

MI LEW
and
MARIE LEE LEW
First Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

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Mi: Moscow; b. 1905
restaurant owner.
Marie: Moscow; b.1910
restaurant owner.

1.6 hr.

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(7 minutes)

with Sam Schrager
Nov. 20, 1975

II. Transcript

MI LEW/MARIE LEE LEW

This first interview with Mi Lew and Marie Lee Lew took place at their home on the edge of Moscow, Idaho, November 20, 1975. The interviewer is Sam Schrager.

Interruptions by the other one than the one addressed will be indicated by ()

MI LEW: We don't like that, you know, that way and so once in a while a kid gets a bump on his head, then the teacher believe us, know what he said is true. And the teacher ^{just} don't bother us too much. Don't penalize us too much at all, see.

SS: Did most of the Chinese folks live in one section in Walla Walla? In one area?

MI LEW: Yeah, they call it Chinatown. They live on Fifth Street and Rose and Main. ^{between there} Had a little Chinatown there. Had little stores there (small buildings around that block) Then as a general rule, the Chinese stores are, you know, they got a little "Smith" store, you know, then the Jones he got a little "Jones" store. Because the Chinese considered if you're a Jones you and the Smiths are not the same family, so the Smiths all gonna patronize the Smith store and the Jones go to the Jones store, see? But that's the way they usually are. And so, they do business that way.

SS: How many different family groups would there have been? I don't mean exactly.

ML: Oh, at that time there was three stores there-- four, five, six, seven stores, at that time. And years ago, ages ago, ^{in China} then there used to be families-- three, four families-- when the people were in tribes at that time. The little tribes are just like the-- like I say little tribes-- then they unite with some bigger tribes form one group, see? They protect themselves. That's the way they are. We are the Lew family. We're a smaller tribe, see? And so, therefore, four tribes

come in with us. (Four families) Yeah, four families come into one group. And all the people now run that little store now, all those four families would come in patronize-- visit that one store.

SS: Would it be centuries or just a short time?

ML: Centuries. Going back, way back, going into the-- I would say- going ^{pretty near} back to the time of Christ, pretty near. When they used to be nomads and they ^{are} just tribes around. The Chinese had three kingdoms, you know. You have to read Chinese history, I don't know that much about it. The Chinese had three kingdoms at one time. And then they used to form into three separate groups. (Three kings at one time) In old China, three kings at one time, but you have to go to Chinese history. (China in three country then) Yeah. In China now.

SS: Were you supposed to marry within the family? In these four families, or were you supposed to marry outside?

ML: No, you can marry within those four families, but a Lee Or Lew could not marry their own family. They don't. They consider--

SS: Marry one of the other three.

ML: Yeah, the other three, or you could marry somebody else. But you never marry brother and sister.

SS: Marry outside of the four families?

ML: Yeah, yeah, you can, you can marry outside of the four families. (You had to go farther than--thousands of generations, like cousins, you know. Well, cousins and cousins, ^{over here} they don't marry either. Even a thousand cousins away, you know, still don't marry. Even if you had no brotherhood soever among the-- you're a Lee from way back in the time of Christ. The brother and sister they ^{blood} has disintegrated into other marriages already. So there is no such thing -- so it a lot farther than what the American people would call cousins, you know. Be hundreds of cousins.

First cousin, second cousin, third cousin-- you go back hundreds of cousins. And there'll be thousands of Lees-- you still don't marry a Lee-- a Lee don't marry a Lee. A Lee who is about six thousand miles away still don't marry another Lee, usually they don't)

ML: I think the main purpose of that is the Chinese people aren't let
 ... ^{US SAY,} the majority of the people aren't educated. They don't research into that thing. And during those centuries there when there were tribes, I would consider that the government, that the Chinese People said-- Right now you have research back there to see where the blood ^{COUNTS}
~~X~~ and all this other stuff. They say a Lee should never marry-- Chinese do not have too much people with that, you know, that you have the kind of disease that where you don't stop, you know, when you cut, you know, bleed. There are very, very few of them. We don't have hardly any of those types, see, because- that's one of the reasons they just--pure blood in that respect.

SS: Cousins usually have--

ML: Except, see, that most of the people are agriculture people, ignorant people, you make one draw like that and then everybody follow it, instead of going through doctors and doing this and that, you know, that way. I think that's the way it happened.

SS: The little that I've read about Chinese civilization, seems to indicate that people had a very highly advanced science.

ML: Yes they did.

SS: Way, way back.

ML: Yes, they did. They had it way back, yeah, they did at that time. But they had really a-- they had it advanced so much then they, you know, they got to the top where they had machinery do some of the work, but when they had that machinery to do some of the work, they'd pick work

out of the other guys. He said, what is these other people going to do? So they kind of staggered for a while. For a while one team burned all the books, burn all the books and let 'em get so the people would start over again, so they wouldn't be so smart that they get to hold the other people down. They had it one time that way, they burned all the book^s.^{But they say that} ^{king was no good because he} burn all the books, because he was-- because the people at that time was very smart at that time. They can operate and all, they-- in what they^{call in} Chinese at that time said-- they had one doctor he can cut a chicken's head off and then change his feet, and all that stuff that way. ^{He knows that was} word of mouth-- he was so skillful and he cut these things that way. But are not very good in patenting it (or writing it down) or writing it down. They tell the family what they did alright. (They were very jealous to keep the secrets to themselves) Instead of brought it out, you see, you got the secret in the family. You keep the secret in the family just fine, but they don't like to tell it out too much.

SS: You talk about like the four families that were along with the Lee Family. Would all those families share pretty much?

ML: Oh, yeah. Just like a big family. It is to protect themselves. (It's

MLL: ()) because they're the small ones. But the Lees and the Engs and the Wongs and the Chins, you know, they're big family. They don't need any-- they don't need to group together. So these other little, you know like the Smith and the Jones-- they're big family anyway. The shoe-makers you know and the bakers and all that you know. But the little ones that are odd names, you know, like in the American family, they're so small, they have so few members that they had to group themselves in order to fight-- to protect themselves)

SS: What were the names of the families that were with the Lee Family?

MLL: No with the Lew. With the Lew Family.

ML: Lee, too. They a group, not in this group, but the other group.

MLL: Chinese Family names.

ML: that at the time of the three kingdom. And that the time when China was divided into three kingdoms, see.

consider one kingdom, see. And Lew was supposed to be the king for the older brother. You know the Chinese are very ^{what do you call it?} ~~That~~ way. When the older one rule-- the oldest brother rule. He ruled-- I suppose the Indians are the same thing. You got a chief; the chief rules, it don't make any difference you know.

SS: The oldest brother--

MLL: The oldest boy in the family, whatever he say rules after the father goes.

ML: Well, whatever he say, usually-- he^s head of the family, in other words.

SS: Does it pass on to his oldest son? To the next oldest brother after he dies?

ML: Well, usually the Chinese family is divided, you know. And you have, what you call them? You have two brothers. Then the brothers would split there. The other brother was head of his family, and the oldest brother was head of his family. But the father of the two, you know, well, what he got, he really divided between the two son. So they had no trouble in that respect, see? But the Chinese years ago-- but when the father owed a debt, the son was supposed to pay (Had to pay^{it}). It isn't like here-- you won't take no pay.

MLL: You don't have to pay here.

ML: But the Chinese custom, like I say, everything goes to the sons--goes to the children-- the son usually. The daughter they consider-- a

daughter is married to somebody else, so somebody else's son can look after her. ^{that attitude, see?} But as a general rule, the daughter don't have to pay the father's debt. But the son do. If he happen to be bad, you know, a drunkard or a gambler or something, then the son would usually pay the father's debt. That way, see.

SS: That's a lot of responsibility.

