

Introduction:

The Asian immigrants who came to this country in the 19th century were best known as miners and railroad builders. After the passing of the frontier and the mining era, many of them stayed in the same region and made a lasting contribution to its growth. Although the early Asian immigrants, particularly the Chinese in Idaho made significant contributions to the state's growth and development, they have been mostly neglected by historians and writers. Are you aware that in 1870, nearly 40% of the population in the Boise area were Chinese? Popular fiction and movie scripts often portrayed Asian Americans as laundrymen, peddlers, or restaurant owners. While these may be the professions of the early Asian settlers, if we examine the families and members of Asian community closely, you will discover they are not any different from the majority of the people in Idaho.

This documentary, based on interviews conducted with (3-4) selected families, spanning from the early 1920s to present day, will try to give you a sense of the contributions of these forgotten people, and hope to increase the awareness and understanding of this less-known, but very important ethnic group in Idaho.

Interview questions:

1. When did you come to _____ (present community; original destination?)
2. Why did you come to the United States? (original destination? present community?)

(If the subject is native born, ask about his or her immigrant parents or grandparents.)
3. Describe to me your early experiences in this community. How were you accepted? What did you do? What was (the community) like when you arrived?
4. Tell me, what are some of the biggest changes you have seen in this community? Changes in the people? In how they relate to you and how you relate to them?
5. Relate to me some of your most memorable experiences as an Asian American living in this community.
6. Tell me about your family - children. Who are they and what are they doing now?
7. Did you raise your children as Americans or Asians (specific group? Chinese, Japanese, or Filipino?) What were some special challenges you faced in raising an Asian family in this community?
8. What does it mean to you to be a _____ American?
9. What advice would you give to a new immigrant from (subject's group), to be successful in America?
10. How do you think you have influenced your community? How have you been influenced by your community?