. Some of the gals would do the punch and chips for refreshments. And it was amazing we didn't have to have security guards out there we never had any alcohol, and we just got together once a month and different people took turns organizing. But one of the fortunate things was the ...uh ...the veterans what do you call it?

Krystin: the legion?

Mary Ann: The Legion, Thomas Tang um ...Post 50, at that time it wasn't called Thomas Tang, but it was Post 50, had a legion hall, had a building on Elm and ...just west of 7th Avenue, and so it was real easy for us to use that facility and not have to worry about renting. The location was a good safe location at that time. And um ...for special occasions, at like Christmas or new years or like that we would hire a band and charge a little bit of ...of coverage and um ... we were able to for ...well for \$150 dollars we could hire a band to come and play, a live band. So we really had some good times then.

Krystin: Who would participate in it?

Mary Ann: Probably all the teenagers, high school age and college age in the Valley at the time. Which was probably, we would have close to 100 people there. And we would plan ski trips up north to Flagstaff or go to Slide Rock in Oak Creek or um ... different little activities like that.

Krystin: Did you primary hang out with Chinese or ... growing up ... just Chinese or other ethnicities too?

Mary Ann: that's a really interesting situation. I grew up in um ... North Phoenix, graduated from ...went to Encanto and Clarendon Elementary Schools ... and then went on to West High and graduated from Central High. And um ...so I had my friends when I was in school but then I had all my cousin on the weekends and after school. My mother had two sisters and two brothers and we all lived in Phoenix we were our best friends with each other. Every Sunday, we would get together at Uncle Walter and Aunt Helen's house after church, and have a potluck. The parents would all pitch in with the lunch and dinner and all we needed was our cousins. And in high school we use to share our campaign speeches, if the campaign speech worked for Barbra when she was over at North High, then I would use it at West High or Central with my ...for my office I was running. We really had a lot of fun then. Then when we went to college we all went different directions to college and then we got married and had our children. And today now, now that we're all retired, we're getting together again, and trying to go on different little trips together and reunite our, our family ties again.

Krystin: How many cousins were there?

Mary Ann: There were probably, I don't remember; let's see ...Aunt Mary had ...

Krystin: Is that on ...

Mary Ann: yeah, Aunt Mary had five kids, Aunt Helen had uh ...four, mom had three, mom and dad had three, and um, Uncle John had four. So how many is that? Sixteen, probably sixteen of us.

Krystin: And you were all around the same age ...

Mary Ann: And we were all very close. Well each family had at least one of the same age, yes, and three and the ones that had four and five they were a little bit younger and not everyone had four and five children. But at least the oldest three are really close to this day even.

Krystin: Are they all still in the area?

Mary Ann: uh ...lets see 90 percent of us are still in the Arizona, or maybe 80 percent some are in Los Angeles and Shelly and her sister are in Minneap ...Minnesota and uh ...New Hampshire. But they come back at Christmas, so we get together.

Krystin: Every year?

Mary Ann: Every year we have.

Krystin: Kinda going back what were you, some of the responsibilities you had around the grocery store and in the house?

Mary Ann: My father spoiled us, he, my brother was the oldest and there was a five year difference between my brother and myself and my sister was three years difference. My father had high expectations for my brother, and expected him, and had him help in the grocery store. But my sister and I were not required however, when we were in high school and college we were expected to go work on weekends in the grocery store. And my mother would go, "Oh now when should I sign you up and when are you going to commit to coming?" and we'd always be so busy and active in school that we couldn't get there, often on a regular basis. One summer I did work all summer, but my father really did spoil us.

Krystin: because most people I've interviewed, right after school they're in the store until Chinese school and then homework and then store and then ...

Mary Ann: exactly.

Krystin: repeat every day.

Mary Ann: We were not raised that way.

Krystin: When did you start going to church?

Mary Ann: My father and mother and my Aunt Helen and Uncle Walter and I think two or three other Chinese couples in the community started the Chinese mission that was part of Central Baptist Church and the interesting fact is Mr. and Mrs. Henderson. Mr. Henderson, and I've forgotten his first name, was the produce man and he went around to the grocery stores and restaurants in Phoenix area and sold produce to the restaurant people and the grocery store people. When he died, on his deathbed, he asked if his wife would take it on as a responsibility or a challenge to reach out to the Chinese community and bring them to know Christ, as part of Central Baptist Church. And Mrs. Henderson did that, Mrs. W. C. Henderson, she went about and talked to these four families in Phoenix and encouraged us, the families to come and start a Chinese mission. And so they did. It was Walter and Helen Ong, Martin and Lucy Wal, Henry ...Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ong, Sr. and I think Mrs. Rose ...uh I mean Mrs. Wing F. Ong. Those are the ... those that I remember for sure. And I think it was just a small nucleus about seven or eight

adults that started the mission. And then my brother was two years old then and he's five years older than I so that was in the late 1940s. And then from that it evolved to First Chinese Baptist Church that's celebrating our fiftieth anniversary as a charter church. But we were a mission for ...and I was gonna look that up, I bet we were a mission for ten or fifteen years before we chartered into a church. And then after the church was chartered, twenty years ago maybe twenty-two years ago we started a Chinese mission church in North, that's call Northwest Baptist Church now. And they started as a mission from our First Chinese Baptist Church.

Krystin: So you guys have come a long way.

Mary Ann: So I have, I was born into the church.

Krystin: And you've continued with it?

Mary Ann: And I've continued. In my college years there were probably about three or four years where I was not real regular in attendance and I didn't take on very many responsibilities in the church. But after I was married and we had children I realized how important it was to have a religious background and how important it was for my boys, or my children, to know the Lord and so I made a ...I promised myself that I would take effort to get them to church. So our oldest son Kevin and I had a two year perfect attendance and he was only two years old, he was one and two, [laughs] he didn't even know the difference but so that's how my three boys started going to church.

Krystin: And they've grown up in the ...

Mary Ann: They've grown up in the church also.

Krystin: That's good, where was your first church building? On ...

Mary Ann: our very first church building out ...after the mission, which was on Wilshire and Central Avenue, with uh..First Chin ...with uh Central Baptist Church then um the first building we've ever purchased through the home mission board helping, was on Willetta and 2nd street, which is not far from ...well it's south of McDowell on 2nd street.

Krystin: Is that still there?

Mary Ann: the building is still there, yes, it was a Jewish synagogue. The Jewish people sold that building to the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist convention so then our church, they helped us, they loaned it to us so to speak. And when we left and went to the new building on 48th Street and Earl where we are today, the Spanish mission took over, which is part of the Southern Baptist Convention. And then they were there for I'd say ten, fifteen years and now the Jewish people have taken over that building again and they're turning it into a museum and they are including our First Chinese Baptist Church as part of the history of their building.

Krystin: How long were you guys there?

Mary Ann: We were there I'd say a good twenty years, I don't remember the exact years.

Krystin: twenty years there and then how many at the new location?

Mary Ann: about twenty, so it's been fifty years, I think we were chartered in 1956, so that's why we're celebrating our fiftieth anniversary. But we've been at the new location approximately twenty-three years or so.

Krystin: So through church did you meet more Chinese? Or was it pretty much the same people just ...

Mary Ann: um, of course I met more Chinese through church and through various church organizational meetings with California, Texas, Mississippi, and whom ever and so forth. But I still had a lot of Caucasian friends that I had through my work and through school. And I've maintained those friendships all these years.

Krystin: what did you do after college?

Mary Ann: I majored in teaching, in physical education, I was an archer at Arizona State University and then I became a physical education teacher and a health teacher in the Phoenix Union High School District and this was in 1965. I coached archery, golf and volleyball and sponsored the cheerleaders for a couple of years throughout the thirty-one years of my career and I went from West High School to Central High School to North High School and then eventually was an academic counselor at Central High School for my last eight years.

Krystin: Wow, kept busy.

Mary Ann: I was very busy and then I had three sons and raised them.

Krystin: That was tough I bet.

Mary Ann: Well I was fortunate because our mother-in law- Rudy's mother really helped a lot with the children.

Krystin: Did your parents participate in any family organizations or associations or the Chinese American association?

Mary Ann: you know I don't, my father never talked much about it but I think at the beginning, when he was younger he belonged to some of the Chinese associations, but then as he was older and my involved in his grocery business and he had a store in Phoenix, one in Yuma and a second one in Phoenix he was very busy with all that and did not get lot involved. Nor my mother, my mother was involved to a small degree but not a real joiner.

Krystin: Was it mainly the church involvement?

Mary Ann: Yes, it was mostly the church involvement, and family.

Krystin: How did the war, if at all affect your life? Like World War II.

Mary Ann: I was just a kid then but it affected my family. My father was fortunate that he had three children and had owned a grocery store so he did not have to go into the war.

Krystin: why?

Mary Ann: because he, they needed him here to provide food and groceries for the people that were living in the town and provide food for them. So they, I think the grocery store people were exempt, or whatever you call it, to some degree. Unless they really felt in their heart they wanted to go serve, then they didn't, they were exempt, and then also because he had three children. So we were fortunate because my dad owned the grocery store we didn't have to go through the stamp stuff that a lot of other members of the community had to. Because in those days, during the war, and I don't even know anything about it that much, is that food stamps were allotted during the depression and so forth and so we were fortunate because we already had the grocery store. And I imagine that's how a lot of the Chinese community people were affected.

Krystin: Did that hinder your dad's business at all?

Mary Ann: Well the whole country was affected and everything slowed down but it came back up and everybody else, it all came back.

Krystin: Did you suffer any prejudices?

Mary Ann: You know I don't know if it was ignorance or if it was naiveté or what it was but when I grew up I never felt any prejudice. Only one time when I was a junior in college I went to Maine, the state of Maine as a camp counselor because I wanted to shoot in the National Archery Association competition that was in New York City so my coach got me a job in Maine so I could go be closer to New York to get to the tournament. And a gal from Tennessee, one of the other counselors from Tennessee would not associate with me on our days off and I didn't tie it in to being prejudice or bias until after I got home and I kept wondering why she never wanted to go to the movie or go wash our clothes down in the town or whatever. And I think it was because of that.. She was from the south and I was brown skin Asian, etcetera. But I have never felt any prejudice or bias.

Krystin: Why do you think that is? Do you think Phoenix was just a more liberal town?

Mary Ann: I think Phoenix was biased, prejudiced my father in 1955 was the first Chinese to buy a large, big home north of Bethany Home Road and if I understand, a lot of Chinese families had to have their American friends buy property for them or buy the house for them and then they would move into the neighborhood and have a few little neighbors get upset and whatever. We never had that, and I guess it was either the timing was good or part of it; I didn't pay attention to it. My father raised us to have a lot of self-confidence and I never thought about it.

Krystin: That's good then.

Mary Ann: and it's not that I thought I was white either. I always was very proud of being Chinese and I knew that I was Chinese.

Krystin: When do you think you first realized that you were Chinese?

Mary Ann: Always.

Krystin: Just always knew.

Mary Ann: Always, I'm always. We followed a lot of Chinese customs in the home and in the family and we learned Chinese nursery rhymes and we went to Chinese church and learned Chinese songs. No, I was always very proud to be a Chinese, I still am.

Krystin: When did you realize that not every other family did that, like your Caucasian friends?

Mary Ann: That they were bias?

Krystin: No, that you were different from them.

Mary Ann: I never felt different, just, I didn't think about it. I just, my skin was a different color and my family values were different but, like I said, after school I associated with church and family and cousins and I didn't have to depend on them to be my social part. So it was a wonderful situation.

Krystin: Good, I think that covers pretty much everything I have, anything else you want to add?

Mary Ann: No, I think it's important though that we raise our children to realize that we are Chinese and to be proud of our heritage and the more children know about their heritage, the easier it is for them to adapt into the world. But today we are such a melting pot anyway that it's a

little bit easier, but on the other hand we still need to be cognizant of our Chinese heritage and really be proud of it.

Krystin: Good interview, thank you.

[end of interview]

SING YEE, JR.

Interviewed by Evangeline Song with Mary Yee and Krystin Yee
4 August 2006

This is an interview with Sing Yee Jr. on August 4, 2006 at his home by myself, Evangeline Song. Also present at this interview are Mary Yee, his wife and Krystin Yee.

Evangeline: For the record, do I have your permission to tape your interview?

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: Please state your name and its spelling.

Sing: Sing Yee Jr.

Evangeline: When were you born?

Sing: August 20, 1923.

Evangeline: Where were you born?

Sing: Phoenix, Arizona.

Evangeline: From what country did your family originate immigrate to the United States?

Sing: China.

Evangeline: Who were the first members of your family to come to the Phoenix area?

Sing: My father.

Evangeline: And do you know when he arrived in Phoenix?

Sing: In the early 1900s. I can't be more exact than that.

Evangeline: Can you provide the names and information of members of your family who moved to the Phoenix area besides -- did he come by himself at first?

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: He didn't have any other relatives with him at the time?

Sing: No. He had relatives there, but not real close relatives.

Evangeline: I wonder who your dad's first connection was to come here, do you have any idea?

Sing: According to the articles I read, I think it's an uncle or something like that. When he first came over, he went into business.

Evangeline: So it was probably because he had an uncle here that he came to Phoenix as opposed to going to Tucson or California or someplace else.

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: What did he do for a living at first and where did he live?

Sing: Santa Barbara.

Evangeline: California?

Sing: California, yeah.

Evangeline: So he was with another relative there?

Sing: Not that I know of. Other members of the Yee clan, but not blood relatives.

Evangeline: So then he came over to Phoenix because he had an uncle here. Did your uncle have a business that your father could work in?

Sing: Yeah, he was running a restaurant.

Evangeline: And then eventually the restaurant became your dad's?

Sing: He went into business with my dad and eventually my dad took over the restaurant, yeah.

Evangeline: What happened to the uncle?

Sing: They had a falling out and my father bought him out or kicked him out or something like that. I don't know. He didn't say.

Evangeline: Do you remember about how old your dad would have been? And when did his wife come over? Did he go to China to get your mom?

Sing: Yes. He went back to China in 1922 to bring my mother over.

Evangeline: What last name was your mom?

Sing: She's Woo.

Evangeline: Probably somebody here knew about her in China?

Sing: No, probably relatives in China made the recommendation. These are all arranged deals. My father lost his first wife. My mother was his second wife, second family.

Evangeline: Do you know about how old they were when they were married?

Sing: My father was probably born in 1876 and my mother was 1896. She was twenty years younger. My father was in his forties and she was in her twenties.

Evangeline: You are the first child?

Sing: Of the second family, yes.

Evangeline: In the second family. Do you know family members from the previous wife?

Sing: Yes, I do. I have two half-brothers.

Evangeline: Were they in Arizona or were they back in China when your dad was here?

Sing: Originally they were in China.

Evangeline: Did they eventually -- your half brothers come over?

Sing: My older half-brother eventually came over. The second half brother was being educated in Europe.

Evangeline: So your mom was born in '96, so she, I was trying to figure out how old she was when she married your dad. twenties?

Sing: Well, I was born in '23, so had married in probably '22; twenty-six years old, something in that order.

Evangeline: Do you remember where you lived? What was the first house you remember living in?

Sing: In the house where I was born, 517 North 5th Street.

Evangeline: Oh, you were born at home.

Sing: Born at home. At that time because my father was a citizen, he was able to buy property. So he bought the property, the house before I was born.

Evangeline: That was in 1920s. Wow. That's pretty remarkable because there was so much discrimination that they wouldn't have allowed them to sell to Asians.

Sing: No, if you weren't a citizen at that time, you couldn't own property.

Evangeline: So he was smart enough to know to become a citizen and he had met already the residency requirements evidentially then by that time, because I think there still were residency requirements -- you had to live here for so long and then you had ... I imagine he had to pass a test too.

Sing: Well, no, he had proof of citizenship from earthquake, San Francisco earthquake. And so he had lived here for at least ten years in business before he went back to China to marry my mother and bring her over.

Evangeline: OK, so he got some papers saying that he was born in America? Because of the San Francisco earthquake. OK. You were born at 517 North 5th Street. I remember going there. It seemed to be a pretty good-sized house.

Sing: It was a large house with large rooms, but not that many rooms. There was only about two bedrooms, but the rooms were all large.

Evangeline: Really?

Sing: The way it was built, the living room ended up housing my two brothers because they had pull out beds in the living room, which they were able to put in a sliding door and shut that off. The back part was where my mother and father lived in and us kids lived.

Evangeline: How soon after you were born, were you r sisters and brother born? Are you two years apart or how much?

Sing: About three years apart.

Evangeline: About three years between the four of you.

Sing: The three of us. Four of us. Two sisters and brother, yeah.

Evangeline: So you're three years older than -- Fuyung was the second one and three years between Fuyung and Oi and three years between Oi and George. Were they all born at home too?

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: Do you remember a midwife or something like that?

Sing: No, they had a doctor, obstetrician to come in to do the delivery with the help of a midwife I'm sure of that, I don't know.

Evangeline: But you had a doctor come to your house?

Sing: Yeah, there was a doctor that came in.

Evangeline: Do you remember the doctor's name?

Sing: Yeah, Brockland.