ML: That is a lot of responsibility. They consider, a father has raised your children-- has given you life, see, given you life to the child. You know you give life to your child. And they figured that you owe your life to your parents. So they figure, after all, life is a cycle. So if the father supports the son when he's small-- and the Chinese custom-- feel that the son should support the Dad when he gets old.

MLL: They are not able to take of themselves.

ML: They very, very few. They like to take care of the old family, because even a family, because even a family-- even would like to come home, but nobody now take care to that extent, see. In other words, we're getting more modern. (Chuckles) But technically, Chinese, you go right through, I think you go down to San Francisco-- although there are not very many outside-- that feel that the children should take care of the older folks.

MLL: If the wife or daughter-in-law or son able to take care of them, then they are taken care of right in the home. But if they aren't able to take care of them, then they have to go to a nursing home. Which is not too often. Now like here, his wife is gone, and when his wife was living, he stays home, except when he got real sick, then he go to the hospital, and then he go to the nursing home for a few days until he doesn't have to see the doctor so often, then he come home to recuperate. But now, his wife is gone. His sister is too old

to take care of him. She cannot give shot for diabetes. Anyway, she is unable to do this for him, so for his own sake it is better that he is there. And the grandson has five children of his own now, from one up to six years old. Well, he try running a restaurant so they have no time. The grandson and his wife doesn't have time enough to take care of him at home.

SS: I can see that it is a lot more important than it is to the average American people. The kids try to set it up so they don't have to pay any more than they have to.

MLL: And let the government take care of them.

SS: And it's bad a lot of times because, I've seen a lot of it, trying to talk to old-timers in the homes, because so many of them just really go downhill once they get in a home. It's a whole different world.

ML: That's right, that's right.

MLL: If they were home, you see, they have - the old people there- they have the grandchildren there. And on the[✓] good days when they're not too sick, you know, they can enjoy what's going on in family life. And then that way they can live longer and they have a desire to live longer. This way if they're off to one place in the nursing home--

ML: Some of 'em are good and some are bad, but some of 'em are terrible: nursing homes are.

SS: When we talked a little about the people coming from Canton-- and that's where you're-- Were you born there?

ML: Yeah.

SS: And you came over very young, didn't you? How old?

ML: ^{I came over when I was}
Six, five and a half, six year old. Six year old in Chinese, I'd be five.

MLL: Because on the day they're born[✓] they[✓] one year old, already. You see,

they figure-- the Chinese figure this way-- they've been conceived nine months ago, you see, so on the day they're born, they're nine months old anyway, so they call it a year.^{21/2}

SS: That's nice.

ML: And, too, on top of that, too, the Chinese people as a general rule, as a nation itself, does not celebrate birthday ~~by~~ themselves too much. They usually celebrate New Year. The New Year they figure everybody add another year onto themselves, see. So in China they close up a week or ten days. The stores, everybody close up. And the only thing you can buy is fresh vegetable and a little fresh meat, outside that you can't buy a suit of clothes or anything at all. Everything just closed up. Everybody-- no matter where you go, you go back to home usually--the people that work in town now, the city, they go home for a week or ten day because New Year, see. And everybody has what you call a birthday at that time; another year. You're another year older. That the way they are. And the nation in general - that^s the way they go.

MLL: Add another year to their age. So, if you're born July, you're one year old. Next Chinese New Year you're two year old. So the one that has to add on lot more years, you know, the one that born on the thirty-first of December; they're one year already. The next day, which you are only two day old, they're two years old, on the Chinese New Year. But my mother happened to be very lucky, she was born on New Year's day, so she's only got one year added on to her, so she's always got that one year^{1/2} advantage.

SS: When you were in Walla Walla and there was a Chinese community, did they celebrate Chinese New Years?

ML: Yeah, yeah, they did. Very active.

MLL: In Honolulu. In any town where they have a big Chinese holiday--

they celebrate.

ML: In San Francisco, that^{is a} big Chinese town.

SS: In Walla Walla, when you were just a kid, do you remember what the Chinese New Years were like there?

ML: Well, the Chinese New Years were-- first they shoot firecrackers. you go out on what they call New Year Eve now, the old year, just before that they have a great big meal. On New Year's Eve they have a great big meal there. Okay, then everybody come and they eat the meal the change of the year, then about[^] twelve o'clock in the night, now, they go and put up some fruit and chicken,-- and what do you call it-- then go worship. At the coming of the New Year, ~~see~~, the time between twelve -- you know at the time between the old year going and the new year coming, they set up a big table with fruits and Chinese goodies, and then they kind of worship. Pray the new year coming in and the old year going by. And the New Year going to be a good year coming now and everybody going ^{to} be prosperous. Then the next three, four days they have great big meal. And you don't have to be invited, you go in the store and you get something to eat. They invite you to eat. Then they usually give the children-- the Chinese consider children, you know, if person is not married, even if you're twenty-five year old, if you're not married you're still a child. The only time you're not a child is when you're married. Then when you married you^{are a} in family, see. Then they give a little package of red-- with a little red emblem with a little money in it-- then whenever you see children, then you give it to the children.

MLL: ~~The~~ good luck sign is the red paper. It's red, always red is good luck and white is bad luck. That's why they use that in funerals. They wear white robes for funerals. In China when they have a bride come in wearing a bridal gown it is all red and gold, but predominately

red. That's a good luck color. Anything that's happy, the birth of a child or a happy occasion, engagement or a marriage or anything like that, you got lots of red around.

ML: Well, you see, I think that the red part is that the Chinese consider it the human body. The American people consider heart the important part of the human body, but the Chinese people consider blood is the most important part of the body. The Chinese got herbs-- and what you call it-- the kind to build the blood up, and to try to make everything run smooth, you gotta have good blood. You gotta have good blood to do it. I think that is the reason to have the red as a symbol for good-- because blood is considered by Chinese more important than the heart is. In a way, I think they are right, in a way, you know. Although, as a unit, blood and heart have to go together. Without one the other doesn't function. ^{Actually doesn't function.} But, I noticed the other day, we went out to kill a pig, that the first thing the farmer did was to shoot the pig-- knock the pig down, they opened his throat so the blood'd drip, so therefore, in order to stop the heart-- You can't have a heart without blood, see. (Laughter)

SS: The blood goes through the whole body.

ML: That's what I said. Goes through the whole body. You know to the Chinese ^{consider} the blood is the more important part. The Chinese people hate to get shots, stick with a needle to draw blood out. They hate to do that.

MLL: They hate to lose blood.

ML: Yeah, they hate to lose blood. They consider it very--what do you call it?

MLL: They don't hardly ever sell any of their blood.

ML: Yeah, they just hate to.

MLL: If they were very poor and that's a good way of getting money, why then they would do it. So, on New Year's Day children ^{they} know how to get that

little extra money, you know. So they go around, and of course, their own families and their friends, they go around because wherever they go they receive a little package of money wrapped in red paper on this few days of the ^{New} New Year.

SS: But when you were in Walla Walla and growing up, were there-- were most of the families there--

ML: Men. Mostly men. Most of the Chinese-- there was just two women ^{there}, that is all. There was three hundred and some men. Just two women I think there was. Somebody's wife-- two families.

MLL: And most of the men were in the farming.

ML: Well, yeah, they used to be railroad in the early day, but when the railroad quit then they got into the farming business. They got into the agriculture, see. Vegetable farming. They'd get a couple of acres and they go plant vegetables and then ^{sell} sell the vegetables.

SS: Did many of them work in the orchards?

ML: No, not too many work in the orchard. Not too many in the orchard. There was an apple orchard--

MLL: Not too many orchards in Walla Walla.

ML: There was an apple orchard that was considered big, but they never did hire too many Chinese.

