

INTRODUCTION

While conducting research for her chapter in the book *They Chose Minnesota*, Sarah Refo Mason actively collected stories from members of the Chinese American community throughout the state during the 1970s. This was the first initiative by a researcher to document the rich history of this community, members of which settled in the state as early as the 1870s. Mason's work resulted in several oral histories now housed in the Oral History Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.

In the 1990s, the Minnesota Historical Society Press began to update individual chapters in *They Chose Minnesota* and to republish each as a book in a new series entitled *People in Minnesota*. Each volume deals with the history of an ethnic community in the state, and includes a selection of photographs and a personal story.

In 2002 an author was selected for the book *Chinese in Minnesota* as part of this new series. Following Mason's footsteps, four additional oral histories were conducted in 2002-2003 in an attempt to collect new stories and perspectives to add to previously completed research. The first interview was conducted with Harry Chin, who entered the United States in 1940 as a paper son, and follows the challenges of his new life in Minnesota while continuing to support family members in China. The second interview is with Chin's daughter, Sheila Morris Chin, and explores her experiences growing up with a Chinese father, an Irish mother and learning of her father's paper son identity as a teenager.

The third interview was conducted with L. Jane Wilson, a long-time director of the Chinese Sunday School at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis who helped several generations of Chinese Americans adapt to Minnesota and American ways. The fourth interview looks at the Huie family who immigrated to Minnesota in 1929 and describes the ways in which members of this family supported each other after the unexpected death of their father in 1939.

All of the above interviews include information about Chinese American businesses, organizations and events in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area between 1940-2002. The challenges of trans-national families, global politics and Chinese American identities are also woven throughout the interviews.

Sherri Gebert-Fuller
Interviewer