Evangeline: Dr. Brockland. I was born in a maternity home by Good Sam and my doctor was Dr. Little. I just wondered if he might have been the same one or not. But yours is Dr. Brockland. For your younger brother and sisters?

Sing: For all four of us.

Evangeline: All four of you had the same doctor?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: OK. I didn't realize that. Your dad's business was -- do you remember the address of the restaurant?

Sing: Yeah, 33 North Central Avenue.

Evangeline: It's right in the heart of downtown.

Sing: Right.

Evangeline: Can you describe the building? Was it one story, two story?

Sing: It was two story. Probably about 50 by 75-foot wide and about 150-foot deep.

Evangeline: That was a big place, wasn't it?

Sing: It was a good size place. We can show you some pictures of it, the front anyway. We had pictures of it before the remodeling and after the remodeling of the face.

Evangeline: How far back do you remember? Do you remember things when you were three, four, five years old? What are the earliest memories you have of that place?

Sing: No, probably the teens. We were insulated from the restaurant.

Evangeline: Oh were you?

Sing: Yeah. We didn't go there. Dad would come home every afternoon, brought lunch home and things like that. There was no need for us to go there until we were teens and we had to walk over there and go there.

Evangeline: About 5th Street and Central, that was I guess it would be five blocks -- from the restaurant to your house.

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: I can't remember. Were they long blocks?

Sing: Regular blocks like we have right here. Downtown the blocks are -- so from 5th Street to Central Avenue and Fillmore, Polk, Van Buren, Monroe -- that was four blocks south and five blocks east.

Evangeline: So it would have been nine blocks to walk. Wow. Did you guys have a car?

Sing: No, we didn't have a car.

Evangeline: Did your father ever learn how to drive?

Sing: No.

Evangeline: Did your mother ever learn how to drive?

Sing: No.

Evangeline: So then how did he go back and forth to the restaurant?

Sing: He called a taxi.

Evangeline: He used a taxi for all your transportation for everybody, the whole family?

Sing: Yep. And later on when we were teens, relatives came to pick us up to go visit them.

Evangeline: What do you remember most about your dad?

Sing: Going back and forth between the restaurant going to work.

Evangeline: Do you have any ideas how many hours he worked? I read somewhere at one time the restaurant was open for twenty-four hours?

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: Do you remember how long that was?

Sing: He operated that until almost World War II. 1941-1942 and about '42 when he had to curtail his operations to less, to more or less a twelve-hour operation because he lost all his help to the war and it was hard to get supplies.

Evangeline: When did you see your dad? If the restaurant was open -- it was like almost twenty years he ran it?

Sing: At least, yeah.

Evangeline: twenty years and most of that time was twenty-four hours?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: Wow.

Sing: He was only there probably from about 8:00 in the morning until maybe 7:00 at night. What he would do he would come home in mid afternoon, take a nap and then go back to the restaurant.

Evangeline: So he must have had reliable help to help him with the twenty-four-hour business.

Sing: Oh yeah.

Evangeline: It took a lot of employees too.

Sing: Well, the majority of employees were relatives who had come over, had immigrated and so we all were reliable employees.

Evangeline: So you remember your dad leaving in the morning, come home, take a nap and go back later in the evening. And your mom, was she always at home?

Sing: She was always at home.

Evangeline: Who enrolled you in school? Where did you go to school when you first went to school? Did you start with kindergarten or first grade?

Sing: I started in kindergarten at McKinley School, which is 2 blocks away.

Evangeline: It was only two blocks from your house?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: So you could walk there?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: Is that school still standing?

Sing: No, the building is still there as a supply center or something like that. But the building is still there, yes.

Evangeline: Does it look the same?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: But it's not a school anymore. What street was McKinley School on?

Sing: 5th Street and Pierce or something like that. It's two blocks north of where we lived.

Evangeline: Two blocks north of Fillmore on 5th street. The house, of course you would probably know, if your dad had it built or was it already there?

Sing: It was already there. He bought it from somebody else.

Evangeline: I remember the loquat tree that your mom had there. Did that come from China? Somebody had to drop seeds or something.

Sing: I don't know that. The only thing I remember we planted Chinese grapefruit trees. Of course she had a garden like everybody did. All the Yees did. Because there were no Chinese supermarkets. You grew your own vegetables.

Evangeline: So she got seeds from friends and they planted their own Chinese vegetables. Like what? Bok choy?

Sing: Yeah, all the common things. Almost all the people here would buy supplies from San Francisco, including your parents. Mail order and they ship it to you wherever you wanted it. Maybe two or three times a year.

Evangeline: Did your mom take trips to San Francisco?

Sing: In the mid thirties. In the summer time we would go there for maybe a couple of weeks.

Evangeline: You would, for two weeks at a time? Where would you stay?

Sing: In apartments in Chinatown, because we had some real close friends, not blood relatives, that we knew that we visited.

Evangeline: Wow in the summer time for two weeks in San Francisco, that's a good experience. Do you remember going more than once? Or would your mother go every summer?

Sing: My mother would go at least three or four times like that.

Evangeline: Wow, every year, that was pretty good. This school that you went to McKinley, was it kindergarten through 8th grade?

Sing: No, to fourth grade only.

Evangeline: Oh, to fourth grade. Did you go there all four grades?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: And then where did you go to school?

Sing: Then you go to Monroe School then. It was on 7th Street and Van Buren. That was 5th to 8th.

Evangeline: Do you remember playing in the neighborhood? Could you play out in the street or in the backyard? Or did you have neighbors you remember playing with?

Sing: Oh yeah. Everything was open. There were no block fences in those days. We didn't have a fence around the house. Everything was open.

Evangeline: So you guys would play -- neighborhood kids, do you remember the ethnic mix?

Sing: Where we lived it was primarily Caucasian.

Evangeline: Primarily Caucasian where your dad bought the house. OK. Do you remember what you played? Some of the games you played?

Sing: Mainly softball, for me.

Evangeline: Did you experience any like racism toward you from other kids? Or did they set you apart?

Sing: No. I experienced little discrimination at all to speak of.

Evangeline: Really?

Sing: Yeah, among the people there.

Evangeline: Not at school either?

Sing: Not at school. I was one of very few other than Caucasians going to school there -- so I was lucky. I'm sure there was some other times when you have experienced some discrimination, some redneck kid or something like that who inherited from their folks, they would give you a hard time. But most of the time -- no.

Evangeline: What would be a typical breakfast or typical lunch or typical dinner? Was that something that your dad bought all the time?

Sing: Breakfast and dinner was typical Chinese all the time. And lunch would be half and half. Sometimes my father would bring home lunch.

Evangeline: What would you eat for breakfast? \.

Sing: Always rice with something. Rice was the main dish for everything.

Evangeline: OK. You had rice for breakfast?

Sing: Yep.

Evangeline: And some kind of meat dish or vegetables?

Sing: Yes, something. I don't remember now.

Evangeline: What home food do you recall tasting for the first time? Well actually, because your dad had a restaurant, you probably were eating restaurant type food before a lot of other families were.

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: Was it good when you tried hamburger or other than Chinese food?

Sing: In our teens when we go to Chinese school, during recess we'd go close by to hamburger, hot dog place.

Evangeline: You couldn't fix those at home?

Sing: No. They were real famous for having hot dogs or hamburgers for ten cents or something like that. It was on Jefferson Street there was a couple of places that sold hamburgers and hot dogs. All the Chinese kids went there and buy hamburger or hot dogs.

Evangeline: Do you remember what names those places were called?

Sing: I don't remember the name now. Off hand ...

Evangeline: Jefferson and ...

Sing: Between first and second street.

Evangeline: Between First and Second Street on Jefferson, which would be about north of Madison. Was the Chinese school between Madison and Jefferson?

Sing: Yes. It was half block north of your dad's old store.

Evangeline: Was it in the alley?

Sing: Yes. That alley was supposedly an herb store. Two buildings were combined and the next building south was the Chinese school and the playground.

Evangeline: The school had a playground?

Sing: Yeah, We had an empty lot where we played.

Evangeline: Was this Chinese school built by Chinese people?

Sing: It was a building that they either bought or rented to use.

Evangeline: Do you know if it belonged to Chinese people, community?

Sing: I don't know. I don't remember to tell you the truth.

Evangeline: When did you start going to Chinese school? Do you remember how old you were?

Sing: Not really.

Evangeline: Teen age?

Sing: Early teen age.

Evangeline: You mean thirteen, fourteen?

Sing: Yeah between twelve and probably sixteen, maybe ten and sixteen, something like that.

Evangeline: It went on for six years?

Sing: Oh yes. For quite a few years.

Evangeline: Did Chinese school, how many students do you think? Twenty, thirty?

Sing: Yeah, about twenty, thirty.

Evangeline: And you had one teacher, more than one teacher?

Sing: Just one teacher.

Evangeline: When would you go to Chinese school?

Sing: 5:00 to 8:00 P.M.

Evangeline: 5:00 to 8:00 P.M. So your parents would have to take you there and pick you up afterwards?

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: But you were picked up in a taxi? You got there by taxi and go back home by taxi.

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: Was your sister going with you part of that time too?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: Yung and Oi? Both of them went to Chinese school for a little bit?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: Did you go for the whole six years?

Sing: Something like that, four or five years anyway. I supposedly got up to 8th grade or something like that, but you couldn't prove it now.

Evangeline: That's pretty good. So you were pretty busy. And you were into sports from school. When would you have time for sports if you went to English school ...it would be summer time I guess.

Sing: In summer time there were youth leagues, like Elks league, softball and I played on neighborhood teams.

Evangeline: Was that through City Parks or kind of a loose thing?

Sing: No, City Parks.

Evangeline: Did you have any responsibilities at home with your brother and sisters? Did boys do certain things at home that they are required to do? Or did girls do different things?

Sing: We all participated in doing housework.

Evangeline: What do you mean housework?

Sing: Doing laundry, ironing, house cleaning. Mom made us all wash and iron.

Evangeline: Did you do the whole family's laundry or did you do your own laundry?

Sing: Oh no, we did the community.

Evangeline: Everybody's laundry. What did your mom do around the house?

Sing: She was busy raising the kids and cooking.

Evangeline: She would cook at home?

Sing: Yeah. And tend her garden.

Evangeline: When would she know to cook like dinner or lunch or whatever, and when would your dad bring it home? Did you have telephones? Did they call each other?

Sing: Yeah. He would call home and let her know if he was bringing food home.

Evangeline: So you don't remember working in your dad's restaurant until you were a teenager. Did you go then?

Sing: When I was in late teens before graduating from high school, I spent little time at the restaurant.

Evangeline: Like weekends or in summer.

Sing: Yeah, weekends for a short time only, because he didn't encourage me going into the restaurant business, because he said it was a headache.

Evangeline: Did he encourage you in any other way; in other words he wasn't grooming you to take over the business for him?

Sing: No. But I did go through the whole regiment of washing dishes, washing glasses, and go on salad table and help in cooking or something like that, a little bit of everything.

Evangeline: Did you remember having different Chinese School teachers, or was it always the same guy for many years? Who hired the schoolteacher?

Sing: My father and another gentleman were supposed to probably be the board or trustees of the school -- they would hire him. We had in my time, I probably had three instructors. They wouldn't stay that long because it was a real chore minding the thirty kids who didn't want to be there.

Evangeline: Where did they live? Did they put them up somewhere to live?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: So they provided them room and board, probably some kind of salary for them to stay there. You wouldn't know if they did something else, because all they did was teach between 5:00 and 8:00 ... five days a week?

Sing: Six days.

Evangeline: They taught six days a week.

Sing: Saturday was all day.

Evangeline: Oh, you guys went Saturday all day? Wow. Do you remember their routine at all? Was there a specific routine or was it just reading and writing?

Sing: Well, instruction of teaching you reading and writing, that was predominantly it, yes.

Evangeline: Did they divide you into different age groups? Or how did he teach like ... you were the older ones, what about the younger ones? How did they do that?

Sing: What they did was, how long you had been in school and your age group and generally speaking, the older people who had probably been in school longer, they advanced by grades, so maybe half a dozen would be in upper level grades, a middle group and a beginners group. So there would be two or three groups of stages of advancement. The school was just like our grades. Grades 1-8 and you would start with grade 1 and go through grade 2, grade 3, grade 4, like that. And as you progressed then you learn more and go into a higher group. So generally speaking the older people like my age group was in the higher grades. It was just one room, sometimes it was two rooms. And what they did was divide it up, like this row was one grade, this row was another grade. And he would say, "we're taking this grade right now." And he would lecture to us, teach us and other people were supposedly reading on their own.

Evangeline: Did they supply the supplies, books? What was the routine? They gave you a schoolbook and then you went through the book?

Sing: Yeah. There were schoolbooks for each grade that they had bought from San Francisco. We all had our own books.

Evangeline: And you had your pens and ink.

Sing: Yeah ink pads.

Evangeline: And you had some practice ... to practice calligraphy?

Sing: Oh yeah.

Evangeline: So basically, you would have book, you would kind of like learn to read it and then you learned to write. Did they go into history or math or just reading a specific book?

Sing: There was some history involved.

Evangeline: Oh, they taught you some history?

Sing: Oh yeah.

Evangeline: What kind of history - on China or what?

Sing: On China yes.

Evangeline: Do you remember something that kind of sticks in your mind that they told you about China?

Sing: Not really. Whatever they teach you what ever happened in China before and after the revolution when Sun Yan Tze took over.

Evangeline: Did they cover Confucius at all?

Sing: No, not that I know -- no religion.

Evangeline: Do you remember going to church at all? Did your family practice anything that you remember?

Sing: No, not really. Although supposedly I had a baptismal certificate from a Methodist church.

Evangeline: How do you suppose you got that?

Sing: I don't know. I might have gone a couple of times and because of whom my dad was, they probably gave me an honorary member or something.

Evangeline: About community life -- during what occasions would you and your family get together with other Chinese American families? What specific events or holidays or cultural celebrations do you remember?

Did you get together with other families?

Sing: We went to visit, yeah. Because it is easier for us because we don't have a business that we were locked into like your parents, so we could go visit your parents versus your family visiting ours and that's because most of our friends all had their own businesses and they can't leave the

businesses. Whereas my dad was the only one who was tied to the business, so my mother and the kids

Evangeline: Did you go in a taxi to visit?

Sing: There were times, half the times we would go in a taxi and the other half of the time, the friend we were visiting would come and get us, because they all had cars.

Evangeline: OK, like who?

Sing: Like your parents.

Evangeline: Did you visit with the Toys?

Sing: The Toys, Jim [inaudible] was another one that I remember well.

Evangeline: Who else?

Sing: Yin Yung, Lucy's parents.

Evangeline: You went to their house to visit them?

Sing: Yeah, we went there. We went to Pauline Ong and visited there because generally speaking a lot of the ladies were Yees, married Ongs or whatever so there were sisters and brothers who were very close so we could visit them. I remember going to see Margie Gin and Su Fong's mother when they were running their own grocery store, just the mother and the kids.

Evangeline: Did your mother pick weekends or days or didn't matter?

Sing: It was always weekends, either Saturday or Sunday for maybe a few hours.

Evangeline: Was it daytime, night time?

Sing: Daytime. Only daytime. On special occasions, the same as now -- New Year's, August 15, different special days that we used to celebrate, Spring Banquet, Spring whatever.

Evangeline: You mean like the Chinese New Year's celebration?

Sing: Each family would celebrate themselves in their own homes. They would do something different. Have different foods or whatever to commemorate each occasion.

Evangeline: Do you remember how old you were when they started doing the 4th of July celebration? Was that after you were in the service?

Sing: No, before, late teens.

Evangeline: Do you remember how that came about?

Sing: Not really, but I remember we started out with for July 4th going to Jack Ong's family's farm around Grand Avenue because their father was farming this big land there so it was open and we went out there to celebrate. To play games and whatever. That's where it first started that I remember.

Evangeline: You were late teens, so it would have been in the late thirties.

You were playing sports in elementary school too?

Sing: Whatever they had.

Evangeline: In high school did they have team sports, did you get into those?

Sing: Not really in high school. But I was still playing summer games.

Evangeline: Did you do like choir or theatre or Boys or Girls Clubs?

Sing: No.

Evangeline: Did your dad have associations? Did they have restaurant associations at the time, do you remember?

Sing: I don't know.

Evangeline: Any family associations that you can think of?

Sing: Loosely family associations.

Evangeline: Would they do anything like they do now?

Sing: No, they didn't get together like they do now because everybody was too busy working 24/7.

Evangeline: These are some questions about war time experiences. Where were you when you first heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

Sing: I was in December, '41, I was a senior in high school.

Evangeline: Did you hear about it at school that day?

Sing: At school, yeah.

Evangeline: What did you think and what how did you react and how do you think other Chinese people felt about it at the time?

Sing: All we thought about is eventually they are getting you for the service. It's just a matter of time because they instituted the draft right away and so you knew that you were going to get called up sooner or later.

Evangeline: Did you get drafted or did you volunteer?

Sing: A Caucasian buddy that I'd grown up with through the years, he and I volunteered to join the Navy when our call came up for the draft, so we were allowed to pick where we wanted to go. His uncle was a Navy man so he said he wanted to go into the Navy. I said, "I'll go with you." So we both went for the Navy and he got rejected because he had a broken arm that didn't heal right, but I was accepted and away I went.