SS: Why did the kids come to America instead of staying in China with the mothers? Why did they come with the fathers?

ML: Well, they come with the father because-- You see the father came over ^{on the railroad} here at that time.

MLL: They only usually -- the boys-- because they could take care of boys easier than having a girl along.

ML: They come to America because they considered it a land of opportunity. They come over here-- one reason is--they can make one dollar then they

get five dollars back there. But what American exchange is-- you save one American dollar, you get five dollars back in Chinese money. At that time the five dollars would actually buy more stuff than the American one dollar. Actually, back there. Their living^{id} be like the--- so therefore, you see, at that time, when I came the railroad was finished. The railroad was finished, the Chinese was just kind of converging one into the other a little bit. And so, therefore-- right after the railroad I think the government won't let the Chinese come in anyway-- the women come in anyway. In the first place the Chinese Government didn't want their wives to go. Then after that when the Chinese Government don't mind so much-- when the Boxer's uprising and then they open up the ~~west~~ to China, then the American Government don't want the Chinese people to move in here. So the gates was kinda closed in one end or the other. So the boys-- we had to come in-- most of the time-- a lot of Chinese come in as a general rule had to fake a name or something in order to say they are citizens or something like that. That's why a lot of Chinese people are that way, through that, because they only allow a hundred and eighteen a year. A year, they only allow that much. Where any country in the world they'd allow thousands a year, they only allow a hundred and eighteen a year. So they have to ~~tell a~~ fib, you know. "My father's so-and-so," in order to do that.

SS: At the time when you came in was it the same way?

ML: Yeah. I came in as a citizen's son. I mean, not citizen's son, a merchant's son. My father was supposed to ^{be} ~~do~~ ^{ing} business here as a merchant, and therefore, I came in as a son to go to school. I did, I went to school. I went through all the years of school here.

SS: Was that his first time here?

ML: No. My father'd been here before. My father's ^l here before on the railroad.

- SS: When would you guess he was first here?
- ML: Oh, it was 18-- something.
- SS: He worked on the railroad building in the Northwest?
- ML: Well, I don't know too much about that. My Uncle did, yeah. 1800 something. Then my father went back, I think 1800 something. Then went back to China. Must be ten, fifteen years, I think. Then he decided to come back. That's all.
- MLL: When he was in China during that time, then he got married.
- ML: Yeah, he got married.
- MLL: I imagine when he come over, did he come over with his father, too?
- ML: No. He just come over as a young man. A laborer.
- SS: He didn't do mining? He worked on the railroad.
- ML: No, the railroad. The mining was afterwards. The people of China -- the Chinese people are not very good miners, because they never had mining in China, that way, see. And so, they came over as a railroad worker. ^{Mostly as} Laborers. They even tell them, dig ditches and stuff, that's fine. But as miners, we have no experience. But after the railroad ^{was} built, then they have to do something. Then they got the idea to go out, you know, they go pan gold.
- MLL: At that time they don't have any more jobs with the railroad, so they have to do something else.
- ML: Do something to create a job for themselves to get ^{something} to eat ^{out of it}.
- SS: Do you think that when your father came to China the first time that he had done well, as far as-- Did he have-- had he made money? Actually here to bring back? Was he in good shape?
- ML: Well, he was, I would say, -- You don't have to do very much to do better than those people in China. The people in China are practically-- they're living from hand-to-mouth, they're like Indians.

MLL: A quarter acres of land, maybe.

ML: Like Indian. But, of course, he work hard and I think he maybe-- I would say, he save maybe five or six hundred dollars and he work probably for five, six years, something like that. I think he worked longer than that in fact. ^{He came over} The first time, he worked longer than that, because my mother is quite a bit younger than my father, so I imagine he was over-- I didn't talk to him so much at that time, I was young.

MLL: I think you said that your father didn't marry until after he was thirty--

ML: Some thirty some year old. My mother was quite a bit younger than he.

MLL: And he saved about five or six hundred dollars. And, of course, that's five or six hundred dollars more than anybody back there had, you know, at the time when he went back.

ML: So, he went back, you know. And, of course, we have a little land back there too. And my grandfather-- (End of Side A)
-- food for the family, see. And then he was doing fairly good in China. He was making a fairly living, I would say. Not good as here, but a living.

SS: It was all farming?

ML: Yes. He was farming and he was in business too. He was in the drugstore business there in China for a while. Then, of course, he was partner in it. And the drugstore business did real good, but at that time, didn't pay off very good. What ~~made~~^{made} him come back was-- at that time they have a lot of robbers. A whole bunch of bandit^s come in and take everything out of your house. Clean you right out.

MLL: Living in the village there.

ML: Yeah, in the village. They just took it all. You had to buy new furniture. The second time they got robbed, then they ain't got anymore, so he came back to work. The last time he came back he work eighteen years.

Then I was a boy then, and I went through school from the very first. ^{grad}

MLL: The second time he came back then he brought you with him.

ML: Yeah, yeah, that's a fact. He only came over here twice.

MML: Five or six years old then.

SS: How big was your family farm back there? Just tiny?

ML: Just ^{4 baby} four, five acres or so.

SS: But how much of the-- How close to being selfsufficient could the farm be? Did it grow a lot of the food you used?

ML: Yeah. First you grow a crop of rice on it, and that crop of rice would support the family. The rice itself; family food. Not to go out and sell ^{it} and get the money ~~back~~. No. No. I wouldn't say that.

SS: Enough to eat for themselves.

ML: Yeah, for the family to eat with. Then after the rice, then you have sweet potatoes and stuff that way. The ^{few} vegetable, that'd grow. And so that the winter months. You see in China where we are, there's no winter. It doesn't get cold like it does here. We live in the South. It just like Honolulu it grows pretty near all the time. But you can't plant rice continuously because at that there no fertilization ^{in which} to add to it, in order to--

MLL: Just one crop.

ML: One crop. So one crop of rice a year. Then you grow other vegetable. On the same soil, 'cause you plow it up. Then on top of that-- right by our land there, there's ^a stream there, there's a little stream there. During the time that the rice need ^s water then we took the water out of the creek to flood the rice fields. But in the fall of the year when we don't need so much water then everybody around there they dammed the creek up. They dam the creek up to the rice field during the summer then in the winter ^{they} lift the dam up and put a net there to catch all the

fish that in that dam. Then they divide it among the group that had farms around there. So we get enough fish to eat. Then we raise a pig, raise a chicken, so like I said, we killed the pig and then the chickens that way.

SS: How important was the water buffalo for a family?

ML: They never eat a water buffalo.

SS: What was it used for?

ML: The buffalo is a worker like a tractor^{'s}. He's a tractor. He's the second one to the man. Because, he plowed all the soil; he does all the pulling, he does everything the, really. And that's the reason most of the time the people don't eat beef at all. That's the reason because he's a working animal. I know my grandfather, years that we have a good crop, we have a good crop and then my grandfather usually fix something nice for the water buffalo^{to have}. Because we had a good year and the buffalo did so hard, much work and so fix him something real nice for the buffalo^{to have too}.

MLL: And also, for the people that don't have a buffalo, can't afford to buy a buffalo, then the man himself will have to do the plowing. They have to hitch him, instead of the buffalo. Like here, you know, you will still see pictures like the Waltons, you know, some of those old pictures where the poor man still have to harness himself and go do some plowing.

ML: South America^{'s} that way. Down in Peru, down in South America.

MLL: Whoever owns a water buffalo is considered pretty good, you see. And so I imagine his father^{was} a little bit better off than the next person.

SS: 'Cause he came here?

MLL: Yes. And he has enough money to buy a water buffalo so he can work this water buffalo instead of harnessing himself, why, he can work behind

the buffalo. Let the buffalo do the harder part of the work and he does the brain part, if that's what you call it.

SS: There was no protection for him against bandits-- against robbers coming in and stealing? Then there was no effective police force ---?

ML: No, no, there isn't any at all. The Chinese people just let you do it yourself. One thing about the bandits is, that is, usually sometimes the jealous neighbor usually-- the jealous neighbor-- that you're doing so well, they want you to be like they are, and they'll cut you down to their size, so therefore they come in and take your stuff.

ML: Oh, no, no, they come in the nighttime. And the whole group they'll put mask over their head--- As a ^{general} rule they don't kill anybody, but they rob everything they can get. Take everything out, that's all. Even, in other words, sometimes it's really-- just like I said-- the tribes. The larger tribes, in other words, in China the Lews live in one village, then somebody ^{else} live a little bit farther away, they a little bit poorer and they got a bigger family, they come over and take your things, and you can't do too much because they're bigger than you are.

MLL: Just like a big roughneck--

ML: ^{big guy here} He's bigger than you are and you can't say too much, he can take your candy away; he take your candy away! The little boy can't say too much you know, because you can't hit him back, can't do anything. That's ^{just} the way it usually is, see. Well, you can take it up to court alright, but you take it up to court, then the Chinese court is just like the American court it take so darn long to, especially the little squabbles, it take so darn long to get them to ^{the process} doing anything, so, therefore, it no use to go that way, besides the other people had more people on their side, so therefore they got more voice than you have.

MLL: Got a bigger voice than you have.

SS: I wonder if they tried to protect the places, they had the guards for the stores and the villages?

ML: No, usually they don't go rob the stores.

SS: I thought it was your father's store?

ML: No. No, the home. Well, you know, if you have a cow^{you have} a pig or two, they clean all that out-- it take^s a while in order to get that back. They don't rob stores.

MLL: Water buffalo, you know. Take everything you have.

ML: They don't rob store^s, you know. As a general rule. There isn't that much, you know like the old West, they shoot up banks, it isn't that type, no. It isn't that type. They usually, like I say, they just go to the homes, you know. They clean out your^{chest of drawers, your} clothes--

SS: Do you think it would be likely someone you knew, or would it be somebody----?

ML: More likely. More likely, if you trace down to it, be like somebody you knew.

SS: Somebody that knew how much you had?

ML: Yeah, yeah, that's right. Jealousy.

ML: Even if they are your relations-- see all, all the relations lived in one village. There's no Lews and Lees and Toms live in one village: all Lews live in this village, and then maybe a few miles further on there'll be Engs live in another village, but only one family name in each village.

SS: So these other families that were your friends, part of your big family, like the other small families that were with the Lews, they would live in a separate village--

MLL: Yeah, live closer than somebody else.

- ML: That's why they usually to get help, they yell to one another to come and help 'em out. As a general rule, though, if you're poor they don't rob you. They won't take anything, but if you're doing well-- You got a little village of fifteen families or so, you're doing so well then the others are not doing too well, so you get cut down to their size.
- SS: If there is a ^{Lew} village here, would there be another ^{Lew} village someplace else far away--?
- MLL: Another Lew?
- SS: Yes.
- ML: Yes, there are many
- SS: There are Lews all over.
- MLL: Oh, yeah, yeah.
- SS: And they're all related?
- MLL: Yeah, and then something too; Lews start in one village, and then maybe you take and go out any farther, your land don't go out any farther, and maybe next to you is the river or something, and the Lew family is getting bigger and bigger all the time, more grandchildren and great grandchildren. And ^{then} ^{er} part of the young people, they migrate to another village and set out another village.
- SS: ^{would they have to} And ^{start} a brand new village?
- ML: Yeah.
- SS: Had to find some land?
- ML: They have to find some land or they have to buy it. They have to bring the money with them from their family, you know, or maybe some of the older-- the grandfather and grandmother have enough money to give to their grandson and let him go get started. ^{in another village}
- ML: Oh, they go into the city to work, that way. They migrate to the city and do work, whatever they want to do, see. That way the family break

you see, usually. When you have two, three in the family and then this little piece of land can't support it, then they split up, and you have to go out someplace else and get it. It's quite a system.

SS: It's really interesting.

MLL: The Chinese people have more family life. They stay put too as long as they can, but if the land can't produce any more, you can't go on starving, see your children starve, then you've got to do something. Then they have to start someplace else.

SS: This is the question I have: How would your family like-- how would it felt having to separate like that? Your father coming here, your mother staying behind and you coming and other kids staying? Would they look at that as a real hardship?

ML: No. Because the Chinese people consider the man ^{the} head of the family. He's supposed to provide for the family. If he can provide things for the family, the wife don't mind to stay home by herself or with a child until he come back there. Lots of Chinese come over here to the United States, married not too long, they come over here and they died over here, and their wives still stay back there in China. Still waiting, ^{there are} lot of 'em do that. They're very-- the older Chinese are very faithful. They don't chase around with anybody at all. They just stay there because; once you're married, the wife's married to the man, then the mother-in-law looks after the wife. No matter what it is, the wife always have something to eat, because the mother-in-law-- if mother-in-law eat, the wife get something to eat. And the grandparents will provide for the wife. But then, of course, when the son do well, come back, then everybody do well. They don't like it, 'course they don't like it, They like ^{to} have their wife with them. But what can you do when you can't do it? That's the next best thing you can do.

MLL: They don't have enough money to do it.

ML: Yeah, you can't have enough money because when you come over here with a wife you gotta find a place for her to live while you could do lots of other things, where the old Chinese the people haven't got too much money, and they ^{can} bunk on the park bench or something, and stay for a few days til you find a job and then you get something else, see. But ^{with} a wife, you can't do that.

SS: Well, I think what you said before that by the time that they were allowed to come here that ^{that they couldn't come} and that's probably true. Since I talked to you I tried to find out a little bit about this exclusion. I find it was passed in 1882 for the first time and then it was renewed in 1892, that was ten years, and then it was renewed again in 1902.

ML: Yeah, that's right.

SS: And then it wasn't changed until 1943.

ML: Yeah, that's right.

MLL: They were able to become citizens then.

SS: Then during that whole time the only exceptions to let Chinese people in were just for certain classes, for certain reasons. ^{Or students.}

MLL: Students can come and the government people can come, of course, I mean the diplomatic people and maybe some religious people, like ministers come over here, but very few. But for the average people--

ML: Very few. ¹⁰⁵.

MLL: Oh, up until that time.

ML: There was very few compared with all the nations in the world, Chinese were the least. Although Chinese helped build the American railroad but they were the least.

ML: And then also, you know, during the war Chinese had ^{always} been their allies, too. That's why you know, very unfair to me. And what

they do for the Japanese. Japanese, they come over here and did what they did at Pearl Harbor and they were the enemies in a big war like that, and yet after the war was over, the Japan, never had it so good. They claim, when I was over there, they never had it so good. Well, China, they didn't do a thing for them. And China was the United States' allies.

SS: Politics, more than anything else. Because with Chiang Kai ~~Shek~~ perhaps had he stayed ruler of China then that would have--- It's the same as-- I've just been reading lately a little about Spain and Franco. I mean he was just just like Hitler and Mussolini, same group, but after World War II when they thought they were going to get rid of Franco because he was one of the Fascists, they kept him because he was anti-Communist, so he became an ally instead of an enemy. And it's crazy but it seems like it's politics more than anything else.

ML: Yeah.

SS: When people came over in a little town like Walla Walla, it was all men and almost no women. It's not a natural kind of community with all men and no women there, so it would be a pretty tough place for a kid to grow up in some ways. He wouldn't have the chance to have a lot of women around. No home. Not much of a home.