Evangeline: How old were you then?

Sing: Early 1943 I was not nineteen.

Evangeline: What did you do after high school?

Sing: I went to Phoenix College for half a year.

Evangeline: And then you got into the Navy?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: OK. Now this buddy of yours, was he from high school or Phoenix College friend?

Sing: From McKinley School, [inaudible] school and Phoenix Junior High School.

Evangeline: Oh my, you knew him a long time. Was he in the neighborhood? Did he live in the neighborhood?

Sing: Yeah, but not that close. He was on the other side of McKinley School and I was on this side of McKinley School.

Evangeline: OK. So you went in '43 into the Navy.

Sing: March of '43.

Evangeline: The other Chinese people, did they end up being -- some drafted and some volunteered?

Sing: Yeah, right. Most of them got drafted.

Evangeline: Most of them got drafted?

Sing: They ended up in the Army.

Evangeline: So how long did your parents live at that 517 5th Street house?

Sing: We finally moved out in '59. So my mother lived there from 1923 and we lived there until -- I went to the service, my sisters still lived there until we came back and then my sisters left and I went into the grocery business and I lived at the grocery store and then I moved back to the house and then later on when I left the grocery business and went to work for Air Research, then I bought this house in '59 and moved my mother out. So '59 was when we left.

Evangeline: Oh your mom moved over here to this address?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: Wow.

Sing: She didn't want to move naturally.

Evangeline: Was she by herself then at the time?

Sing: Yeah. We were living there for a year or two before with my mother. With the advent of our kids the grocery store back of us was too small so we moved back to the house. And then after that then we moved out in '59.

Evangeline: How long were you in the service and was it in the service that you met your wife?

Sing: Yeah. Almost three years, exactly.

Evangeline: And you met Mary in San Diego? Was that where you were based?

Sing: At the end of my service career that was where I was stationed in San Diego. Before that I was all over. Mostly in San Francisco going to school.

Evangeline: What did you study in school in the Navy?

Sing: Electronics.

Evangeline: You got married while you were still in the Navy?

Sing: No. Didn't get married until after I was discharged a year later. I got discharged in '46 and got married in '47.

Evangeline: You got discharged in '46 and got married in '47, what did you do in that year?

Sing: Went back to Phoenix College.

Evangeline: Oh you did? You finished your AA?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: In electronics or ...

Sing: College engineering, yeah. I was going to go to college, but I never made it.

Evangeline: So you married Mary in San Diego?

Sing: Right.

Evangeline: And how did you decide to go into grocery business?

Sing: Well, at that time I had done so much schooling I was getting tired of school and through the pushing of my mother and like that, "everybody we know, all of us are in the grocery business." So I said, "OK, we'll go in the grocery business." Because I worked in the grocery store a lot during my teenage years -- working for different relatives, including your father. So I said, "OK." So I decided to go into grocery business. How you said, "I'm the only Chinese who failed in the grocery business."

Evangeline: Did you buy an existing Chinese grocery store?

Sing: Yeah, I bought a small grocery store from a fellow Chinese friend?

Evangeline: Where did he go?

Sing: He wanted further and better things and bigger stores and did well. [laughs].

Evangeline: So you were in the grocery business. Where was the grocery business?

Sing: 20th Street and Yale. Which is south of Thomas Road and west of 24th Street, in that neighborhood there.

Evangeline: Is it still there?

Sing: The last time I looked, the building was still there, yeah.

Evangeline: What was the name of your store at the time?

Sing: Palmdale Market.

Evangeline: Then did you sell it to Ongs?

Sing: Nope. I had it sold to a Jewish buyer, but my landlord he said, "Unless you find a Vhinaman, you can't sell." I said, "The [expletive] with you, I'll just close it up. I'll take the loss." So I just closed it up and moved out.

Evangeline: Initially you were living at the back of the store with Mary. Did you have children there too?

Mary: The first year we had [inaudible].

Evangeline: So you lived and had the baby.

Mary: Stephanie came and then my sisters were all gone and mother was living by herself. We couldn't bring her to live with us, so we went to live with her.

Evangeline: Was that when your dad passed away?

Sing: My dad passed away just after I moved into the grocery business. He lived just long enough to sign the papers for a loan to the bank and then he died.

Evangeline: What kind of health was he in?

Sing: He is old age. He was used to working all his life and all of a sudden when he sold his store ...

Evangeline: This picture that you have here of your dad's restaurant on Central Avenue, just north of Washington, this picture was taken about 1935 or so -- there is a building it says Vaugh's Indian Store and there was an alley and then, what kind of store is that?

Sing: I remember now, you keep on going, it used to be Lerner's on the corner there on Washington.

Evangeline: This is Courtesy Drug Store was just north of your dad's restaurant. There's another little business here and there's this Frank Society Diamonds and Jewelry Store and then there must be Adams Street, because there is the Adams Hotel right across the street there.

Sing: Right.

Evangeline: Do you remember where Rose Sing had her beauty shop? She was on Central too, wasn't she?

Sing: I don't know to tell you the truth.

Evangeline: Do you remember Rose Sing's beauty shop?

Sing: Yes. I remember Rose, but I don't remember where she had her shop.

Evangeline: Your mother and your sisters never went to go to the beauty shop to see Rose?

Sing: No.

Evangeline: I know she had a beauty shop here. It was the only Chinese beauty shop I ever heard of at the time.

Sing: I really don't know to tell you the truth.

Evangeline: There are some rumors that in Chinatown there were some tunnels and things like that, did you ever see any of those?

Sing: No.

Evangeline: Did you ever hear about them?

Sing: I heard about them, but I never saw any.

Evangeline: You never saw any. Did you ever walk in the old Chinatown?

Sing: Yep.

Evangeline: In that little courtyard area?

Sing: Yes.

Evangeline: Did you know anybody there?

Sing: Yeah, the Wong [inaudible] family. That's Eleanor Wong, Eleanor Fi, Willie Fi.

Evangeline: Did they live in that China town?

Sing: They lived, the Chinatown building was like occupied half a block.

Evangeline: From 1st Street off of Madison?

Sing: From 1st to almost 2nd Street on Madison ...

Evangeline: On the south side of Madison.

Sing: And then only goes half a block in and then there's a courtyard in there and then there's a bunch of adobe buildings facing the alley and some Chinese people lived there, including this Wong Fi family. He was the one who played football. They were football stars at Phoenix Union. They were mixed Hispanic and Chinese, so they were big guys.

Evangeline: Was their father Chinese and the mother Hispanic?

Sing: Yeah.

Evangeline: And the whole family lived there. How many kids were in the family?

Sing: Three.

Evangeline: Too bad your dad's restaurant is long gone.

Sing: Oh yeah, it's demolished and gone.

Evangeline: What's in its place now? I don't even know what's in its place.

Sing: It's a big professional building I think.

Evangeline: What would you want your grandchildren or your great grandchildren to know about you and after a lifetime of experiences what would you consider to be the defining moments of your life that made you the person you are today?

Sing: [laughs] That's a hard question.

Evangeline: You had a lot of experiences. You've done different things.

Sing: I wanted to say that being in the service and the war probably ended up molding the rest of my life.

Evangeline: You think in a positive way?

Sing: In a positive way, yeah.

Evangeline: You felt it was good for you.

Sing: For instance when everybody went into the service, they were all complaining about the lousy food and I remember my remark was, "I thought the food was great because I had to eat Chinese food seventeen times a day or something." So you went into the service and all you got was different food. I thought that was terrific.

Evangeline: You thought that was great. So you enjoyed your three years of service?

Sing: I enjoyed it very much.

Evangeline: You have good friends from the service?

Sing: Oh yeah. Not to be snobby or something like that, but then all the personnel in the electronic training group were high school educated or higher and so they were no dummies either, so they got along very well.

Evangeline: That's great. We're going to end our interview session at this time and thank you very much Sing for talking with us.

Sing: I appreciate this. This has been very different from my other interviews where it was purely history.

[end of interview]

JOAN AND RICHARD YEN

Interviewed by Aurelia Bradley
22 October 2006.

Aurelia: This is an interview with Joan Yen on October 22nd at her home by Aurelia Bradley, also present at this interview is Richard Yen, her husband.

Aurelia: For the record do I have your permission to tape your interview?

Joan: Yes, you sure do.

Aurelia: If you could just state our name and its spelling.

Joan: Joan Yen.

Aurelia: And how about you?

Richard: Richard Yen.

Aurelia: And when were you born?

Joan: I was born September 25, 1930.

Richard: And I was born on January 9, 1927.

Aurelia: And where were you born?

Joan: I was born in Los Angeles.

Richard: And I was born in Phoenix.

Aurelia: When did you come to Phoenix?

Joan: I came in '53 I think it was – [inaudible] was born.

Aurelia: From what country did your family originally immigrate to the U.S.

Joan and Richard: China.

Aurelia: And who were the first members of your family to come to the Phoenix area?

Joan: To the Phoenix area. Well, I am the first one of my family to come here.

Richard: My father was the first one in our family.

Aurelia: And when did your father arrive in Phoenix?

Richard: I think he came here, I think it was 1915. It might have been before that, I don't know.

Aurelia: And that's when he came to the United States, did he come straight to Phoenix?

Richard: No. He was up in San Francisco. He had to go through immigration there. He stayed in San Francisco for one year.

Aurelia: If you can recall, why did your father move to Arizona?

Richard: Why did my father come to Arizona?

Aurelia: Yeah.

Richard: He had an uncle here. I think that was one of the main reasons he came here to help his uncle with [inaudible] grocery store or whatever he had here.

Aurelia: Do you recall the uncle's name or the name of the grocery store?

Richard: I remember the grocery store name, but I don't remember ... The store name was [inaudible] Grocery.

Aurelia: Do you remember where that was at?

Richard: It was on 9th Avenue and Hadley. That's where I was born.

Aurelia: In that grocery store?

Richard: In the house right next to the grocery store.

Joan: Southwest corner and now it's a housing project. That whole area and Hadley itself. Has been kind of chopped off.

Richard: There's not even a Hadley on 9th Avenue anymore.

Joan: On the back there is a Hadley that comes from 9th Avenue and stops and three blocks down it picks up again.

Aurelia: Why did you come to Phoenix?

Joan: To marry him.

Aurelia: He just wanted to come back to Phoenix?

Joan: Yeah, he had been in the service.

Richard: My father had a grocery store here. And her father was farming out in California. And when we got married, I was farming out there with her father and brother. And my dad got sick so I came back to help him.

Aurelia: And was that at the same grocery store?

Richard: No. We went back to China. He took the whole family back to China in 1932 and the war broke out in China in 1937. In 1938 he brought the whole family back here to Phoenix. He built another grocery store on Indian School and Grand Avenue.

Aurelia: Do you recall the name of the grocery store?

Richard: Harry's Food Market. He built the store there and then he added onto and made it a strip shopping mall, a little shopping center. He built that in 1939 and in 1940 -- I went into service in 1946, came out service in 1947 and he had built, added on more stores- there were about four more stores. I think it was about 1948 or '49. We ran that store - he retired -- what year did he retire? Do you remember?

Joan: After we came back.

Richard: I quit the store in 1964 in that location and I ran it for twelve years. So my dad must have retired in 1952 and I took over the store. I enlarged it. That was when [inaudible] came in. In 19 ... When did he go back to school?

Joan: It was in the '60s.

Richard: I graduated in '68 from ASU.

Aurelia: How long were you in school?

Richard: Three years.

Joan: You closed the store in '64.

Richard: And I went back to school in Dec. '64. So I got out in '68.

Joan: Anyway they leased the store and they sold the store and in about '95 ...

Richard: Sold the property in '95.

Joan: But your family doesn't own the property any more. You sold it off.

Aurelia: And now were you -- is that the house you grew up in then? Was there a house with that store?

Richard: No. We lived when my dad first came back in 1938, he built the store in '39 he had living quarters right next to the store and then eventually where we lived he built a house behind the store and used the living quarters from the store there for storage for a warehouse.

Aurelia: Were your parents actually able to own the land that this store was on?

Richard: Yes.

Joan: How did that happen?

Richard: Let's see ...At the old property on Hadley and 7th it was in my name even though I was a child, because I was a U.S. citizen. I didn't even know that until we were married. And my dad sold that property in 1952 or 1951.

Aurelia: The Hadley store?

Richard: Because I remember coming out to California and having to sign the deeds -- my name all that property he owned.

Joan: But then Harry's Food Market that property -- was he able to buy that under his name? I thought the exclusion law ended in '42.

Richard: Maybe he bought that under the Cobb's name; a friend of his.

Joan: That's a question we can't answer.

Aurelia: I understand that a lot of people said that property was bought in their children's names, their grandchildren.

Richard: We didn't even know it was in my name because my dad owned, he bought quite a bit of property. He had the store and another store, like [inaudible] grocery which was located about 9th Avenue -- no it wasn't 9th, it was 5th Avenue and Maricopa. He had the store and two houses there. That was also under my name.

Joan: Gosh, you were a rich boy.

Richard: When we came back from China we lived in one of those houses.

Joan: He didn't sell those until when? You would have had to sign them over to him.

Richard: It was like in 1951 or something like that.

Joan: When you turned twenty-one.

Richard: Yell. No, after I got out of service he sold it. All the stores he had he leased out to his people, friends of his.

Joan: Now you studied all this kind of law and everything -- the Chinese could not buy property until when?

Aurelia: After the Chinese exclusion act. I'm horrible with dates, I really am. In Phoenix it was even specific areas that the Chinese couldn't buy property in from what Betsy Yee told me. She said you couldn't buy property on Central if you were Chinese.

Richard: I had a cousin who came out after World War II he was in the service and he went to my house down in [inaudible] area they wouldn't sell up there.

Joan: Well, that was just discrimination. That was not an illegal kind of thing. We're talking about - you have to be a citizen in order to buy property here. Asians.

Richard: Like you say it was just in certain areas they won't sell to you.

Aurelia: The Chinese exclusion act it was nation wide, but even after that repealed there were certain areas in Phoenix where they would specifically, from what Betsy Yee told me -- it was specifically put on the deeds: cannot be sold to black person, native American -- and they didn't actually use politically correct terms -- it was like oriental or Indian or things like that.

What are some of your memories of living here in Arizona -- like after you were married and you came to Arizona?

Joan: Well, I first came back here, I kind of like that primitive life style and Indian jewelry and all that kind of thing and you saw it all over town. We'd go to weddings and they'd wear cowboy boots -- they'd get dressed up. Me would wear cowboy boots and wear their cowboy hats and women would wear squaw dresses, which is a derogatory term, but squaw dresses were like formal attire for Phoenixians and these were like custom made. Have you ever heard of them?

Aurelia: Yeah, yeah.

Joan: They were custom made and you choose your colors that you wanted. I had one that was white with turquoise and black on it. And it would have designs on the bottom and the top would look like they're Navajo, velvet top, but it wasn't velvet -- it was cotton and it matched the skirt. You wore this to weddings and all. Because buildings were not air conditioned. It was very hot and so in the summer time and we'd go to a wedding in a church, men would not have jackets and not have ties on and such. Downtown was just a little area around Orpheum Theatre.

Richard: Fox Theatre.

Joan: Right now it's still Orpheum. That was still - those in those days was the Orpheum Theatre. And it ran on, let's see Orpheum is on Washington or Van Buren.

Richard: No, it's on Adams.

Joan: That was the main thoroughfare. No shopping centers. No subdivisions. No nothing.

Aurelia: What about some of your memories of growing up here in Phoenix and living in Phoenix?

Richard: My memories?

Aurelia: Yes.

Richard: It was a small community. You walked downtown, every time you walked downtown you knew somebody. You always see somebody you know. There weren't really a lot of stores -- like Goldwater had a store, Diamond, which was sold to Dillard's and then there was men's stores, Hanny's, which was one of the best men's stores in town supposedly.

Joan: There was J.C. Penney's and Sears.

Richard: Walgreen Drug Stores on the corner.

Joan: Korrick's.

Richard: Korrick's, yes. Korrick's was a big department store.

Joan: This is interesting -- being Chinese -- anytime you go downtown and you'd see another Asian, you'd stop and say hi and they would ask me because I was out of town or they'd ask me what grocery store are you from? That's how they would identify who you were. "Oh, how are you, what's your name."

"Joan Yen."

"Oh, what grocery store are you from?"

"Harry's Food Market."

"Oh, Richard, you're Richard's wife."

Then the conversation would go on. Now you see an Asian someplace and you don't know who they are nor is there much conversation. There is no conversation unless you actually know them.

Richard: Well, the Chinese community in town here were mostly Tangs, Hongs and they were mostly from the same village or adjacent village in china. So they all were more or less, somewhat related somehow you know.

Joan: Chinese cousins.

Aurelia: What occasions would you and your family get together? Any holidays or major celebrations?

Richard: Major holidays for the Chinese in Phoenix was 4th of July. 4th of July I remember when I was a kid, they always had, on Broadway they had a swimming pool down there and since the Chinese all owned grocery stores, they'd get all these wholesalers to donate drinks, like

[inaudible] beer and coca cola and cut a hay with donated lunchmeat or something. We really had a big gathering every 4th of July. It was a big celebration.