MLL: *no home life for their kids,*
ML: No there isn't, as a general rule. Well, I was one of the first Chinese kids there.

MLL: There wasn't very many children that come over, either, you know, and he was one of the few. And not every man was able to take their son over. Well, for one thing, they have to have the papers, you know, and also, the child have to be under age and all of that, you know. And have to have enough money for passage over here and get set up with enough clothing for winter, enough so that he could be sent to

school. It all amounts to-- some of the men cannot afford to. Some of the men didn't have any sons, and some of them, maybe not married. But just a very few. Just like his father that does have a son that come over with him. So it's not a very big community with very many children.

SS: Were you the oldest son?

ML: Yeah. I was the oldest son. I was the oldest son, and then like I said, I was the first Chinese young kid in Walla Walla. And then a couple of years later there's another one came over, Leland Lee, he came over. So for along time-- but afterwards, after I was there eight or ten years, at Walla Walla-- the maximum young Chinese was there was about forty, young kids at that time. Yeah, there was about forty. We all went to Baker School. That the maximum. At that time I think the law was a little more lenient or something, so the father can bring the kids over. Was a little more lenient, so everybody brought their boys over. And, of course, a lot of 'em went to school. And a lot of 'em ^{now} in business in Seattle and Portland and all; some of 'em in businesses. Then, of course, a lot of the younger people married and some of them went to China and married and bring their wives over. But first ^{when} when I came over, I was the only Chinese kid. The older ~~men~~; all the older men, they liked children. So I was, in other words, kind of a pet for the whole two-three hundred. No matter who has a party, I was there. Because I was invited, so because no matter where it is, I was invited to.

MLL: If somebody had a birthday party or something they invite him, you know, because, well, maybe they got a little extra, you know, chicken-- little extra-- nicer things ^{to eat} for the meal.

SS: How did the men treat you? Did they indulge you, or were they strict?

ML: The men treat you kind of strict, you know. But they like children, ^{it} remind~~s~~ them of family. It remind them. I was the only one, it just remind of their family at home, what they had at their home, so they was all good to me. There was something special, like I said. Then sometime they take me to a show or a circus come to town, boy, I was more invited than anybody. Everybody wanted to take me to the circus. They figure that I enjoy the circus. The Chinese at Walla Walla, that 's the only vacation they get ^{during} the summer, when the circus come to town. In the olden-time I think the circus come to town, I think maybe three times during the summer. There used to be a Ringling Brothers, and there used to be another two or three other little smaller ones. They used to make a great ballyhoo, because when they come to town everybody have a ^{big} parade. And it ^{was} really kind of nice. Of course, the Chinese work seven days a week and twelve-fourteen hours a day out in the truck garden so one day when there's something like that, everybody just take off and go to circus and rest one day, see. It was quite nice, that way. Oh, I don't know, in a way it was kinda rough, and in a way, it's alright, you know. Of course, most of the older Chinese people, they got nothing to do after the work, they got no family or anything, so they gambled a little bit amongst themselves. They played cards, they play Chinese domino. In amon^gst the three hundred there's always, we'll say about ten percent of them. Ten percent of them that don't ^{want} to work because you can make the ninety percent of them do the work, and they go ahead and gamble, and they get that way, see.

MLL: Those are not the farmers, they're the gamblers.

SS: I hear a lot about in the lumbercamps that the cardsharps come in and they cash their paychecks, and they clean them out.

ML: It is the same way, the same thing, I'll bet you at the Alaskan pipeline, the same thing. That's the way it is. They work so hard, then

got nothing to do, after they get through working. They make money, so what they do, they--

SS: I would think in a small community like that, if a guy was a cardsharp that the other guys would find out pretty fast and they wouldn't be taken by a cardsharp.

ML: No. It isn't the cardsharp so much, no. It isn't the cardsharp, it's where they get them is this way, you see. Those guys, they work, you see, they work all day long, they work twelve-fourteen hours a day, work, see-- Okay, when they get through working they go to these towns and they gamble and play cards. Those guys don't work, see, they sleep all day, and they're sharp, and these guys are half woozy and they go and-- they're not card sharps, no they're not, If they're cardsharps (ML calls them cardsharks) they throw 'em out. That's true. But, like I said, that's what I tell those guys, "If you ^{guys} gonna gamble don't work." I said, "Go ahead, then you have a chance," I said, "you work fourteen hours a day and you sit down and you're woozy, then you go ahead and gamble, and you give it all away. You don't know what you got." That's the way it is. And especially when you go up ~~there~~, and these cardsharps, you know, "I get you a nice meal." And, of course, you have a little drink. The Chinese as a rule doesn't get drunk, you know very much, but they have to take a little sip with the meal. So you know how it is, when you have a little bit you feel good and then you play cards pretty soon. ^{you fall asleep} Then they beat your ass off!

MLL: You're just not as sharp as the gamblers.

ML: They're not cardsharks, you know. Because those guys are there, some of 'em I've known for twenty-five, thirty years. If they were card-shark, they ^{would've} be^{en} dead a long time ago. But they're not.

MLL: The card players they've been there twenty-five years, like he say.

It's a diversion. It's just something like a pastime. I mean, you know, you go and play pool or a bowling alley, or whatever.

SS: I would think it would be a very hard life, no wife.

ML: I ^{know it} .. What you ^{could} do?

SS: What I mean, is that recreation like that would be important. Something to let go.

MLL: That's it. And then, the more you play, or especially the more you lose, why you think, "Well, gee, one more ^{time} I get it back." Well, that's the way it goes.

SS: Was there a special card game that they played? Or did the Chinese play poker?

ML: No, they play Chinese domino, kinda. ^{little} Domino set, what you call it. fan- And then they could play ^{fan-}tan, they call it fan-tan with the four squares there, then they take a handful of beans, except they use buttons, they got little Chinese buttons. They take a handful and then they leave it there, ^{then} you guess, then if you put your money on the corner, you get double your money. If it's a one-two-three-four now- if there's a one and two, either one of them ^{you} can double your money, if you buy on the first corner. But if you buy on one, if it comes out at one, then you get three times your money. So that's the way they gamble. ^{that time} They're just guessing. They just take a handful, just a handful of beans; they set it there in the middle, then you count it four by four, and then they count it, and the odd one, whatever it is is the last square. The last two, three, whatever it is, then you win. They ^{fan-tan they call it.} play that mostly because they consider that Of course, they do have it--what you call it? Down in Las Vegas, they call it--

MLL: What do they call it? The girls come around and take your bets.

ML: Is it Veenoo? (Bingo?) Keno. They got spots. Eighty letters--

ML: It's a Chinese book, see, they got eighty different words on one page.
In other words you get eighty numbers all on one page.

MLL: Then they roll something--

ML: Then they open twenty of the eighty letters. They mix it all up and open twenty, then you're supposed to find out which one of the twenty that they open; you buy it. ^{down there} If you open, I think five or something like that, you double your money. Or you get all ten of 'em, whatever it is, you make a lot of money.

MLL: Depends on how much you put in. Out of the eighty words you're allowed ten.

ML: You can buy as many as you want to.

MLL: Oh, I see. Can you? Well, they usually do with ten. You mark-- the Chinese people use wood, but the American people use numbers. And there's someplace else, they've got some kind of roulette or something and they turn that and you get these twenty come out-- they ^{turn} to someplace else.

ML: ^{down Reno,} Down to Las Vegas, you know, they got a little air tube, like a ping ping ball with numbers, they blow it so the ball will circulate, then they open a slot and they drop one of the balls out, and the ball got numbers on it-- then they open those twenty.

MLL: If you happen to hit so many of those twenty, the more you hit the more money you buy-- if you buy twenty-five cents, naturally, you only get ^{so much} but if you buy five dollars worth, you get more.

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ML: ----truck garden. See, there used to be twenty-five Chinese gardens there. Each garden get about eight or ten people working there. And they buy food--Chinese food, you. ^{know} Chinese canned goods.

ML: Near a store, he has a little store-- Chinese store.

- MLL: A store, he had a little Chinese store
- ML: Chinese store, supply to these gardens.
- SS: Your father was a merchant?
- ML: A merchant, yeah. Then afterwards some of the partners wanted to get into him, so he had to go outside and run a restaurant, see, afterwards.
- SS: Was he being supported as-- did he get money from the partners to start into business, when he started running the store? Did he have enough capital to start?
- ML: No, no, they all get together. Actually a partnership to start with. Nobody had enough money to start with. Because the Chinese people they carried a gardner for a year. They carried from the time until the crop comes. ^{After the crop come until the harvest.} They carried them no interest. Until the harvest. Whatever they want they come get it.
- SS: And was your father in partnership with the same other families that were ^{Lew?}
- ML: Yeah, they were.
- SS: Would people who would be in the gardening would be from the same family?
- ML: No. No, not necessarily. And sometimes, too, if it happened to be a poor year and the farmer can't pay all of it, then they have to carry for two years, sometimes. Because, they all work hard and they couldn't make enough to pay it, and so you have to carry 'em another year. Chinese people do do that. And no interest or anything, they just go ahead and carry 'em over, that way, see.
- MLL: I imagine the partners all put out so much money to buy stock--
- ML: Buy the stocks from Seattle--
- MLL: Seattle or San Francisco or Vancouver, from the Coast. Where the ships come in to the Coast. And then they sell it to these stores. In Spokane they used to have a China Town, too, they called it a China Alley--

a Chinese Alley there. One alley was a China Town and the other alley Japanese Town. And they would be having some Chinese stores just like that. Only their's was one big block there in Walla Walla-- but in Spokane we have- in that alley between Trent and Main-- by Browne.

ML: They tore it down.

MLL: They tore it down. And now, there's no more Chinatown.

SS: It was much bigger than the one in Walla Walla.

ML: No. Walla Walla was bigger.

SS: Walla Walla was bigger?

MLL: Yeah, because in Spokane, the only people that ~~is in it is the...~~

ML: Run a restaurant, that's all, see. Spokane never was----

MLL: There were more people-- Chinese people in Walla Walla--than there are in Spokane.

SS: I wouldn't have thought that.

ML: You see this way, too-- a Chinese in Walla Walla- a emigrant come in- new alien come in the gardens with Chinese. But in Spokane you couldn't work in the restaurant. You gotta have a little English in order to work in there. But the garden-- You could go down they just tell you to plant ^{on}ion-- show you how to plant onion and you go there and plant onion. Because they have a few that know how to seed it and how to irrigate it and all you do is harvest it, and plant it, and that's all.

SS: Were these gardens owned in common? Or did one man own it?

ML: No, they all own it together. They work: co-op. They rent the land.

MLL: They rent the land-

ML: from the American people. They can't own land.

SS: Can't own land?

ML: No, they can't own land.

ML: When you're not ^{an}citizen, you cannot own land.

ML: They just lease it.

MLL: And what he's trying to say is, each group on each farm, is co-op and they all work together; they all eat together.

ML: ^{Same food, and they divide it.}
When the fall come and the harvest, they all divide it. All expense is paid then they divide.

SS: Fifteen men in one?

ML: No. Some big ones there. But most of 'em have about six or eight. But there are some big ones.

SS: And these six or eight, they didn't have to be from the same family?

ML: No. No. They're friends. They usually friends.

MLL: ^{You can work together.}
Over here, when they come over here, not only families is grouped together, outsiders is into it too because--

ML: Mostly friends.

MLL: Uh-huh.

ML: ^{live together}
You live together all year 'round, so you gotta be able to work together. You got to be friends enough, because if one guy don't go to work at five o'clock in the morning-- you have to go to work at five o'clock in the morning, you can't say, "I'm going to sleep until six." Because if you do, you're going to have trouble, see? So, they usually are friends.

MLL: You have to have the same ideas and the same goal and the same ambition too. One or two of them cannot be lazy ones and sleep in a couple of hours later. And ^{then} probably the one that has to cook the evening meal, maybe he can be off the field an hour or two hours earlier, you know to cook the meal for the group of workers.

SS: So probably, like one man would take care of all the cooking.

MLL: Yeah, usually is. Or maybe arrangements, like two students, you know. Or maybe one of them would cook for one week and another one cook for--

But, usually, one of the men like to cook or know a little bit more about cooking than the other guy, and probably one can do better out in the field, and one can do better doing the cooking, and maybe a third one can do the dishes, you know, and clean up afterwards.

SS: I wonder how big one of the plots would be, how many acres a group would have.

MLL: *In* truck farming, you don't need too much, but I'm not sure how much. But we have a friend that's down there now; originally, they had forty acres and they do real well. In fact that forty acres, when he do the truck farming he has to have a lot of equipment. And, you see, in the old days they don't have any equipment except-- your own little household garden to do the weeding and things like that. All by hand.

SS: Are these friends of yours-- have they been there truck farming in the early days?

MLL: Yes. His father and mother, they been there-- the father had been there for forty, fifty years.

SS: I wonder if he started like Mr. Lew's father did?

MLL: No, I think he come in a little bit later, I'm not sure.---This is our son-in-law, he has this trailer court down there. Sometimes, you know, things might be in trouble or something, and he check into it. In their forty acres, and I think they rent another ten or twenty, they have lots of equipment. They have two or three tractors and diggers and everything. And then they sell it to the canneries. One of their biggest crops is onions, dry onions. ^{He's} [^]wondering about how big some of these truck (farms) are. they got a forty acre.

ML: Most of the truck gardens are about forty acres--at that time. The big ones are a hundred and a hundred and five.

MLL: You mean, they do all by hand?

ML: Those the ones got fifteen, eighteen people working, you know.

SS: They work twelve or fourteen hours a day.

ML: Sure. That's right. The big farms they got a hundred to a hundred and five, somewhere around there.

SS: Where did they sell the produce?

ML: To the produce (company) in Walla Walla. Pacific Fruit and the Walla Walla Produce and all those things, yes. Although, every day they go and have a little pickup, a little horsecart with -- just like a little pickup except it was driven by a horse. They go peddle it from house-to-house. They have regular customers, they come right out to the front door, and pick their vegetables and pay them. They used to be in Lewiston. When you go down to Lewiston, you ask them. It wasn't too many years ago that the Chinese man with two big baskets have vegetables. He peddle from house-to-house. With a pole on the shoulder, goes up and down the street. ^{you ask 'em 'bout it. All 'em you.} It very interesting, I never seen those in Walla Walla. I've seen them in the truck garden, they carry them from there into the home, then they load on the wagon. But this guy here in Lewiston, he carried it from house-to-house, peddled it that way. (Laughter)

SS: So, when you first came here, you didn't do any work, you just went to school?

ML: Oh, yes, I did work. I work for a dollar a week.

SS: What did you do?

MLL: You were in high school then.

ML: No, I was in the seventh grade-- the sixth grade. You see, at that time my father had to get out of the business ^{there} in the court, you know into the restaurant business with three other partners. And, of course, the three other partners haven't gotten any children, see they haven't got

any children. In other words, my father had to feed me, and some of 'em don't like it, so I had to go get myself a job. So I got myself a job with some insurance lady, insurance man and his wife, and I worked for a dollar a week.

MLL: Do ^{all} the housework.