Joan: That's the community. The Chinese community was only a handful of Chinese families, but they would all kind of gather together on such occasions.

But when you say, when would your family gather together? Well, they all kind of lived in the same little near or around the grocery store.

Richard: And the Chinese would always ...

Joan: They were always together.

Richard: Somebody celebrate their fiftieth birthday, that was a big deal in those days. They always had a big gathering for all the relatives. They'd go to a restaurant and have dinner.

Joan: And they still do. He's going to be eighty.

Aurelia: Are you.

Joan: And so he's going to have a big party.

Aurelia: I heard there's been a lot of big eighty parties going on.

Were there any holidays or cultural celebrations that your family particularly enjoyed like I've heard the Moon Festival and Chinese New Years.

Richard: Chinese New Year's was the families, most of the families celebrated on their own within the family itself. They had no big gathering.

Aurelia: Did your family celebrate that growing up?

Richard: Oh yes.

Aurelia: Did your mother or father cook special dishes on those days?

Richard: Yes, my mother always did cook special. They always make

Joan: Has to have the chicken with the head and the feet on it. [laughs] You always had it totally complete. Of course you go to dinners with Caucasians and they say, "Oh, I can't eat anything that looks back at me." Chinese can look at anything and eat it.

Aurelia: Did you all carry it on with your own family? Do you all cook ...

Joan: More or less. I don't. Because it's like the following generation, our children don't even speak Chinese. So they're very westernized. And each generation becomes more westernized and so they have their own busy lives and businesses and their own work -- it kind of takes up their time. And we did it too. So the most I would do is like grandma Yen would do, she even got to the point where everybody was so busy she would just cook chicken and say come over and get your chicken, take it home and eat it. [laughs] So she still kind of did that.

So what Richard and I tend to do now on Chinese New Years is just have a dinner in a restaurant. I think that's what a lot of contemporary couples and families do now. Go to a restaurant and eat.

Aurelia: Did either of you attend Chinese school?

Richard: I did go to Chinese school. I was eleven years old when I came back. My dad took the family back to China when I was five years old, came back when I was eleven. They had a Chinese school here and we went to Chinese school after American school every night for about three hours. From like 5:00 to 8:00. And go home. That was pretty tough because you're going to school all day long, then you go to school for another three hours.

Joan: And then you come home and work in the store.

Richard: On Saturday we had classes all day.

Aurelia: Where was the Chinese school located at?

Richard: I think it was 2nd Avenue between Jefferson and Madison, right in between there.

Joan: Didn't do too much good though, because he can't read ... anymore.

Richard: My dad used to let me write a letter to my grandmother every month. Every month I wrote a letter in Chinese to send back to my grandma. I did that for maybe a year after I came back and then you start going to school, pretty soon, you let go, let go.

Joan: If you don't use it, you lose it.

Aurelia: I've heard quite a few people ...

Joan: They went to the Chinese school, but didn't remember any of it.

Richard: In Chinese everything a written language is so different. You just have to memorize it.

Joan: You asked me if I went to Chinese school?

See my grandfather came over in 1874. So we're several generations removed. And so my father who was also born in China he decided that it was very important for his children to have Chinese school. We lived very far from a Chinese community. So he had a Chinese person who was working for him who used to be a teacher and so he let him teach us. And I learned to use the brush to do calligraphy and everything. And then I kind of perpetuated -- I was the one person in the family of six children who really enjoyed my heritage. So I went on to UCL.A. and I took Mandarin over there and when I started teaching and then everything I did, I did my Masters at ASU and it was on Chinese painting in the American School. Because Chinese are more structured and Americans were loosey-goosey in the seventies.

Then when I went to Scottsdale College to teach, I brought that into my curriculum. I introduced the Chinese brush as a writing tool. And they loved it. So then I started teaching and I created the only class here in the valley that is introduction to Chinese painting that was studio and painting. So I teach Chinese painting and I introduced calligraphy to them. And if you can see my paintings here, all my work is on my cultural background.

Aurelia: Oh those are beautiful.

Joan: This is a series and I'm doing a series on Asian women that have impacted my thinking. If you know the history of Hawaii you know the U.S. went over there and just stole their country.

Aurelia: The U.S. [inaudible] that a lot of people.

Joan: This is her abdication speech and finally a hundred years later Clinton came in, came out with a formal apology to the country. That was her when she was in prison in her own palace.

I'm doing a series of coins. See the big coin out there? And this is to introduce that series. See this coin is hanging, a circle with a square in it.. That coin is the metaphor for the Chinese immigrant who came over and all the hardships that they faced when they came over here. Chinese Exclusion Law, no pigtailed and so many people in a cubicle, blah, blah, blah. Anyway this is the dates when all the female ancestors came over or were born here. So In 1871 my grandmother was born over here in a mining camp. So it goes on like that up to my grandmother.

And this one is in 1864 when my [inaudible] grandfather came over and that's my grandchildren, grandson over there. This is obviously looking in the backs and it's looking toward the future.

Aurelia: That's beautiful.

Joan: Sometimes that early forced Chinese education has a lot of ramifications. And my whole purpose in doing this -- I had a great interest in it and at the same time I want to bring that legacy down into my grandchildren. Because you hardly know they're Chinese, because they're treated so well now. Nobody calls them names. And because discrimination, employment and housing and everything, everything is free and open to them. So that's my way of passing on the legacy.

Aurelia: Any of the younger generations starting to become more interested?

Joan: They either are or are not. Now we have six grandchildren and one granddaughter is very into Asian everything. I mean she did a painting of her for this woman and she chose to go to North Central High School because they taught Mandarin there. She took four years of Mandarin and now she's going to major in International Business and she has gone to [inaudible] and she did the student exchange, going back and forth to China and everything. She is very interested. ... And for her senior prom she was over in China there and she had a prom dress made for herself that was Chinese. She's very much into that. And that's her. This is in my series of women. [inaudible]

So over at North High she was very much in athletic [inaudible] I did this one for women in sports. You know that came from the Smithsonian -- there was a show at the Burton Barr Library and to accompany that they asked artists to submit any women in sports, so I submitted Emily.

Richard: Which she lettered in badminton for four years.

Joan: So her name is Joan Emily.

Aurelia: Is she named for you then?

Joan: Yeah. She is named after me. All the grandsons are named Richard. [laughs].

Richard: They didn't know any better.

Joan: While we're at it -- we don't want to take up too much of your time -- this one is the Dowager Empress. You know about the Dowager Empress of China of course.

Aurelia: Not a whole lot. I'm still learning everything.

Joan: She was in the 1800s she was so called the leader, the empress of China and everybody made her out to be like a horrible monster because the Europeans were trying to dominate China and trying to go in there and force the opium in and open up all the ports. So this is everything that went on in China -- the European domination, all the rebellions that happened over there -- it was totally war torn. And books are coming out now about the real deal. That she wasn't that bad -- she was just a woman trying to survive. So here she is.

Aurelia: Those are beautiful.

Joan: This is the series. Once I get it completed. For artists to get shown you have to go out there and fight them.

Aurelia: My boyfriend is a metal sculptures and so he's out there all the time pounding the pavements.

Now did you all attend church here in Phoenix? Or did your family attend church?

Richard and Joan: No.

Joan: You know the Chinese they used to call the Chinese "heathens." Because the Europeans went over there -- they didn't have an European lifestyle for beliefs over there, so they called them heathens. Of course anybody that studies the Chinese know that they have this philosophy, which is Confusion and Daoist and Buddhist and that is their religion. You know that. Most Caucasians don't know that.

Aurelia: A lot of the reason that the question is in here is because of the impact that the Baptist Church had on the Chinese community here.

Richard: About this church was started in Phoenix -- when it first started I remember going to church. They use to have, what's the name of that fellow? Who used to come out to the stores and pick up the kids to go to church every Sunday.

Joan: So he's got relatives that are very avid church goers.

Richard: We went to church for a while but then after a while -- Baptists, their religion you couldn't go to a movie or anything. I said, "Forget all this stuff; I want to go to the movies."

Joan: That's one thing that people don't know about the Chinese -- because of their background, their Confucianism -- now they are most tolerant nation of the world really. That's what they say and it's true. So whenever they go to another environment, they can very readily take in and assume the identity of whatever is prevalent or there for them. That's why you have a lot of Baptists.

Aurelia: Were there other group activities that the two of you were involved in or that you perhaps were involved in?

Joan: Not in the early days. He was working and I was raising kids. He was bowling.

Richard: I used to bowl when they had a Chinese bowling league. That was the only outlet besides working.

Aurelia: Did you also work in the store too or you just stayed at home with the kids?

Joan: I raised the kids.

Aurelia: Maybe you could describe a typical day start with a day in the store maybe.

Richard: My day starts about 6:00 in the morning. I go to the produce market, buying all the produce and bringing it back. Store opens up at 8:00 in the morning. We get everything set up and work. I ran the meat shop, cut meat and took care of everything else and I'd go home for lunch for a half hour about 12:00 I go home.

Joan: We would eat very punctually.

Richard: Half an hour and back to the store and then I go home for dinner at around 5:00 for one hour and I'm back at the store at 6:00 and I close the store at 9:00. Before I close the store at 9:00, used to close at 10:00, open until 10:00 at night and then I'd get home about 11:00. And then my day starts again the next morning.

Joan: And then he'd go bowling.

Richard: Once a week, I'd go bowling. As soon as the store closed at 9:00, I'd go to the bowling alley.

Joan: I have to tell you this. This is very interesting because coming from Los Angeles area, most of the Chinese there are second generations in this country, so they are a little more westernized. They don't all have their own businesses, so they don't have those long, exhausted hours that the Chinese Phoenixians have. So when I came back here, it was very hard to get used to a wedding at 9:00 at night. On Sunday some of the stores would close early, around 6:00. I think you closed at 6:00.

Richard: We'd close at 6:00 on Sunday.

Joan: Then they would have the wedding at 7:00 and the reception at 9:00. It was a long day, so it was very different. Different lifestyle here.

No vacations.

Richard: Most of the banquets they had starts at 9:00.

Joan: Then they wouldn't go bowling until about 10:00.

Richard: 9:30.

Aurelia: Was your grocery store, what days were you closed?

Richard: Seven days a week we're opened.

Aurelia: From my understanding a lot of the grocery stores only closed say on the 4th of July for the Picnic. Were there any other holidays that you'd close or were you open pretty much - 365?

Richard: For a while to begin with we're open for all holidays and then we started to close Christmas Day and 4th of July -- we're close and I think New Year's Day -- we're close and that was it.

Aurelia: Where were you when you first heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

Richard: I'll never forget that. I was in the store.

Joan: I was only eleven. So I was kind of totally unaware of anything. I heard both ways, either you really knew or depends on your age.

Aurelia: What was the reaction do you think of other Asian Americans around you, maybe perhaps your parents or other community members, do you recall?

Richard: In '41 you mean when they bombed Pearl Harbor?

Aurelia: Yes.

Joan: For myself being out in the California there are a lot of Asians, Japanese and Chinese. And of course the Japanese were put in internment camps immediately and the Chinese had to have a paper that told that they were Chinese so you wouldn't be arrested on the street, because you were supposed to be in an internment camp. They can't differentiate. And then we even had buttons that had a Chinese flag and an American flag on a map.

Richard: I still have those buttons.

Aurelia: Did you actually wear ...

Richard: Oh yeah.

Aurelia: You did?

Richard: Yeah, wore those buttons ...downtown.

Joan: We didn't wear them unless we went into Los Angeles, you know where people didn't know you because in a small town they all knew you.

Richard: We wore the buttons everyday, just wore that button.

Joan: Otherwise you'd get screamed at "You dirty Jap, get out of town."

Aurelia: Now did you have any Japanese American friends that you felt ...

Richard: Lots of them. In fact where we were on Grand Avenue, if the Japanese lived I forgot what side of the street ...

Joan: On the west side.

Richard: They got to stay and the other side of the street they went to camp.

Joan: East side they had to go -- east side they could stay, west side was too close to the coast.

Aurelia: I've been told also that north-south of I can't recall the exact road, north-south of a certain road was the dividing line.

Joan: They had like brothers, families one lived on the one side and one lived on the other side. Some had to go and some didn't.

Richard: That was terrible. I had a lot of Japanese friends who went to school with us, grammar school. All those Japanese friends. It was really kind of sad, huh.

Joan: Did they go into the Tanitas for instance, that huge family?

Aurelia: No. They all went.

Richard: I don't know if they went to camp or not. I don't think they did. But there were some like Henry. Henry went to camp, he and his wife.

Joan: You know what was sad -- out in California they had a whole area that was Japanese town, like little Tokyo now they call it, but it was all Japanese and they had stores and everything -- and when they went they had no time to sell anything or salvage anything, they just jumped on the train and took them away. And those places just turned into dumps. And then the black people came in and took over. When they left them out of the camp, the Japanese had no place to go to, because they didn't own that anymore. And so in my case somebody came to my father and said

there is this elderly couple and they have no family at all, and no home to come to. So maybe you have something there that you could give them to do that could give them a job. So we took in this older couple. So there were a lot of sad stories like that.

You haven't done the Japanese yet, huh?

Aurelia: Actually one of the other interns has talked to a lot of Japanese Americans. I'm going to hopefully sit in on a couple of those interviews. I'm especially interested in the Chinese American history.

Joan: Why is that?

Aurelia: The real truth is that Dr. Leong, the director of the Asian Pacific -- she taught a class that I took last semester called Women Warriors and she recommended that I read Maxine Hong Kingston's book. [inaudible] And that book was just amazing to me. I just wanted to learn more because the truth is I was really ignorant about Chinese history and I have this idea of what Chinese women are portrayed as especially in western culture and as I am learning ... No, they're amazing, they are not at all subservient or docile -- the way that they are portrayed. They are just an amazing group of women. Not that the men are any less, but I'm incredibly amazed by ... and I have a great deal of respect of a lot of Chinese women. And so I want to learn as much as I can.

Joan: Aren't you smart. You're a very sensitive, smart girl.

You know people tend to see all Asians as one , big group. They are as different as all white people. There are whole different kinds of cultural things differences. And just because the Japanese women are bowing all the time and serving the tea and subservient, they think all Chinese are like that. And Chinese take community baths just like the Japanese. No, Chinese are very puritanical.

Aurelia: And I'm learning a lot of differences -- just between a lot of the different cultures too. I just find it very interesting.

Joan: I tell you what is interesting to me aside from all your questions, but people will always ask an Asian "where are you from?" They say to me, "Where are you from?"

I say, "I'm from Phoenix." I know what they're talking about. I say, "I'm from Phoenix."

"No, no, I mean, where were you from before that?"

And I say, "Los Angeles."

"No, no, you know what I mean."

I say, "You talking about my heritage?" I say, "My heritage, my background is Chinese. I was born in this country so I'm Chinese American. I told my students this in class yesterday. I says, "When I go to China, they know I'm an American, but when I'm over here, they think I'm from China. And I can't speak English.

They say, "Oh your English is so good."

"Well, yours is too." I tell them. The thing is that Americans don't know, well Caucasians they don't know that Americans come in all different colors. I said the Chinese know that. The rest of the world knows that Americans are all different colors. The only ones that don't know it are the Americans.

Aurelia: It's true. My daughter was once asked, "What are you?" And she said, "Well, I'm an American." Because that's all she knows. She doesn't know ...

Joan: Does she look like you?

Aurelia: She does. She looks just exactly like me.

Joan: You look Eurasian.

Aurelia: Yeah.

Joan: You look kind of half and half. That's why I asked you.

Aurelia: I'm blessed with a great creamy skin, so I love it.

Now do you guys remember any memories of any specific treatment like we were just talking about -- about being Asian American or being treated differently at all because you are Asian Americans? Maybe you could share some more experiences.

Joan: It's always like that. In fact even our son who doesn't speak Chinese or anything and people will say to him because they think he can't speak English -- "DO YOU KNOW WHERE DOWNTOWN IS?"

And he'll say, "I don't know." Or he'll say, "I don't speak English." Anytime he wanted to be dumb. They have a tendency to always stereotype. If you're Asian looking, obviously you can't speak English.

I get that more than anything else.

Aurelia: What about you? Do you have any memories?

Richard: Growing up I didn't feel like I was discriminated against in any way.

Richard: When I first came back from China I was eleven years old I attended Adams Grammar school for one year. Went to first grade there, because I couldn't speak English. Then my dad built the store on Indian School and Grand and went to Alhambra Grammar School. And started second grade, then I went to fourth grade and went to seventh grade and eighth grade and finished out in four years. Then I went to Phoenix Union High School. From Phoenix Union High school I went into the service. After I came out I went to Phoenix Junior College for one year and then I went to [inaudible] I attended a business school out there, Woodbury College. That's when I got married.

Joan: Then I kidnapped him. [laughs].

Richard: Then I quit school, came back, worked for her father and came back to work for my dad and after they took a lot of property from the store where my dad was, they widened Grand Avenue and they widened Indian School Road, so we had no parking space, so we closed the store down and I went back to ASU. I finished up at ASU and I went into the brokerage business. I worked as a stockbroker for twenty-seven years. I retired from that. I went to school all over.

Aurelia: Do you remember growing up were your friends primarily other Chinese Americans or were they, what was the kind of racial diversity in

Richard: All my school friends, not all Chinese, there were Mexicans, there were whites and I used to play a lot of basketball in high school, so all our friends were all different races.

Aurelia: What about the customers at the stores that your family owned and also the stores that you all had? What were the customers like?

Richard: Customers where we were, mostly farms and they were farmers. We had Japanese people traded with us, we had Mexicans and we even had Filipinos. Because they used to have groups of Filipinos that were hired -- like the Mexican Brazeros here in groups that they farmed -- worked for the different farms out there and they used to come and trade with us.

Joan: A lot of your customers were Caucasian, white.

Richard: Most of them were white.

Joan: Your big customers.

This is kind of interesting -- I went to a high school where I was the only Chinese.

Aurelia: Really?

Joan: Yeah, our family was the only Chinese. Isn't that interesting?

Aurelia: At that time did you notice any different treatment then?

Joan: No Because they didn't know enough Chinese to have any bad stereotypes [laughs] so I was fine, I was active in school and all that kind of stuff.

Aurelia: Your family never owned a farm, right?

Richard: My family owned the farm.

Aurelia: And your farm was in California? Those questions are more about Maricopa County.

Are there other buildings of significance that you guys can speak of in the Chinese community?

Richard: You mean buildings owned by Chinese? Different locations?

Aurelia: Yeah any older buildings.

Joan: Sun Mercantile.

Aurelia: That's a big one.

Joan: That's a very big one.

Richard: Which one?

Joan: She said are there any other buildings that were meaningful to the Chinese? And I said the Sun Mercantile Building that they are fighting for now.

Aurelia: I think that is actually part of what prompted the property survey as well.

Joan: And I got to tell you that my son is the attorney for the group that is suing the city. What they did was wrong. You can't do that. It's an historical building, etc, etc. It's the last remaining building for the Chinese community. I went to the city council meeting and some crackpot says, "Well, many years ago when we were building the ball stadium, the Chinese, nobody objected to anything. And now suddenly they're objecting."

So my thoughts were you idiots. In those days, that as our parent's generation. They did not have the know how or means to put up a fuss. Now the new generation who are professional people and they are as intelligent as you think you are and more so, and they are saying you can not do this. This is our history.

I even told them at that meeting. I said, "I feel like there is almost an ulterior motive in doing this survey because maybe you think you can get those Chinese to go someplace else and gripe about some other building." But that is the one.

Aurelia: It seems maybe you can share more of your experiences with your parents -- that you said part of their land was just taken for the road. It seems like that happened consistently to more than one Chinese business owner. Is that ...

Richard: There used to be a Laotian American kitchen, do you remember where that was?

Joan: Well I mean that whole string of stores, but she's talking about like when Harry's Fruit Market -- when they to have that area for the freeways and the highways to go through, they just kind of took over that property and cut down the properties, so you didn't have enough parking, right? Isn't that what you just said?

Richard: That's why I got out of the grocery business?

Joan: What was that -- eminent domain or something?

Richard: Yes.

Joan: They just say we're taking it -- too bad. They pay you for it.

Richard: They paid for it. But it took a long time for us to get the money.

Joan: You don't have no choice to say, "Well, I don't want you to take it, I need it."

Aurelia: And you said your son was the attorney ...what is your son's name?

Joan: Obviously, Yen.

Aurelia: Is he [inaudible] OK I think there is an interview that they had done a few years ago with your son that I have read through.

Joan: He was quite prominent in a lot of community type things.

Aurelia: Maybe you could talk about some of the foods that you ate for breakfast, lunch, dinners?

Joan: Bacon and eggs.

Richard: My dad at the grocery store I remember ...

Joan: ...sandwiches.

Richard: ...a real fancy breakfast. He had lamb chops with the kidney, fried that, and have that for breakfast with eggs.

Aurelia: He cooked it?

Richard: He cooked it.

Aurelia: For himself?

Richard: For himself and me. I remember that. Not every morning. It was a special breakfast that we had.

Joan: What was it just for you and him? How about the rest of the family?

Richard: Well, we got up to go to produce market.

Joan: Oh, you used to go with him.

Richard: I used to go to the produce market with my dad. He used to get up when he had the store, he opened the store at 7:00 in the morning and we'd go to the produce market at 4:00 in the morning.

For breakfast we always had breakfast -- that was a meal of bacon and eggs or if we're down at the produce market and they always met with two or three other friends at the produce market and we'd go to a restaurant and I remember the favorite always had custard pie and coffee. [laughs] That was one of their favorites.

Aurelia: And then what was for lunch?

Richard: For lunch -- my mother always cooked. She cooked two big meals a day.

Aurelia: Chinese lunch?

Richard: Chinese lunch and dinner. She cooked that because my dad had hired help who were Chinese. So mom cooked lunch for them.

Joan: Those were his early days. Then when he got married, then he had sandwiches for lunch. He had cereal for breakfast.

Richard: We never went hungry. Even if you own a grocery store, you always feed, mom always cooked the meat that wasn't sold or the vegetables, tomatoes are getting a little soft, those are the things that we ate.

Aurelia: How many children were in your family?

Richard: There were -- I had three sisters and me.

Aurelia: When did you start working in the grocery store and start working with your dad going to the produce market -- how old were you?

Richard: Actually I went to school, we all worked in the store after school, like we cashiered and at night in those days we used to buy eggs, come to thirty-dozen to a crate and we'd sack them and put a dozen to a bag and lard came in fifty-pound barrels and we'd weight them in one pound, two pounds, and three pound packages. We did all that at night. Pinto beans came in 100 pound sack. We put them in two-, five-, and ten-pound sacks. So my sisters and I did that after store closed.

Joan: And after Chinese school. American school and Chinese school and making "As."

Richard: I remember my mom always gave the kids fifty cents a week.

Aurelia: Was that your allowance?

Richard: Fifty cents a week went to the savings account. Each of us, there were four of us, so that was two bucks a week. [inaudible] This is amazing. When we got married, I don't know how many years that she was putting fifty cents for each kid. I had \$4,000 in the bank when we got married.

Joan: Weren't you sending home money from the service too? Wouldn't that go in there?

Richard: No. In the service I made \$51.00 a month. Never sent any of that home. That was just from fifty cents a week. It just showed us how to save.

Joan: His mother was a really good cook and she was the only person that I ever knew who really loved to cook. A lot of women say they love to cook. Oh yeah, only when they don't have to clean up and yeah, they're just going to go in there and putz around and say, look I cooked this. But I mean she loved to cook. And the more people she could cook for the better. She wanted people to stay and eat. And well, I can't come home from work, why don't you come over here and your kids over here and I'll cook for everybody. I mean her life was her cooking.

Richard: She was a fantastic cook. She really loved how to improvise because the store was in a Mexican town and she first came over at Thanksgiving they had turkey. She had never seen a turkey before in her life. The neighbors taught her how to cook a turkey and taught her how to make tamales.

Joan: Yeah, she was good at tamales.

Richard: Pretty soon she was making tamales different from what the Mexicans were making. She put raisins in it, olives in it, things different flavored tamale.

Joan: Yeah, that was good.

Richard: My mom was amazing. She used to carry us when we were babies on her back, Chinese style. They have ...what do you call those?

Joan: Do you know about those?

Aurelia: I don't know.

Joan: It's a cloth that they tie, it's like a square and it has four ribbons like and the square is around the baby's bottom and back and they take this, the two ones on the bottom and they take it up like this and they take the top ones and they tie it here. The Americans have a papoose like, only it's not a board and it's not swaddling. And baby just sleeps there.

Richard: She'd have us on her back and she'd be working carrying like 100 pound sacks of flour and stuff and she's moving around. And my dad used to tell me about her how hard she worked. She opened the store before he comes back with the produce and she cut the meat, was a butcher.

Joan: So you're talking about independent women, she was very much that.

Aurelia: What were your parents' names?

Richard: Harry, they called him Harry and my mom's -- they call her Susie.

Joan: And they called her Susie because the Chinese women always maintained their maiden surname and her maiden surname was Suwho and they specificized with Shi. So she was Yen Suwhoshi and so they called her Susie.

Aurelia: Did your parents pick out your name?

Richard: I had an aunt who was born and raised here in Phoenix and she was well versed in English and she named all my sisters and myself.

Joan: I can tell you a little story that is very cute and very unique and kind of special to me. They had their grocery store in south Phoenix. It was all Hispanics around there. And the children because they knew the customers really well, the children would go over to the customer's homes and they learned to eat tamales and they'd take make up over there and the Hispanics would put on their make up for them and all this. Grandma was telling me all this and she says one day, what was her name, she had a name for her -- she says she came over to the store and asked me, "Is it all right if I take Richard to church with me?"

And she said, "Church, that's good for you. That makes you a better person." So she said, "OK, you can take him to church."

He said she made him this little white suit with little short pants and little white jacket and she took him to church. Well, she took him to church and she baptized him Catholic. [laughs] ... papers and this lady who took him was his godmother. Was that cute? Because his mother didn't know the significance of what she was doing and his mother although she lived over her for so long, she really couldn't really understand English very well. She could speak Spanish pretty good, but she didn't understand English and all that stuff.

When we were looking for passport, we found his Baptism papers.

That's why I say for the Chinese to merge themselves into any religion at all, it's very easy for them because they have to restraints. It's not like you're Chinese, you can't be Catholic. You can be anything.

In Los Angeles like here the main church in the early days was Baptist. So everyone was Baptist. You go out to L.A. they have main churches, Chinese churches, or Presbyterian, Congregations - - they're all Protestant churches. Not many Catholics. There must be but in my experience it was

Aurelia: From what I'm gathering the Chinese Catholic was few and far between. Even here in Phoenix ...

Joan: I think because they were too restrictive. You can't get married and this and that. And the Chinese don't believe in that.

Aurelia: I think we've covered a lot of my questions. Were there any other experiences that you all would like to share or anything else that you would like to tell me about? Or do you have any pictures of any of the old buildings or anything like that that you would be willing to

Joan: They had an event at the Phoenix History Museum ...

Aurelia: Oh, the one down there ...

Joan: ...by Heritage Square.

Aurelia: I haven't been there yet.

Joan: Are you familiar with the Phoenix area?

Aurelia: Not really. I moved from the east valley.

Joan: You know where the Science Center is?

Aurelia: I do know where the Science Center is.

Joan: Science Center -- that complex, that last house and everything -- there is Phoenix History Museum there. And what they did one year is they decided to kind of focus on the Chinese. And so the Chinese all took their stuff down, collected their pictures and everything and there's a picture of the Ahwing Grocery Store with his father standing in front of it and it's around here someplace. I don't know where it is.

They have a treasure trove of stuff over there. I think I did mention to Karen at lunch when they had a meeting. I don't know if they have copies of it or what. But I know there is an old picture around here. If I can dig it up, I'll be glad to let you use it. I'll make you a copy.

Aurelia: That would be great. I would be truly interested.

Richard: Ah Wing's store?

Joan: What? Harry's Food Market? Yeah, there are pictures of that too. You can even drive by and take a picture of it. It's not called Harry's Food Market -- it's a bail bond place.

Richard: It's on Crenshaw.

Joan: Pawnshop.

Aurelia: And you said it's 35th and what?

Joan: 35th Avenue and Grand.

Richard: It's actually on the corner of Indian School and Grand Avenue.

Joan: It would be on the southeast corner there at those points.

Aurelia: Anywhere Grand is ...

Joan: I know it's a mess. [laughs] So it's Grand, Indian School and 35th Avenue.

Aurelia: I'll just have to go over to the museum and see what they have as well.

Or there any other experiences or anything else that you guys think I should know?

Joan: I think that the event that the history museum had down there -- they had several people, you know the Toys are on of the pioneer families and if you've been here before a certain year -- they call them first rounders.¹ So they were one and who was the other one.

Richard: Was that Henry, Fred Ong?

Joan: Yeah, Fred Ong's family. And so then they got a bunch of us -- like their little advisor board, and I kind of get hooked into those things, although I'm not a native of here. And so they decided to kick off the whole month of this Chinese history thing, they would have a meal which they always do, like a reception and they said, we'll do this and we'll do that and how much food do you need -- well, we usually get maybe about fifty people or up to 100 ...

¹ First Families.

I said, "If you do this with the Chinese community, you're going to get the whole community here, because this will be the first time in the history of the Chinese community that anybody is even interested in honoring the history of the Chinese here."

"Oh maybe we should get a little bit more food then. And if the weather is good, maybe we'll have it outside."

The community themselves -- they notified the Chinese restaurants and they had the golden dragon come in with sixteen people doing the dragon dance and we had so much food -- they set tables out -- the place was mobbed. I mean mobbed totally. People got dressed up, it was free, and they were going to have all these activities and afterwards they would go in there and tour the place. It was just mobbed. They had so much food too, mountains of food -- the restaurants all contributed food.

I don't think they ran out of food. They still had a mountain full of fortune cookies for sure. But they ran out of places to sit. And so I think that's kind of a tribute of the Chinese community. I think there is this pride now in who they are and that's why they are not willing to give up that Sun Mercantile war.

For once, instead of being looked down on, they're looked up to. So that is kind of nice for any group.

The Native Americans were so horribly treated and it was so unfair and finally it's getting noble now.

Richard: I think one thing that might be of interest is the reason why my dad took us all back to China was that we couldn't converse with my mother, because our language, we only spoke Mexican. All my sisters and I it was our first language. We couldn't speak English, we couldn't speak Chinese. In the whole neighborhood it was just Mexicans. So my dad says how is she going to raise the kids if she can't even talk to them, so that is why we all went back.

Joan: One thing too, many of the Chinese families here went back with the idea of actually building homes and living there and raising their kids -- that's one thing about the Chinese is their roots, our families, our country and they're proud of who they are.

[end of interview]

EDWARD YUE

Interviewed by Brandon Wong with Kimball Kam
7 May 2007

Brandon: We're doing an interview with Edward Yue on May 7th, 2007 at St. Joseph's hospital. My name is Brandon Wong and I'm here with Kimball Kam. For the record do I have permission to record this interview?

Edward: Yea, it's OK to record this.

Brandon: So, can you please state your name and the spelling of it.

Edward: Edward Yue(pronounced "Yee"), I spell the last name Y-U-E. Edward is E-D-W-A-R-D.

Brandon: When were you born?

Edward: January 30th, 1939 born in Phoenix, Arizona. It was at 18th (Lateral 18) and Maricopa which is now called 59th Ave. and Thomas. I was born in a house, not in a hospital, and at that time it was in the outskirts of Phoenix.

Brandon: So, you were born right here in the valley?

Edward: Here in the valley, right.

Brandon: Just some basic background information about your family. From what country did your family initially immigrate to the United States?

Edward: From China. Hoi Ping, its probably southwest of Canton. And Hoi Ping is the closest town near there. Or now they call it Kai Ping, the mandarin is Kai Ping. If you speak the Cantonese or the Toi San, its Hoi Ping.

Brandon: And what (language) do you speak?

Edward: I speak a little *Toi San*. Mostly English is my predominant language. I speak a little bit of *Toi San* which is a village dialect, a form of Cantonese. They call it *Say Yep*, 4th dialect.

Brandon: And who are the first members of your family to come to Phoenix.

Edward: My dad came here in 1918. Then he went back in 1934 and brought my mom back with my stepbrother 'cause he'd been married before and he had lost his first wife.

Brandon: What was your father's name?

Edward: Frank T. C. Yue. He was a graduate of Ling Nom University in Canton which is a world respected uh ... it's sort of like the Stanford or Harvard of China at the time. You had to have a lot of money to get in, you had to be smart to get in, not everybody got in.

Brandon: How long did he live, or is he still alive today?

Edward: He died in 1990. He was ninety years old. He was born April 1st, 1896.

Brandon: Same day as my dad, or, he was born on the first, also. April 1st. Around what time did they arrive in Arizona?

Edward: When he first came here, he worked for his brother-in-law. 16th Street and Jefferson at East Lake Market. He came over on a student visa, although he was already a graduate of Ling Nom University. He attended Lamson Business College at that time and then he had his own store. Frank's Cartwright Store, at that time it was called 18th and Maricopa which today is 59th Ave and Thomas. Then he sold it and built a store on the northwest corner and that was Frank's Cut Rate Market.

Brandon: What did they sell there?

Edward: It was a grocery store. It also had gasoline pumps. I have a picture of him, sitting on a horse in front of his store, and before, we had a picture of it, and when they had Chinese Week they would, the caption underneath it was "Before Circle K."

Brandon: Is there any way maybe that we can get some copies of those photos?

Edward: Yeah, I can get you copies of that.

Brandon: Did your parents first move to Phoenix when they got here, or what part of Arizona did they get to, did they arrive in?

Edward: Well at that time they were living behind the store, we all lived behind the store, and they had outhouses at that time [laughs].

Brandon: When they first came to America did they come straight to Arizona or did they stop in another state?

Edward: Yeah. Well they came through San Pedro instead of San Francisco. He came over with a student visa, when he went back, he went back as a merchant, so he didn't have to go through Angel Island in San Francisco, they came to San Pedro, in the L.A. area. Yea they came directly to Phoenix, 'cause he was already living here, and then my mom, you know, came directly to Phoenix.