ML: Do all the housework, do all the cleaning up, and then not most of the cooking, but I helped cook. And start the old Model T Ford in the morning. Had to boil water to pour on the radiator to keep it warmed up so when you crank it it'll go, see otherwise it'll freeze, it won't start. Then we have to jack up the hind wheels so it ^{'d be} easier to turn, see. The model T Ford it's out of your---(chuckles)

MLL: You've never seen one.

SS: I've seen one, but I've never seen one running down the street.

ML: You jack up one wheel, you jack up the hind wheel, because when you crank it, it ^{'s} a lot easier than, especially in the winters, that one wheel would turn, then you crank it a lot easier than it would if it was on the ground, see. Easier to turn the engine that way. Lot easier when you jack one hind wheel up.

MLL: I thought you put a stick, you put something-- no, you put something in there to crank it, that hole in there--

ML: That hole already there-- Just like a tire thing, you know--sits on a tire--

MLL: Yes, I saw those. *I remember seeing them.*

ML: Comes up with a little thing, that way.

MLL: Oh, they always stuck on the car.

ML: The older ones stuck on there, you just push it in, then you crank it then it comes out, that's all.

SS: When you worked for these people for a dollar a week, how did they

treat you?

ML: Well-- I wouldn't like it-- that's why sometimes I hate to say these things. I didn't like it at all-- very well. Because, in the first place, they don't give me enough to eat, I'm hungry all the time. Because these two people are-- they had no children, just a man and his wife. Their name is Winterberten (?) and they had no children and that's all he sells, just insurance. ^{He's} Just insurance salesman for New York Life, I think it is. And she is a social type of a woman.

SS: Oh, they're probably dead by now.

ML: Oh, yeah, they're dead by now. They're social-- what do you call it--

SS: Social climbers.

ML: ^{Climbers} Oh, she terrible. In Walla Walla there are two group of people, there's the Ankeney's and the Marshalls, those are the wealthy people; those are the wealthy, rich farmers. Then there's another group that are quite wealthy too, but this group smokes, this is a social group that like to drink and smoke more. She tried to get in both ^{something} and therefore, she'll put on a party once in a month or so and for the next week or ten days we don't get nothing to eat. ^{practically} Nothing to eat.

ML: For them older people, it was alright, see, but for a growing boy--

ML: But the trouble is, you know. I get to eat whatever's left, you know.

MML: Of course, he doesn't get to sit with the family.

ML: I eat in the kitchen, so whatever they got left. So that's the way I eat.

SS: Do you remember, did they deprive themselves of food after a party like this.

ML: Yes. They do.

SS: They're trying pretty hard to--

ML: That's what I hate.

SS: It just reminds me exactly of what people remember, like there's a couple that I know, now they live near Princeton, and she grew up near Harvard, that's where she grew up. So to go to high school, the only high school was in Potlatch, and to go to high school there she had to work in town. So she lived there, she had no way of getting there. So she had to live with the families on Nob Hill in Potlatch, because they were the people that had the hired help. Every better family on Nob Hill had a servant girl from the country. She said the same thing. She said there were times when she didn't have enough to eat. Depended on the family. Some families were ^{more considerate} than others. But to have hired help was a sign of their success.

ML: Exactly the same way. Everybody-- the Nob Hill people in Walla Walla they all got Chinese cooks, But this ^{poor} lady here she got to have a Chinese cook also, so she hired me for a dollar a week. That the same thing, no foolin', ^{like I say,} when they have a dinner, her husband don't like it at all, because when she have dinner she have clean house, and do this and she have to get her hair fix. You know, he's a poor insurance salesman, where these other guys got Marmon cars, you know, big cars, and he got a little old Model T Ford; he try to climb up with them, it's terrible. In the morning, like I said, just a piece of toast, and maybe one egg, sometimes ^I don't get an egg, you know. But when we have parties, then got lotsa food there for that one day, that's all. And after that, we don't get anything to eat for a week, see; week or ten days.

SS: Were you still going to school?

ML: Yeah, going to school. And then I had to go home to get something to eat sometime, I ^{get} so hungry.

MLL: He stay at home.

ML: No, I stayed at their house.

MLL: Oh, you stay at their house.

ML: I stay at their house, yeah.

MLL: Every day--^{almost} every so often you have to go home to^{get a little extra} eat.

ML: I stay at their house, because in the morning I have to go build a fire in the furnace, I tended the furnace, chop the wood, you know and take the ashes out and all that stuff, too, you know. He goes to work about eight o'clock.

MLL: Not even enough bread to fill him up, you know.

SS: Did they talk to you very much?

ML: They're really nice people. They're really nice, awfully nice people as far as that's concerned, but, like I said, they haven't got the money, they're social climbers. They just trying to get up with the Joneses. She's^{is} more that way. He doesn't want to be that way, but she's that way. So you can't do anything.

SS: How long did you stick with them?

ML: It must be a year and a half, two years. I think I got out of the eighth grade, out of Baker School.

SS: What was it like when you first started school there and you were six? You probably didn't start then.

ML: Seven. I don't know a word of English, you know.

SS: How was it?

ML: It's rough. But then, of course, as a general rule the teachers are very good to the Chinese people,^{the one that doesn't speak.} They are willing to do that, not like the modern teachers are. They are willing to stay after school, two-thirty, three o'clock to work an hour, to help you a little bit.

SS: You got personal^{attention} ?

ML: Yeah. You do. All the Chinese do that way. Practically all do that.

MLL: And also, the church help out a lot. The church would have a lady,

you know, that maybe teach a whole group of kids the same age for one hour in the evenings. To help them get started.

ML: They're very good that way. Evening school.

SS: Did you get through the first grade with all the kids and the second grade, too?

ML: Yeah. Just right through, went right through. Went through high school.

SS: Did it take very long for most of the kids there to accept you as being just another kid, or did they warm up to you right away, or did it depend on the kid?

ML: It depends usually on the kid. You never did get to know everybody. No it isn't like that. There's always a certain amount that, you know-- The boys are a little bit better, they get friendly, but the girls you know, just stay away entirely, that's all.

MLL: 'Course, you know, you not having a home ^{and} a mother you know, it might make it a little bit different, too, you see. He ~~can't~~ have a boy come up to play with him, he maybe just have one bedroom, you know, with his dad, and no homelife, what you call a birthday party or something. He never had a birthday cake until after we're married. It's a little bit more difficult that way for them to adjust and for the other kids, too, you know, to adjust to him.

SS: Like when Gene Settle and I were talking, he was telling me, how it was really different when he went. Well, country school was a lot easier--

ML: Oh, yeah, that's right.

SS: --than it was when ^{we} came into town, and then it was easy at the beginning to start. You went to school right in town, right in Walla Walla.

ML: Baker, Baker School, I went to Baker School, right in the town.

MLL: And when they are young children it's not too bad.

ML: Not too bad. When you're first grade, five- six year old see.

All the kids are five- six year old then.

MLL: And especially where the teachers-- usually the teachers are not,-- they are with you, with the ^{new} kids, you know, and they try to make it easy for you. ^{+ transition into it} Well, when I came over I was ten years old when I came to the United States and I started with the first grade, but it didn't take me very long -- as soon as I know enough English I can go on. I started with the first grade--well, it took me five or six years to finish the first eight grades. But you know, the first few grades I-- because I already had some history and geography and math, especially, in China already. So all I need ^{was} English and that what he need-- of course, he needs everything there. And he never had been to school, but I had already been to Chinese school five years. So I know everything except English. So it's ^{was} easier for me to adjust.

SS: When your parents decided to come over were the reasons much like why his father decided to come?

MLL: Yes, to get a better living than back in China.

SS: Did your mother come too?