Brandon: You said that when he originally came here, he came on student visa, right?

Edward: Yeah.

Brandon: And then he went back to China?

Edward: He went back to China as a merchant because he had his own grocery store at that time.

Brandon: So, at what point did he come back from China, to here?

Edward: He came back in 1935 and then my oldest brother was born in December of 1935.

Brandon: What's your brother's name?

Edward: His name is Frank Joe Yue, but he goes by Joe. You know, he uses Joe.

Brandon: Well, speaking about your brother and about your family, I wanted to talk about where you grew up and the house you grew up in. So, when you were born, you were born in a house, right?

Edward: Yes.

Brandon: And where was that again?

Edward: 59th Avenue and Thomas. And then, in the early forties, we moved to 719 East Adams. My dad had another store there at 7th Street and Washington, on the southeast corner, it's called Consumer's Market. We lived there until about 1954, '52 or something like that, until I went to the ...I attended a grammar school called Washington School at 9th Street and Washington. First three grades and then I went to Monroe, which is at 7th Street and Monroe, up to the sixth grade. Then we moved from there to 1606 East Flower. And from there I attended William T. Macken School, which is in the Creighton District, and that's located at 22nd Street and Virginia. I graduated from William T. Macken and from there I went to North High, and graduated in 1957. After that I went to Phoenix College for a while, and then got drafted in the Service in 1962. January 22nd, I had almost two years of college, at that time. It was during the Berlin Crisis, when they were building the Berlin Wall. Then, when I was in the service, we had the Cuban Missile Crisis going on, and then I was due to get out in December 17 of 1963.

They were going to let me out a month early, you know, and in November, late November, when Kennedy got assassinated, I thought I was going to get extended, in the Service, but they didn't extend us, and I spent boot camp at Colorado Springs, at Ft. Carson, and they had reactivated the 5th Division there, and I was a medic attached to an artillery unit, the 5th Battalion, 4th Artillery. So, then I got out of the service and I was tending bar at Wing's Restaurant. Then I got married, and then went back to school, and finished my A.A. at Phoenix College, then transferred to ASU at night school.

I was a psych major but when I transferred to ASU at night school they didn't have any psych classes at night, so I switched over to sociology and got a degree in, a B.S. in Social Welfare, and I finished my degree in 1974, while working full time for the Public Defender's office.

The way I got the job through the Public Defender's office was that I was working at Wing's as a bartender, and, actually, all through high school I worked at Wing's as a sixteen year old, as a busboy. Then, I worked in the kitchen doing dishes and a little bit of cooking, and learned to cook back there.

Brandon: And where was that located at?

Edward: Wing's Restaurant was 16th Street and Thomas, owned by Wing F. Ong, the late senator Wing F. Ong. And my wife was Sharon Lee Dennis. She was Caucasian, and she had a daughter named Tracy Dennis, who was three years old at the time we got married in August of 1965. August 30th 1965. I think that's when it was. We were married for thirty years. She died on October 20th, 1995. We had a son named Aaron Frank Yue. He was born in November of 1965.

So, I spent thirty-five years with the Public Defender's office as an investigator, doing investigation work for them, after I got my degree, and uh, that's where I met your dad. He used to hang around with people near 20th Street and Clarendon at uh Loma Linda School. And Marianne ...

Brandon: Marianne Quan ,yeah ...what about her?

Edward: We were in the same class, but she attended Macken and I finished 7th and 8th grade there. And her dad, Bob Quan. When their parents to China, Bob and his brothers, Bob and Dave stayed at our house at 719 East Adams when their parents were in China. So, I've known them for a while.

Brandon: Just for the record, that's Robert and David Quan and they are my grandpa and his brother. Well you had mentioned that growing up, you said that you had gone through all this different schooling and you said that your parents owned a grocery store and a gas station.

Edward: That was the first one.

Brandon: Well can you go ahead and describe the first one and then we'll gone in order to the other ones?

Edward: The only one I remember was Frank's Cut Rate Market and it's on the northeast corner of 59th Ave. and Thomas. It was basically a, not a block building, it was a 2x4 building to be movable, 'cause I know we sold it to my uncle.

Brandon: Who was your uncle?

Edward: Uncle Harry Yue. And he had that store, they moved that store during the war to 35th Ave. and Van Buren and it was Western Food Market and later on that store got burnt down and they rebuilt another one 35th Ave. and Van Buren. But you know, in the old days, they had pumps and you actually had to pump the gas out of there. I just remember seeing it there, but I never had to do that because I was too young.

I was probably three or four years old when we moved from there to 719 East Adams and moved. I remember the place at 59th and Thomas had an outhouse, and there was a canal that ran north and south of there I remember falling into that canal one time and hanging on some roots until somebody pulled me out. I don't remember who did it, but it was a pretty deep canal, you know, for irrigation. And on the southwest corner, was the church and now it's a mortuary.

Caddy corner from it was Cartwright School. And I've been told that my brother's and I were named after the Cartwrights, but I don't know if that's true or not. As far as the store goes, I know it's a white building because I only know that from the pictures I see. That's about all I remember about that store. The store Consumer's Market ...

Brandon: And this is the one after?

Edward: Yea the second store at 7th Street and Washington on the Southeast corner. It was a block building and I know that at one point I started a fire in the back of the store as I've been told. I don't remember doing it, but it got put out, it didn't get burnt down. It got put out pretty quick.

Brandon: At what age were you when you guys moved to the second store?

Edward: I think I was probably three or four. I know during the war at one point, a lot of the times I had to tell people I was Chinese not Japanese, you know, this was during World War II during early forties until the war ended.

Brandon: So, we've got the first store and the second store, was there owned after that or did your parents just stay at the second store.

Edward: After the sixth grade we moved to 1606 East Flower which is 16th Street and Flower, it was one block north of Osborn and that was Phoenician market and that was also a block store.

Brandon: Is that store still there today?

Edward: Yeah, the building is still there, but it's a Mexican fish market and there was a house in the back and we lived behind it. That's the address which was 1606. The stores address was 3311 North 16th St. and it face the west, and it was a block building and he had, just like both stores, all three stores had a butcher stop. But I know at the end there, he stopped selling a lot of meat. My dad used to buy beef and cut it up and stuff, but then A.J. Bayless and the Safeways got bigger and then reduced his store sort of a small Circle K type store, but you know although it was a full service store, it stopped selling the fresh meat. I used to go to the market with my dad all the time, I enjoyed doing that. And then I guess when I was a sophomore or junior in high

school, he closed that store and moved to 4th Ave and Yavapai called Yavapai Market. Took over a store from Barney Ong, which was a relative of my mom's, you know, my mom was an Ong.

Brandon: OK we were talking about your family businesses when you were a junior in high school.

Edward: I guess according to this, Brother Stanley's thing, in '51 he moved to 16th Street and Flower and then I don't remember when he moved to Yavapai market. He didn't even retire until 1972 after two robbery attempts where one time he took a knife away from a guy also took the gun away from a guy one time at night. And here's an article in the paper of my dad in 1961.

Brandon: Wow that's pretty crazy.

Edward: He was a health enthusiast you know. He practiced Tai chi and all that stuff. He tried to get us kids to do it, but we too Americanized and didn't believe in that stuff. We were tough guys. But only my sister, my younger sister ...

Brandon: What's your younger sister's name.

Edward: Marie Christine Yue, she now lives in Berkeley California and she works for University of San Francisco of California in the area of aging. Also I have a sister that's one year younger than me, Leela, she's a retired school teacher and social worker out of Southern California. She presently lives in Glendale, California. One of the robberies, the first time he took knife away from a robber, the next time, he took a gun away from a would-be assailant and so my mom said at that time, "Maybe you better retire." So I guess he retired, according to this, in 1972. He was about eighty years old or something like that. In '72 he would be seventy-six years old. And then he moved back to 719 East Adams at that time and then he was at Civic, in that article I gave you, at Civic Plaza he was robbed by a couple of teenagers and they took twelve dollars away from him. They jumped him and he only had twelve dollars on him. That was the only time he was (ever) in the hospital.

Brandon: We were just talking about you going to church at First Chinese, and I was just wondering, what is your earliest memory of attending church.

Edward: Either Mrs. Henderson or Mrs. Hawkins would pick us up and take us to First Chinese Baptist Church and at that time it was located at, the afternoon sessions at Central Baptist Church, which was at that time located at, Central and one block south of Virginia, whatever street that is. Central Baptist Church was up there, so we're doing second sessions there and then later on our church was First Chinese Baptist, and I remember that we finally got our own church on 2nd St. and Culver. Which was originally a Jewish Synagogue and then I think we were second and made it First Chinese Baptist and after us, then it was a Spanish Church. Then it was recently bought back and made a museum by, I think, they Jewish people and so they have plaques there where each denominations that were there -- the Jewish people, the Chinese Baptists, and then the Hispanic Mexican or Baptist church, which Brother Stanley when he retired, preached there with the Hispanic students before he passed away. And then finally First Chinese Baptist moved to 49th Street and Earll where Reverend Tsoi became the pastor there and now Pastor Wat is there and since then I've gone back and started attending church a little more regularly than in the past.

Brandon: And who got you to go to church?

Edward: All our parents encouraged us to go and told us to go and we were small so we had to go. And so the uh, Ms. Hawkins or Ms. Henderson would pick us up and, I remember, too, that later on they got a bus and we used to go to Bible school in that bus and go to church in the bus, too. First Chinese Baptist. They sort of do that, 'cause I know my granddaughter still gets a ride

from somebody, not, they don't have a bus, but a van or somebody picks her up. She lives on the west side, quite a ways away from 49th St. and Earll.

Brandon: I remember you said that Ms. Henderson or Ms. Hawkins would pick you up in the mornings. What was a typical church day like then if you could run me through it.

Edward: Later on I remember Mrs. Hawkins or Mrs. Henderson was telling me I was pretty mischievous, sometimes I would bring horny toads to church and put them down girls backs and stuff like that. I was, you know, told that before. We joined the RAs, the Royal Ambassadors, I don't know if you guys had that at church or not. It was a youth group, ten-year olds. Your mom used to go to there too. Both your parents went.

Brandon: Both my parents went.

Edward: Well, I was actually talking about your grandma, Marianne.

Brandon: We just finished talking about church and now I was just wondering what other activities are there that you participated in? What else did you do as a child, or growing up basically?

Edward: I joined the Boy Scouts just not through the church, but Royal Ambassadors was the sort of thing that was a youth group through the church. And at about 10th St. and Washington there was a Christian place next to Macken Heartwood, a Catholic church, it was a Christian center there and that's where I joined the Boy Scouts with a guy named Paul Ong. He was from Republic Market. He had a brother named Gene Ong and Edward Ong and Freddy Ong. Freddy was actually a mechanic and you know as he grew up, he serviced the Chinese Baptist church bus. He did a lot of work on it and he probably drove the bus too, you know, I never drove the bus. And so I joined the Boy Scouts, Troop 16 at that time.

Brandon: And was that all Asians?

Edward: No, it was an all-mixer. I was the only Asian there. My brothers never joined. Also I played a little league type baseball when I was at Macken School in 7th and 8th grade and that was held at Creighton School, it was called the Sad Sack League. Then in high school, I wrestled, got a letter in wrestling, and played a little JV football. And I went up for basketball my freshman year and probably would have made the team, but I got a hernia so I dropped out. But I did letter in wrestling and JV football as a running back and corner back.

Brandon: Did your parents participate in any kind of associations or organizations?

Edward: Yea, my dad was a member of Yee Fung Toy family association and also Chinese Chamber and I'm sure he was a member of Chinese Welfare Counsel and that was before Phoenix Chinese United was developed. He was pretty active in the community and he encouraged us to do a lot of stuff and you know he was a health fanatic. He'd go out shaking people's hand and showing them what kind of health he was in. He was eighty years old, ninety years old. He would bend down and touch the floors with the palms of his hands without bending his knees. He was that limber because at night he would do some meditations and some yoga too. And Reverend Tsoi from First Chinese Baptist was the first one that told me about it.

My dad also during World War II helped simplify the Chinese language because he was a scholar from Ling Nom University. They would send him stuff, then he would help simplify the language for them and send it back. And I didn't know this, but my younger sister remembers asking my dad what he was doing at night and he told her that's what he was doing. I wasn't aware of it until Reverend Tsoi told me later on that he'd done that. It's mentioned in that biographical thing. Well, not the translation stuff, but that he was a scholar from Ling Nom University.

Brandon: Well you mentioned earlier that you went to war.

Edward: I didn't go to war, I was in the service. Drafted January 2nd, 1962 and I went to Fort Carson, Colorado which is in Colorado Springs for my basic, then they sent me back there for advanced training. They reactivated the 5th division and they had the infantry down there and a light artillery unit there at Ft. Carson. While I was there, when they reactivated, they reactivated under the ROAD concept, Reallocation to Any Destination in the world and we were a strike outfit. They were testing things, they were going mechanized and we were an experimental group, so they wanted to see if we could relocate within seventy-two hours and be on call then go somewhere. I went to three major maneuvers in the twenty-three months I was in the service and was heading to our fourth one when Kennedy got assassinated, went to Swift Strike 2 and 3 which in North and South Carolina. They flew us from Wichita Falls, Kansas there because Colorado Springs is a mile high and it's too heavy to load up heavy vehicles into an airplane and fly from that height. So we had to drive by convoy to Wichita Falls, Kansas and then fly to North and South Carolina. We went two goals and two years in a row. We drove by army convoy from Ft. Carson, Colorado, Colorado Springs to Yakama, Washington. The whole 5th division went there for maneuvers and was headed to Southern California for operation Gold Dust or Gold Strike or something like that.

When Kennedy got assassinated in November either 24th or 27th of 1963 and I was due to get out in December 17th of 1963. So, I was kind of worried that I would have to stay in longer and it was a good experience. It was a million dollar experience, you know. I'm glad that I went through it. Also when I was there in October of 1962, they had the Cuban Missile Crisis and so, being a medic, we had to give shots to everybody. Everybody in our immediate company, you we had the artillery company, because in case we had to go to war, nobody had their shots. We were issued arctic gear and tropical gear, so that we could go to any place you know so we had big heavy Mickey Mouse boots and heavy stuff for arctic warfare and stuff like that. Good thing we didn't have to go to war.

Actually, I was a medic in the service, but I was actually supposed to work in the hospital, but then since I was attached to an artillery unit, you it's like a field medic. I reached Specialist 5th Class when I was there in two years, and its equivalent to a sergeant you know, a three stripe sergeant. But I was a Specialist and I couldn't give direct orders as a Specialist. I came back and I was tending bar at Wing's Restaurant. And Senator Wing F. Ong, at that time, was partners with a guy, the guy who got appointed as a Public Defender. It slips my mind, I'll have to give you that name later on.

Vernon Croft was his law partner, so he was appointed in 1965, he was appointed a Public Defender and his name was Vernon Croft and so I got hired on because of that connection. And I was hired as an interviewer and a few years later became an investigator. Then, I spent thirty-five years at the Public Defender's Office as an investigator and finished my college degree.

You know, like I said, when I got out of the service, I married Sharon Lee Dennis and working full-time with Public Defender's office, going to night school at ASU. So, my major switched from psyche, like I mentioned before from psyche to social welfare. I got a degree, a bachelor of science. Then I continued, I was getting LEAF money. It's a Law Enforcement Assistance program. As long as I stayed with the Public Defender's law enforcement it was considered law enforcement.

Four years after I stopped school, I didn't have to pay it back. It was a grant. And I also got G.I. bill, I got money for going to school, so it was it sort of like a part time job, but you were going to school. But I would leave from work then go to ASU and I would come home at midnight and so it got old you know. On the days that I had to attend school and the days I didn't, I'd go home, so it took me four years to finish night school.

Got a B.S. in social Welfare and I went to grad school and I think I had about twelve hours to finish in counseling and I never finished, my G.I. bill ran out and I just got tired of going to school

at night. I got tired, I probably should have finished, but I never did. So, I had a lot of graduate work done too.

Brandon: And then I had another question about war-time basically. Where were you when you heard about the Pearl Harbor Bombing?

Edward: Well I was probably, Pearl Harbor was in 1942 I think, I was probably three years old at that time, so I don't recall that you know. But I remember as a kid telling people that I was Chinese, not Japanese, you know, during the war.

Brandon: How did affect your life growing up, that whole World War II situation, basically with the Japanese and Chinese people?

Edward: I was so small, I don't recall a whole lot of it. I just remember telling people that I was Chinese. So, everybody around knew the family because we were in the grocery business and they'd come to the store. I don't recall any bad things from that.

Brandon: You don't recall ...

Edward: There was no discrimination and stuff.

Brandon: OK. Do you remember, just in general, as growing up in the era of World War II where, you know, in general, Asians kind of had a bad name because of the whole bombing and things like that. Do you have any memories of negative or positive treatment just because you were Asian?

Edward: Not during the war era, but you know, as far as prejudice and stuff like that, I wasn't really aware of it growing up in a Hispanic area and going to Monroe school which was predominantly Hispanic at that time. You know the whites went to a different ... There was a good friend of mine, James Frederick Boston, same age as me, born March 8th 1939. We were sort of buddies, but he went to another school, you know he was Caucasian. He went to another school and you know there was prejudice then, but you just sort of lived with it. As long as you didn't get out of your element, you didn't get discriminated all the time in general.

As far as the war thing goes, you know the positive and negative during the war stuff, I wasn't aware of that. As far as the prejudice period goes, I didn't really realize it until I grew up as an adult and then I realized and saw some of it. I can't name any specifics, but because being raised Chinese, you just sort of accept of a lot of stuff like that and avoid stuff like that. It didn't bother me personally or I didn't take it personally. I don't recall anything, growing up, prejudice and stuff. Other than sometimes if you go, you know you see it in general in stuff in retailing or you're at a movie or something like that you might get discriminated upon, but you know small things you didn't worry about. You were aware of it that it was there, but it didn't affect me, it didn't anger me a whole lot. Although growing up, I got involved in Civic affairs too. Like English Only, at that time I was against English Only, but I've done a 180 on that now. I think that if you're in America that you should learn English. I think English only is a good thing. Not to the extent that they try to pass it before that they passed the English Only thing, the first time in Arizona. I don't think that you can't speak another language when you are working in city government or county government. I think there's a place for it other than interpreting. I don't think you should be arrested for something like that, which is crazy.

That's why that thing failed in the first place, because it got overturned because it was too restrictive. I've done a 180 on that thing, I think everything should be done in English, I mean that's the official language I think it should be declared. I don't think you should be punished for it if you do speak another language. I think that out of courtesy you speak English. I think its very rude even if I should speak Chinese to somebody else in a different setting, a work place, where's

there's a person that couldn't speak that because it's very rude to do that. I don't think you should be arrested for something like that.

Brandon: Is there anything else that you would like to talk about?

Edward: Like I was telling you, I worked on the English only thing and then I also worked on Martin Luther King day, trying to get Martin Luther King a national holiday for Arizona. It never going through until it had to be voted on. And Arizona today is the only voted approved Martin Luther King day. It to my knowledge is the only voter-approved state holiday in any state. Every other state declared Martin Luther King a state day or a holiday, but Arizona is unique in that they had to vote on it because at the time the government would not do that. So, they put it one the ballot and it was voted approved. Martin Luther King is an accepted stated holiday and a national holiday. So, I worked on that campaign to try to get that approved and as a result, I got involved in a lot of civic activities. And now I'm also a member on the National Board of Chinese American Citizens Alliance which was started in 1895 out of California and it's sort of a civil rights groups that helps Chinese and Asian people and to this day I'm on the national board as the grand marshal. Other groups that I belong to is, I was charter member of Chinese American Citizen's Alliance, Phoenix Lodge which was started by the late Senator Wing F. Ong. I've been involved with Chinese Citizen's Alliance since 1974 and I go to every biannual convention that we have. And we do scholarships for that, for kids. And through that we've also sponsored kids to boy's state and girl's state.

Brandon: I went to boy's state myself.

Edward: We sponsored kids to that and do scholarships too and art contests too. Other organizations I've belong too was I past president of the Yee Fung Toy family association, so now I'm an advisor there. I'm a past president of Chinese Chamber of Commerce, also I'm the second vice commander in American Legion Thomas Tang Post 50. So, I'm active there, past president of the Phoenix Chinese United Association of greater Phoenix. Past president of that, let's see what I'm also a member of ...I was also on the Asian advisory commission for Janet Napolitano when she was the Attorney General. I'm am presently on that same commission with the Attorney General Terry Goddard. I've been there since he's been there, for two years, '05, '06 and '07. So, now I'm an advisor with Chinese United Association. We're doing that 4th of July thing, I want to get you two guys involved. Do you know Jamie Sun?

Brandon: Yea.

Edward: She started a new group. It's linked with Chinese United, we donated a thousand dollars for them to get going. The Chinese United Association did 4th of July celebration.

Brandon: She just won the pageant right?

Edward: Yea, she's the reigning Phoenix United Queen. Reigning for 2006. Jenny Sun and you know Christian Yee? They're sort of together, they sort of hang out together. What else you want to know?

Brandon: We don't have anything really else that we need, unless there's anything else that you can think of. Is there anything else that you want to mention that stuck out in your life?

Edward: No, not really.

[end of interview]

LUCY YUEN

Interviewed by Ian Lynch
19 July 2006

Ian: Just to start it off, can you please state your full name and spelling, too?

Lucy: OK, my name is Lucy Yuen. And the first name is L-U-C-Y. Last name is Y-U-E-N.

Ian: All right. Where were you born?

Lucy: I was born in Phoenix.

Ian: Phoenix?

Lucy: Yeah, I'm a native, in definition.

Ian: Do you mind ...

Lucy: No, I don't mind, I was born in 1931.

Ian: 1931? Sorry, did you have any siblings?

Lucy: Yes, I did. I had two sisters and two brothers. And I was next to the youngest one, so.

Ian: So you're a [inaudible] kind of.

Lucy: Yeah, my oldest brother was born in, like 1923, I think. [inaudible] 1931.

Ian: Did your parents, were they in Arizona as well? Or ...?

Lucy: Yes, yes.

Ian: Oh, they were?

Lucy: But they came from China, so. My father had been here, early, probably in the early, probably from 1920. And then he went back to China. And then shortly after he went back, then my mother came.

Ian: So he brought her back?

Lucy: He didn't come with her. She came at a separate time. But I was saying that my father didn't marry into no storybook neither. He had been here in Arizona. And then he went back to China. Which, when he attempted to come back, he couldn't come back because they said that he didn't look like his photograph. But ...

Ian: Oh really?

Lucy: His passport. And so he had to go back to China. And that's where he came back under papers that he bought. That was a common thing they used to do. They would buy papers.

Ian: Was it pretending to be someone's son?

Lucy: Yes! Yes.

Ian: The paper sons?

Lucy: So, originally, he was, you know there are a lot of Ongs in Phoenix. And my father was an Ong, but he, when he came back, he had to come under another name. So he came under the name of Yuen. And so that's how come I'm a Yuen instead of an Ong.

Ian: Oh really?

Lucy: So, I am the daughter of a illegal immigrant.

Ian: So he just decided to keep the last name?

Lucy: Yes.

Ian: Oh. That's interesting. What did your family do as a living here?

Lucy: As everybody else did at that time, they ran a grocery store.

Ian: A grocery store.

Lucy: One of the many grocery stores in Phoenix at that time.

Ian: Yeah. Definitely noticed that's a trend.

Lucy: Mm-hm.

Ian: Was it a difficult life? Or was it ...

Lucy: Well, I think that as we were growing up, we did not think it was a difficult life. Because everybody else that we knew lived in the same circumstances. They all had grocery stores. They had their living quarters behind the grocery store so that they could be right there to run the business. So we were one of many that had that type of situation. And I think that they worked long hours. I know that when I was growing up, they probably opened the store at, probably like seven or eight o'clock in the morning, and didn't close it until like two o'clock at night. So they did have long working hours.

Ian: Where was the store located?

Lucy: My s-, my parent's store was located on 10th Street and Jefferson.

Ian: 10th Street and Jefferson?

Lucy: Not very far from where all the, where Chase Field is. Now see, that's at 7th Street.

Ian: Oh, oh, yeah.

Lucy: This is at 10th Street, so it's a little bit east of Chase Field. And that whole area has been, it's changed a lot, because, I can't remember what year it was, but the city bought out the property. And my brother was running the store at that time for, they bought, the city bought for early removal.

Ian: Oh.

Lucy: And our grocery store was torn down. And I think that what's there now is, it's a [inaudible] business. It's either a printing business or a paper business, I'm not sure which it is. But it's on 10th Street and Jefferson.

Ian: Do you have any idea, either, like, when the city bought the store out? Or how long you guys ran the store?

Lucy: Oh, I think we ran the s-, I think our family ran the store for about forty years. Because we already had the store in the 19- probably before 1930. And I think that they were at the same location until at least the 1970s.

Ian: That's a long time.

Lucy: Yeah. So ...

Ian: Well, it's definitely seemed to work, I guess. The grocery store.

Lucy: Yeah. Well that was the only thing they could do because, you know, they weren't trained for anything else, so. Running your own business. And in those days, it was a lot easier than a different job because they would, all the, all the licenses and all the things that you had to fill out in order to run the business.

Ian: Yeah. You could just do it if you really wanted to.

Lucy: Yeah. And probably ... oh, I don't know what it was, but I know that there wasn't all the, all the information that is needed now to run a business.

Ian: Yeah. A business-oriented, like, a ...

Lucy: Yeah, like you hire people now to have withholding taxes, and there's sales taxes, and I'm sure that there's rules where they have you [inaudible]. There were rules at that time also, but not as many as there are now.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: So I'm just amazed at some of the newer people that come in and manage to run the restaurants and businesses. Because I, I can relate to how difficult of a time our parents had because neither one of them read or wrote English.

Ian: Oh really?

Lucy: So anything that came by in English, they had to rely on some other distant relative to come and translate it for them and fill out whatever forms needed to be filled out.

Ian: Yeah. Were you guy- I'm sure you guys were a part of that too.

Lucy: Well, we were grow- yeah, we ended up having to do some of that. But as we were growing up, my mother, where I grew up, it was a mostly Hispanic neighborhood. So my mother, although she could not read or write, she could talk English and she could talk Spanish. So she spoke quite fluently in Spanish. And we grew up with a Hispanic influence. We went to eat all of the foods.

Ian: Really?

Lucy: Yeah.

Ian: So that was kind of like your America, I guess, like at the- or that, that entire area's America, like?

Lucy: That's, that's true, you know.

Ian: Spanish influence.

Lucy: We had, so, we were lucky. We had, at one time, you know, when I still remembered my Chinese, I could say that I was trilingual because I knew Chinese, and I knew a little bit Spanish, and English.

Ian: Could- I guess like, just since we're talking about childhood, how was, like, not even generally growing up, I guess, but going to school, like your interactions with the kids in the neighborhood, was there, were people racist? Or was it ...

Lucy: I, you know, when I was growing up, I did not feel it. If there was any, I wasn't aware of it. And as I told you, our neighborhood was mostly Hispanic.

Ian: Mm-hm.

Lucy: So when we went to school, many of, most of them were, the students that we went to school with, were mostly Hispanics. And at that time, there weren't any Blacks because they were segregated.

Ian: Oh really?

Lucy: They had to attend a separate school.

Ian: Nowhere near you, I'm guessing?

Lucy: No, the school that was for the Black students was just about three blocks away from where our store was.

Ian: Oh.

Lucy: It was called Booker T. Washington School. And currently that building is still up. It's now the New Times.

Ian: It's- Really? I hadn't ...

Lucy: Where the New Times is now.

Ian: Huh.

Lucy: And it's still the same building. That's where it was Booker T. Washington. And that was the segregated Black school.

Ian: I never knew that.

Lucy: Yeah. Well, wouldn't expect you to know. That was before your time.

Ian: Yeah. So, school in general, there was, did you have a Chinese school?

Lucy: Yes, I did go to Chinese school. And my sister went to Chinese school also. But my brothers did what many of the Chinese did at that time. In about 1935, my father took both of my brothers back to China to be educated in the Chinese school. So they lived in China for about two or three years. And then when the war broke out between China and Japan, that's when they returned to the United States. And that was, of course that was the beginning of the things that lead to World War II. So they went to school in China and my sister and I went to a Chinese school here in Phoenix. And that was near where America West Arena is now. It was at 2nd Street

between Jefferson and Madison. And we, our parents had to pay tuition, it was five dollars a month, for each child. And we went to Chinese school everyday after American school, from five until eight. And on Saturdays, we went to Chinese school from nine until four. So we didn't get to play much!

Ian: You were learning Chinese.

Lucy: Yeah. We were learning Chinese. But I can't say that we learned very much, so I. But that's where we met a lot of our friends, you know, and so. It was ... What Chinese we learned, I think, I think it has left. It didn't stay with us.

Ian: Yeah. You were ...

Lucy: Because if you don't use it, you lose it.

Ian: Mm-hm.

Lucy: I think that because we didn't use it. After, because ... Well, not too long ago I found a notebook where I had written had written sentences when I was a student. Apparently I knew what I was doing then, but I couldn't read it now. I didn't know, I could recognize a few words, but not much.

Ian: Was it just all in characters?

Lucy: Yeah, it was written in Chinese characters. And I had, apparently had quite a good vocabulary at that time. So, and then of course, all of the families that were growing up at the time I was, all the children helped in the stores. So we were working in the stores. We all had our chores.

Ian: Mm-hm.

Lucy: Either sweeping, or cleaning things. And in those days, all the soft drinks came in bottles. They come in cans now.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: And there are some bottles, but in those days, everything came in bottles. And there was deposit for the bottles.

Ian: Oh yeah.

Lucy: Fifteen cents, or whatever it was.

Ian: So you'd bring it back?

Lucy: We always had to return them back to the beverage company. So that was one of the jobs that a lot of us kids had. We had to sort all the bottles. Sort out the Barqs bottles, and the RC Cola bottles, and the Coke bottles, and separate them and put them in the right crates. So that was a job that kids could do and we all did that.

Ian: That sounds ... not like, you know, sounds like interesting work.

Lucy: Yeah. It was. I think we grew up in an interesting time. It was, we didn't, you know, in those days there wasn't television. We didn't have television. And my family didn't have a car. So whenever we wanted to go somewhere, we had to depend on some nearby friend or relative to take you. So the big things in those days was listening to the radio, that was entertainment.

Listening to the radio, and then we'd go, going for a ride in the car. In those days, going for a ride, just to go out to 24th Street and Thomas, that was way out.

Ian: Well, yeah, that was a few miles.

Lucy: The city limits at one time was 16th Street.

Ian: 16th Street.

Lucy: In Phoenix.

Ian: Oh. Yeah.

Lucy: Eastward. 16th Street, and then it went to 24th Street. Those were the boundaries, you know. That was city limits.

Ian: Huh. So it was just your little niche inside of Phoenix.

Lucy: Yeah. And a lot of the Chinese families had their grocery stores, and they were located mostly in the south part of town. Because they, there was the discrimination in property ownership at that time.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: If you were not a citizen or, you could not own property in certain areas.

Ian: Hm. Let's, I guess, move on a little further. Do you, were, did you ever marry?

Lucy: No, I've been single all my life.

Ian: Oh. How's that treating you? Is it ...

Lucy: Well, you know, at one time, most of the Chinese culture, that was frowned on, to not marry and go on and start your own family.

Ian: Mm-hm.

Lucy: But I think times have changed, and ... So, and then marrying outside of your race was a big taboo when I was growing up. You know you-

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: You only married another Chinese. And then another thing that was a taboo was that you did not marry within the clan. Even if it was a cousin that was not closely related, if they were Ongs, that was a big no-no. An Ong did not marry an Ong. It was almost a, whenever that happened it was almost like a, a disgrace. And it was big news. I can remember, when I was growing up, when there was some Ongs that married Ongs, and it was, it was considered something that was quite traumatic for the family.

Ian: Was it like disgusting? Or ...?

Lucy: No, it just wasn't done. You did not marry ... an Ong could marry a Wong, but an Ong could not marry another Ong, even though they might be, you know, tenth cousins or something. But these still were considered an Ong, so you did not marry within the clan. You had to go outside of the clan.

Ian: How was your, I guess, how was life outside of school, once you passed, did you graduate high school?

Lucy: Yes, I did. And I went to, I went to Phoenix Union High School.

Ian: Phoenix Union High School.

Lucy: Uh-huh. The grade schools that I went to were Washington School, which was at 9th Street and Washington. Then I went to a school called Monroe School. That building is still up, and it's now the youth science building, I believe. I think they're trying to open up a science museum. And then I went to Phoenix Union High School. And then eventually to ASU.

Ian: How was ASU?

Lucy: At that time, it was a small, it wasn't as big as it is now, you know. And I told you we drove from class to class and we didn't have- Before we had a car to [inaudible], before we learned how to drive, we used to have to catch a bus to come to ASU.

Ian: So your family had a car at that point, but it ...

Lucy: At that point we did. But when I was growing up, we didn't have a car. And very few other families did have a car.

Ian: What did you major in at ASU?

Lucy: In education.

Ian: Education?

Lucy: Uh-huh.

Ian: Did you become a teacher?

Lucy: Yes, I did. I taught in Phoenix for thirty-four years.

Ian: Really?

Lucy: In the inner city schools.

Ian: Like elementary ...

Lucy: Yeah.

Ian: Elementary school?

Lucy: Phoenix Elementary School District, that's where I taught. I taught at a school called Ann Ott School. And then at a school, Garfield School. And I taught in the lower grades. First and second grade. Then I retired from teaching in 1989.

Ian: Do you, do you mind me asking what your, like, religion is?

Lucy: When I was going to school, when I was young, I did go to Sunday school at the Chinese Baptist Church. It was called a mission at that time.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: Chinese Baptist Mission. So I did go to Sunday school at that time. And ...

Ian: I've heard stories of all the Chinese kids being picked up in a bus.

Lucy: That's right. I was one of those that rode on the bus. Yeah.

Ian: It's true then.