MLL: No, my father was over here first. He came over here by himself first and that was right after they were married, and then he came over and ^{spent} a few years and then I was six years old before he went back. So the first time he went back, was six years, you see.

SS: When you first saw him?

MLL: Yeah, when I first saw him. So it was six years after he first come over here.

SS: What year was it?

MLL: 1920 when I came over. When I was six years old, then my father went back to China and he studied a little Chinese medicine then in Hong Kong and then came back over ^{here} and it was 1920, so I was ten years old

before we come over. And so, he left us another four years. And, of course, the second time, when he went back then my sister was ^cconceived then and so she was four years old and I was ten. I'm six years older than she is. So she and my mother and myself came over in 1920, which ¹²four years later on then.

SS: Was it difficult for him to get the whole family over here?

ML: Oh, yes, uh-huh. It just as difficult for money matter and red tape too.

SS: That's what I was thinking of, the red tape. If it was hard to get women into the country.

MLL: Well, at that time he was in business, so I was a merchant's daughter, and my mother was a merchant's wife, when we two came over.

SS: Had he started in business before he ever came to the United States?

MLL: No. No, he was only a boy when he come over. I imagine he must have been seventeen-eighteen years old when he came over.

SS: What do you think the first time would have been, around what time, the year when he would have come over? Was it the first time when-- right after he was married?

MLL: Yeah.

SS: So that would have been about 1910?

ML: No, no.

MLL: I was born in 1910, so I think that's about-- I think they ^{were} married ¹four years before I--

ML: I don't think so.

MLL: Yes, I am sure they were. He said he twenty years older than I am and they were married when he was sixteen, and he said he'd been married four years, somewhere around four years. He came over here at sixteen or seventeen, right after he got married.

SS: He came about 1905 or 1906?

MLL: 1904, wouldn't it?

ML: He got married just before he come here.

MLL: Sure, sure, that's right.

ML: How could he be four years--

MLL: No. I was born-- He's twenty years older than I am. So he was twenty years old in 1910. That's when I was born, yeah. He was married when he was sixteen years old. So, I would say 1906 when he come over.

SS: So he would have come over when he was sixteen--

MLL: Sixteen, seventeen year old.

SS: By himself?

ML: No, he had an uncle or something---?

MLL: No, his father was over here.

SS: Do you know what he did--- what his father did?

MLL: Yeah, his father was in the same kind of a store, down there in the alley, Chinese Alley -

ML: Supplying the railroad men. A store come in there that supply the railroad men, from that transcontinental railroad here. Hope, Idaho.

SS: That's right, that's right, I was reading about that here-

ML: Hope, Idaho.

MLL: ^{We know this fellow in} Hope, Idaho, he passed away ^{not very} long ago. He was still living there until about five, six years ago.

SS: So that's what your grandfather was doing? He was supplying the railroad.

MLL: He was supplying the Chinese people.

SS: ^{Who worked on it.} And then your father came over, and did he work for him? For his father?

MLL: I suppose he work some and went to school and later on he did go to

school for a while, and then later on he worked in some restaurants.^{too}

SS: Then he came back and stayed for a while and then came back.

ML: Yeah, he went back 1917-1918. ^{Some where around there} Mi's father and he came over alone a lot earlier than we did in 1800 something when his father and his uncle.

SS: Well, when your father was over here he learned to be a merchant .

MLL: Well, see, when he went back to China at the time I was six years old and he learned to be a herb doctor. And so when he came back here he was a herb doctor In Spokane. ^{He} He was a merchant in -- , you know, in business. I think he was there about three years, two, three years, something like that. I think he went back in 1917-- 1916, I guess, 'cause I was six years old, somewhere around 1916. And then he had two, three years--, in herb...

SS: In old country training, that takes to be an herb doctor, is it like going to school, where you study. (End of Side C)

ML: Then he collected these certain herbs for certain things, and then you have a doctor and he tell you, that way. You have to know something. ^{How to read.} In the old times the doctor used to be that way, you know, in the pharmacy. You go study to be a pharmacist and you work in the pharmacy department, and then ^{you} gradually become a doctor. The Chinese did that in the old time and they're still that way. ^{More or less.}

SS: So he learned to do that and when he came back--

MLL: He came back by himself. A little bit later on we came over to-- ^{two later,} a year or 1920 before we came over.

SS: Did he have his own store in Spokane?

MLL: Yeah.

SS: Would it be just an herb store or herbs and groceries?

MLL: No. At that time he's been--he was out of the grocery in Chinatown then. He was out when he went back to Hong Kong; went back to China

when I was six years old.

SS: What did an herb store carry?⁷

MLL: All kind³ of herbs. And then he would take different kind of herb, - boxes and boxes of them and jars and glass jars and--of weeds, well, roots, and even some little animal- dried animals, oh, things, too you know. And for certain things he would keep certain herbs and cook 'em and then make a drink out of it, and bottle it. The Indians do a lot of that, too, you know.

ML: Maybe Carter's still has some of that too. They got little drawers where they got different kinds of herbs. These old drug stores. Used to be the corner drugstore had it. Old Charlie ^{Bowles} had it, you know. You get a certain thing, you know--

MLL: And then stir it---- (both are talking at the same time)

SS: Well, I understand that most of those they use for modern drugs now come out of natural ^{base} herbs.

ML: Yeah, they do.

SS: Was he the only herb store in Spokane?

MLL: No, there were two. There were two in Spokane. I think there's only one now.

SS: I think I've seen that one in Spokane.

MLL: It's on Sprague, you know. He used to be on Wall, ^{they} used to be between Riverside and Main and our's was between Riverside and Sprague, we were up closer to the old John W. Graham up there and that way.

SS: Did he do his business just about completely with Chinese people?

MLL: No, uh-huh, mostly American people. They believe in it. The Chinese herbs are like any herbs, it takes longer to go, you know, with American things, they just shoot it right into the bloodstream. With the herbs you have to take it through the mouth and it's not like the

capsules either, it takes time to-- it goes through as a food-

ML: Slower, lot slower.

MLL: Slower, ^{process} It's mostly to maintain your health rather than to cure you after you're sick. They had a Herb doctor in Walla Walla too, didn't they?

ML: ^{They} Used to.

MLL: They usually ^{wherever there's a big enough town they usually} have an herb doctor, they still have some in San Francisco and Los Angeles area. ^{They cater a lot of it to American people.}

SS: Did he get his herbs from Seattle?

MLL: Yeah, from Seattle or San Francisco, mostly more from San Francisco. But now, it's harder to get now, especially since it is mostly from Communist China. The only place that's not Communist China is Hong Kong, and Hong Kong is just a small island. So it has been very expensive and very hard to get some of the herbs, ^{to come over} So the herb doctors are really up against it now.

SS: It must have been a pretty good sized industry in China. They, ^{growing} the herbs.

MLL: Oh, Yes. A lot more than the modern doctor, would ^{not} you say? Lot more. There is only very small percentage of-- Now, of course, now in Main land China now, ^{the Communists,} it's a little bit different, it's still more or less--

SS: Did your father do good business in Spokane?

MLL: Yes, he had good business.

SS: It's interesting to me that a lot of Americans--

MLL: Oh, yes, they believe in it.

ML: ^{At that time,} I ^{think} believe less though now. The doctors are against all that. They like acupuncture.

MLL: Acupuncture-- even some American doctors are taking that courses in China now. Like a brother, and he says the American doctors are going

in there too. Groups of American^{medical} doctors are going into Communist China to take these courses.

SS: I've heard that in American doctors, American medicine, they always believe in treating the symptom, whatever that is, and often don't treat what's underneath it, the underlying causes. And that's one things they talked about Chinese medicine, that they treated the--

ML: They try to cure you. ^{They do} That's true. (End of interview)

END OF TAPE

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