Lucy: Because, like I told you, not everybody had a car. And then our parents were busy running to store, so they didn't have time even if they did have a car, to take you to church. So for a long time the Chinese Baptist Mission was comprised of a lot of children, I would say.

Ian: Did you stick with the Baptist religion?

Lucy: I never went to another. But then, after I started teaching, I don't think I went to church very often. Except for weddings, and funerals, and holidays. But I, but I still have kept up an acquaintance with one of the ministers' family that was there. Reverend Stanley and Mrs. Stanley. So we became close friends. But I didn't attend church after I started working. I think it's because I felt like, I worked with kids all week long, I didn't want to see any more people on weekends.

Ian: Just to, to relax.

Lucy: Yeah, that's true. That's true. Because when you're working, the weekends are a precious catch-up with all your chores.

Ian: Yeah. I definitely can feel that pain of catching up on your days off.

Lucy: So when I was teaching, I was still attending summer school, because we were required to take X number of classes. And then I'd also attend night classes occasionally. So I didn't mind then, but I couldn't do that now. But I guess when you're younger you can, you have more energy, you can do all those things.

Ian: Yeah, definitely. If you had the work mindset-

Lucy: Yeah.

Ian: You can get quite a bit done.

Lucy: So it wasn't until after I retired that I became more active with the Desert Jade Women's Club. And we did a lot of community projects at that time. And currently I'm involved with the Phoenix Chinese Week. Where we plan that big event that is held.

Ian: It's big.

Lucy: Well I'm in that group and it's a big job. And it takes a lot of money to run it. So a lot of our time is spent fundraising and getting advertisement to support the event.

Ian: What part do you plan? For the fundraiser, mostly?

Lucy: Currently I am in charge of the raffle, which is a kind of a fundraiser. And, and we have meetings every month just to approve of things or know what's coming up.

Ian: Right, just for that one week.

Lucy: Yeah, just for that one week because things have to be planned ahead. In fact, at this point, we already have the Orpheum reserved for 2008 and 2009. You have to reserve them that far ahead.

Ian: Wow. Well at least they're, you are planning ahead.

Lucy: Yeah, so. And it's ...

Ian: Were you, I'm sorry, but were you a part of, like, the Chinese Cultural Center from the ground up? Or ...?

Lucy: I was, I was around when it was, you know, when they proposed the building of it. But I'm not a, I'm not involved with the Chinese Cultural Center at all.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: Except for we hold one event there.

Ian: Yeah. Well, it's definitely an interest ...

Lucy: Did you see the event last year? Or ...?

Ian: Yeah. I actually helped out with ...

Lucy: Oh, did you? At the Children's Pavilion?

Ian: I didn't help out with the Children's Pavilion. It was ...

Lucy: Oh yeah, I know where you were. You were probably at the ...

Ian: I forget his name. He was running ...

Lucy: Tony Tang?

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: Yeah.

Ian: I was teaching ...

Lucy: The Chinese cultural, the, he calls it ... "cultural village" or something to that effect. But they show different things about the Chinese culture.

Ian: Yeah. Exactly.

Lucy: Chinese yo-yo. And the abacus.

Ian: I was teaching people how to do that. That was interesting.

Lucy: Oh, you see, the cultural village was right across from where I was working. I was at the information booth, and that's where I am every year.

Ian: Oh yeah, that was just-.

Lucy: The information, right across from there.

Ian: Real close.

Lucy: Yeah, so I, so I went to the event all three days there working at the information booth and selling raffle tickets. So-

Ian: That's a busy job.

Lucy: Well, and then the raffle tickets, it's a year-round job. Because now, I'm going to have to start hustling to get some raffle prizes now. And then you we have to print the raffle tickets. And then we have to *peddle* the raffle tickets, so.

Ian: Well, all right. Was there anything else you wanted to say about, like, about the Chinese Baptist Mission, if you remember? Or ...?

Lucy: I really don't remember too much about it except that I went to Sunday. And it was always in the afternoon because I think the building that we used was probably used in the morning for some other ...

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: Church group. And then we had the use of it in the afternoon. So we went to Sunday school in the afternoon.

Ian: Um ...

Lucy: And one of the active people in it was Mr. Walter Ong. And he was an active grocer. And I think that when I sent in the information to Karen's group, I suggested that they talk to Mrs. Walter Ong. Because her husband was very active. Yes.

Ian: Yeah. She's a, she's a very nice lady.

Lucy: Oh, you already met her and interview her?

Ian: Yeah!

Lucy: Oh, great!

Ian: She, that's, that's how I knew about it begin with.

Lucy: OK.

Ian: But I really had no idea.

Lucy: When did you interview her? Just recently?

Ian: Um ...

Lucy: Because when I sent in the information, I gave, you know, all the contacts and everything.

Ian: Yeah, it was probably about like two, two or three months ago.

Lucy: Oh, OK.

Ian: I wanna re-interview her.

Lucy: Oh, OK.

Ian: Because I had no idea how big the Chinese Baptist Mission actually became.

Lucy: Yeah. Her husband was the superintendent of the Sunday school for many years.

Ian: Mm-hm.

Lucy: And he was one of those people that remained with it from the beginning. From the very beginnings, I think.

Ian: Do you remember much about, just like, lifetime experiences about World War II?

Lucy: Oh yes. We were, I was probably in the fourth grade at that time when the war broke out. And I remember that my sister and I, because our parents did not speak English, we had to do a lot of the, the work that was involved with the regulations that came up during the war. Such as the price, there was rules about pricing, about how much you could sell things for. So everything had to be, couldn't be above a certain price. So there were rules of that. And then there was rationing. And people had to have food rationing stamps. Every item had a point value. So people would come to the store and buy things and you would collect the stack for whatever they bought. And the periodically you would have you count up all those stacks and take 'em to the bank, and deposit them like you would money. So my sister and I, actually it was my sister ended up, and she was about four years older than I was, but she had the sole responsibility of taking care of all the food stamps. And counting them up and depositing them at the bank. And I remember that there was, when was the shortage of gasoline? But I guess gas was rationed at that time. And so a lot of the car, a lot of the people that had cars, you know, they really limit to the use of their cars at that time. So we, at that time, we started walking to Chinese school. And there was a time that somebody would pick us up. And it wasn't that far because we lived on 10th Street. The Chinese school was at 1st Street or 2nd Street. So it was about a mile that we walked. And in those days it was safe enough that we were able to do that. Can you imagine now having ...

Ian: Little kids.

Lucy: Little kids. Eight or nine or ten years old, walking.

Ian: I wonder, will they be too happy about that.

Lucy: No, you know. And yet at that time we did. So, we did do a lot of things for the store during the war because our parents couldn't read the instructions on how to do some of these things.

Ian: Yeah. So they, I mean, they relied on you sometimes.

Lucy: That's right, they did.

Ian: Just as much as ...

Lucy: Yeah. And at that time we were, we were working at a store. You know, by that time we were old enough, we were actually collecting money.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: And when people bought things, and so. I remember one time, when we had our store at that time, that there was some prisoners of war. The, I think they were Italians. And they were on some work project around our store there. And they all came into the store to buy things. So that was really exciting because they were ...

Ian: Were they trash men? Or ...?

Lucy: No, I don't know what they were doing, they were with some work project and there was a whole group of them. And they were probably under control of the mili- the US military.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: So they came to the store either to buy snacks or something.

Ian: I don't think that would happen now.

Lucy: And it was really an exciting time, you know. Because here were all these men, you know, looking to buy things. I can't remember, apparently they knew enough English so that there was some communication so that they bought things. So that was one of the experiences of World War II. Besides the rationing and that. And also I remember that, when I was going to school, I remember there was a Japanese boy there. And I think that all the students gave him a really bad time because he was a Japanese.

Ian: Did he ...

Lucy: They didn't beat him up, but they probably teased him and made him feel bad.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: Another thing that happened, during that time, my brother was in the Navy.

Ian: Oh, he was?

Lucy: Yeah, my older brother was in the Navy. So he was stationed in San Diego. Or, no I, it was in Oakland, I think. But anyhow, my father took me and my younger sister to visit our brother. We were going to meet in San Francisco, I think. He was working on a weekend pass or something. Anyhow, at that time the Japanese were already interned at different places in Arizona. And when we were on the train, my father knew that we were supposed to stop in a city called Barstow. That was halfway between, I guess. And he wondered what time it was going to be. But he didn't say it was Barstow, he said "Pawstow." So I thought it was Poston. So I asked the conductor, when was the train going to get to Poston? And they thought that we were Japanese interns that were *out*, traveling on the train, you know. And then I don't know how we finally explained it, but we thought, I was really trying to figure out when we were getting to Barstow. And then they thought we were trying to find out when we were getting to Poston. Which is where the Japanese were interred ... interned.

Ian: Really. That must have been kind of scary.

Lucy: Yeah, that was a mistake in racial identity, you know, because they didn't know whether we were Chinese or Japanese.

Ian: Yeah, I read people would wear pins that would say, like, "I'm Chinese."

Lucy: Oh, I don't think I ever did that though.

Ian: So, did your brothers fight in the war at all?

Lucy: My brother was in the Navy, but he never was in the active zone though. He was in the, he worked in a medical ward in Oakland, I think. So he didn't ever get involved in going overseas. So I [inaudible], my brother was in the Navy, after he got out, that he ran the family grocery store. And then all of our family graduated from ASU, so. Then my other brother ended up teaching chemistry at ASU. He was in the chemistry department.

Ian: So ...

Lucy: Then I had a sister, my oldest sister and I both became teachers. And then my youngest sister had a degree in accounting, so she ended up doing bookkeeping for some tire store, tire company. So we all grew up and out of the grocery business, 'cause it was a hard life.

Ian: I can imagine. Well, I mean, that's all I can do, is imagine. Because ...

Lucy: But we learned so much, though, growing up in the grocery store, you know. We learned how to make change.

Ian: Mm-hm.

Lucy: Which a lot of people didn't know how to do it, and so. And I think that because of our experiences I really picked up the Spanish language and ... Well, and the neighborhood that I was in, we even grew up on one of ... In those days, you know, there were alcoholics, and there were characters in the neighborhood that were habitual alcoholics. And so, we weren't afraid of them, we grew up with them, we knew who they were. And we knew when they were really drunk and when they were sober, you know. And so, so we grew up meeting a lot of different kinds of people, you know. So we grew up meeting different races and different people with different problems.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: Alcoholics.

Ian: What was gonna be ... I'd like to ask this just, I guess, to tie up any loose ends or some- like, like, if you can, is there, like, one, like, or it could be more than one, like, one moment in your life where, like, just something made an impact, like, and, like, you realized that? Or ...?

Lucy: Oh, I'm trying to think, was there something that made an impact ...

Ian: Sometimes it is a hard question, but a series of things that just ...

Lucy: I really, I really can't remember any specific thing that was, that was such a momentous thing that I remember, you know.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: Well, there were events, you know, like, like world events. You know, like when Kennedy was assassinated I know that, you know, we were all just, for the whole week we were so emotionally involved in it that you just felt like you were drained.

Ian: Mm-hm.

Lucy: So I remember things like that. But for personal moments ... I really can't think of anything. Maybe if I were married it would be my wedding day. But, but not that.

Ian: All right. Well, it was worth a shot.

Lucy: Yeah.

Ian: Thank you for your time. I definitely appreciate it.

Lucy: Well, you're welcome. [inaudible] that you were interested in knowing about the locations of grocery stores, were you?

Ian: Yeah, I definitely am. Because ...

Lucy: Because I can tell you, you know, up and down Jefferson and Washington Street.

Ian: Really?

Lucy: About some of the stores and where, what areas they were located in.

Ian: Yeah, that would be wonderful.

Lucy: I don't know how you could work it in, but ... But I, I could just mention what stores were on Jefferson Street.

Ian: Yeah. Jefferson Street was like ...

Lucy: OK, Jefferson Street, let's see, at -- and this would be back in the 1930s -- starting at 7th Street, there was TE Yuen Market.

Ian: Was that your parents' store?

Lucy: They were, it was the same last name, but they were not related to us. And then on 10th and Jefferson was my family's store. And it was called Yuen Lung Market.

Ian: How would you ...

Lucy: Lung, L-U-N-G. OK, and then on 11th Street -- this is still on Jefferson -- was the Republic Market. And the owner of that was Gene Ong.

Ian: Just G?

Lucy: Gene.

Ian: Oh, Gene.

Lucy: G-E-N-E. Gene.

Ian: Wait, how did you?

Lucy: Gene. G, G-E-N-E. Gene, like Gene Autry. OK, and then Ong is O-N-G.

Ian: Oh.

Lucy: See, Ongs and Tangs are all variations of the Ong clan.

Ian: Mm-hm. Oh, T-.

Lucy: Tangs, Dongs, and Ongs are different in English, but in the Chinese character they're all from the same clan. They're all ... There're variations of that, too. Dangs, Ongs, Ting, Tang, Dong. OK, we're down to 11th Street.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: And at 13th Street -- and also Jefferson -- was the Wing F. Ong Store. So see, Wing, W, like wing that you fly with. And he was the one that they always talk about because he became involved with politics and became a state representative.

Ian: Really?

Lucy: Yeah, he was one of the ...

Ian: Wing Ong?

Lucy: Yeah, Wing F. Ong, O-N-G. Yeah, that always comes up in politics, you know. And his family is very proud of the fact that he became a legislator. There are some stories that I wouldn't have heard. Then at 16th and Jefferson there was a store called the East Lake Market. And see, and it was called East Lake Market because right across the street from that was East Lake Park which was designated for the Blacks at that time.

Ian: Oh really?

Lucy: Yeah.

Lucy: Yeah, and that's on, that, I think that store was owned by Harry, Harry Yee, I think. Y-E-E. And those are all that I know that were on Jefferson.

Ian: Mm-hm.

Lucy: But then on Washington Street. I'll start at 7th Street and Washington, and it was a Consumer Market. And that was -- I think it was Consumer Market -- and that was owned by Frank Yue. Frank. And then they spelled last name Y-U-E. In fact, you may have ran across Eddie Yue, which is, who is his son.

Ian: Oh really?

Lucy: Yeah.

Ian: No, I haven't.

Lucy: Maybe you haven't yet, OK. OK, let's see, we're at 7th Street. And then at 9th Street, there was a Chinese store called Ben Save It Market.

Ian: Ben Save It?

Lucy: Uh-huh. "Save," like save money. And then "It." But I do not know the names of who owned it. And then at 11th Street and Washington was the Gene Ong Market. See there was a store almost at every, at every corner. And these were all owned by Chinese.

Ian: I guess if most people are walking around, too.

Lucy: That's why. That's exactly it, because people had to, you know, get their groceries and stuff. And you can't go too far carrying groceries. Especially if you don't have a car. OK, we're at 11th and Washington. I'm going to be missing a few, but I don't know the exact location. But then there was at 15th and Washington, was Lee Jew Market. L-E-E and then J-E-W. Yeah. And then at 16th and Washington, there was a store called Mary's, it was just called Mary's Store. Mary, like, you know, like ...

Lucy: OK. And her son became one of the first architects. I can't think of his name now ... Oh, his name was John Sing Tang. He's one of the first architects here. One of the first Chinese architects. And his mother owned that store.

Ian: Architect, like throughout Phoenix?

Lucy: Yeah, here in Phoenix, yeah. OK, let's see. Then there's some other stores that I'm not quite sure of their location. I know there was one at 24th Street and Washington, but I can't remember the name of it.

Ian: It's all right. I would never be able to remember this much.

Lucy: Yeah. I do know that it was owned by the parents of Rocky Tang. And Rocky Tang was at that last meeting that we went to.

Ian: Yeah, someone in the group interviewed Rocky Tang.

Lucy: OK, that was, they had a store at 24th and Washington. Then there were some on Van Buren, but I can only remember the names of them but I can't tell you the locations. There was a Shady Park Market.

Ian: On...

Lucy: On Van Buren. But I'm not sure, you know, what the exact address was. And there was a Modern Market. And those are the ... and then there was a Joy Land Market on Van Buren. Then there were a lot of stores that were in south Phoenix, but I could not tell you where they were at. But these are the two streets that I was more acquainted with. I know there was a South Phoenix Market that was on south Central. And then there was a, there was a Lee Wing Market, it was on -- gee, I don't know -- I guess it was on Hadley Street or somewhere, but I can't remember. But there were a lot of stores in south Phoenix, too.

Ian: Yeah, this is very helpful. All these store names. I would never have, like, known any of this.

Lucy: Well, some of, I don't think any of the structures are still standing now. The twenty- well the Lee Jew Market I think is, the structure is still standing. And I think the one at 24th Street and Washington, the structure is still standing. And the last time that I knew of, it was a, the guy was in, he made signs, it was a sign store. He made signs.

Ian: Is this the one you think ...

Lucy: Rocky, Rocky's parents.

Ian: Yeah.

Lucy: Yeah. And I think that building is still standing. And the Wing F. Ong store is still standing, I think. And some of the others might be, but I know that those are still standing.

Ian: If they are, that'd be amazing.

Lucy: Yeah, well, see, a lot of them were converted to other businesses or, I think, like ... Oh, I think, the one that was Lee Jew Market, I think ... No, no, I really don't know what's become of that.

[end of interview]