Stanley Chong Narrator

Sarah Mason Interviewer

June 28, 1979 Minneapolis, Minnesota

Sarah Mason -SM Stanley Chong -SC

SM: I'm talking to Stanley Chong in Minneapolis, Minnesota on June 28, 1979. This an interview conducted under the auspices of the Minnesota Historical Society and the interviewer is Sarah Mason. Stanley, I wonder if we could start with your parents and what you might know of when they came and why they came.

SC: Well, it just happened that I was home in Yakima, Washington, about three weeks ago for a funeral and we found quite a number of papers indicating that my father was one hundred and one years old when he died.

SM: Oh, that's remarkable. When did he die?

SC: I'm trying to think . . . let's see, it must have been 1959.

SM: I see. And do you know what year he came to California?

SC: No, I don't.

SM: Or did he come directly to Oregon?

SC: I think he probably came to Oregon directly. And then my grandfather, his age in those same group of papers indicated that he was ninety-eight years old.

SM: Did he come to America, too?

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh, I see. And he died when he was ninety-eight.

SC: That's right.

SM: He must have been a very early . . .

SC: He was one of the early settlers of Portland, Oregon.

SM: I see. Oh, so your father grew up in Portland?

SC: No.

SM: Oh, he was sent . . .?

SC: I think that he . . . as far as I know, my father spent most of his life on the West Coast, but I think that it was in primarily in the state of Washington.

SM: I see.

SC: Whereas with my grandfather, he spent his time in later life primarily in the state of Oregon. But I do know that both of them worked in the railroads as well as in the gold field.

SM: I see. Well, then did your grandfather marry in America?

SC: Yes, he did.

SM: I see. Well, that's unusual then for that period, isn't it?

SC: Oh yes, it was.

SM: Yes. Did he send for a bride or . . .?

SC: No, she was in California.

SM: Oh, I see. So was she a second generation? Or she just came as an immigrant?

SC: I'm . . . not sure.

SM: Yes. It's a long time ago. [Chuckles] I see. So grandfather married in America.

SC: Right.

SM: So your father was a citizen then.

SC: My father?

SM: Yes.

SC: No.

SM: Oh, he wasn't?

SC: No.

SM: Wasn't he born in America?

SC: No, my father was not born in America, my mother was.

SM: Oh. Oh, I see, then they went back before he was born?

Washington SC: No, you see my father was of a different family. See, my grandfather.

SM: Oh, this is your mother's father?

SC: My mother's father.

SM: I see. That's the maternal grandfather.

SC: Right.

SM: Okay. But your father then grew up in Washington.

SC: Washington.

SM: Did he come as a [unclear]?

SC: Yes, he did.

SM: I see. Did he come alone then?

SC: He came with a group of people. And they came over on a sailing boat.

SM: Oh. Do you know, that they were contracted laborers or . . .?

SC: I rather imagine it was.

SM: It would be really nice to know a bit more about those early ones, what prompted them to come. I'm sure it was economic reasons.

SC: Oh, definitely, yes. Yes.

SM: He came from Taishan then, is that right?

SC: Correct. Yes.

SM: And what was his village?

SC: Yinping.

SM: Yinping. Well, Taishan was an area of very small farms and hilly land at that time, as I understand it.

SC: That's what my understanding is. Never having seen it . . .

SM: That's why so many came from there, I guess, in order to support the people who remained behind.

SC: Yes. Right.

SM: That's very interesting. So your mother and your father then married in Oregon or . . .?

SC: Mmmm, I think so. No, wait a minute. No. No, they were married in Washington.

SM: Yes. In Yakima, was it?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: Where did they meet? Or how did they get to know each other?

SC: I think through a matchmaker, as I remember.

SM: Oh, but in Washington?

SC: Oregon.

SM: In Oregon.

SC: Yes.

SM: I see. So the matchmakers would function both in America and in China?

SC: Oh, yes.

SM: I think it was Marvel . . . your wife [Marvel Hum Chong] was telling me that there was a great celebration when they were married.

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: Was that the first Chinese wedding there?

SC: That I don't know.

SM: Yes. But it was a big event in the town then.

SC: Yes, because we do still have the wedding pictures. And the robes were rather elaborate.

SM: They were brought from China then?

SC: Yes. Oh, yes.

SM: And was there a large group of people there for the event?

SC: I don't know. Haven't any idea. Because that's the only picture we saw, was the bridal couple.

SM: I see. That's very interesting. But your mother was American born?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: She was a citizen. Did she lose that when she married your father?

SC: She must have. Yes, she must have. Although the laws were definite, but then interpretations were very hazy.

SM: I see. So you're not sure if she lost her citizenship?

SC: No.

SM: Was she somewhat more Americanized than your father or pretty much the same? I mean, was there any conflict in their values or the way they looked at the world?

SC: I don't think so. No. No, I don't think so.

SM: Yes. So she was very Chinese.

SC: Yes.

SM: [Unclear]

SC: Yes.

SM: One thing I thought would be really interesting if you want to talk about it at all is the family structure. As a person in your family with parents who were . . . well, one was second generation, one was first generation, whether . . .

SC: No, both of them were [unclear].

SM: Oh, well, it's hard to know what to call your father because he was a young boy . . .

SC: Yes. Yes, he wouldn't . . . I don't think he'd view . . .

SM: He did come from China though, right?

SC: Yes, so it wouldn't be first generation even.

SM: Oh, I see what you mean. Well, I always think of the people that first came as being the first generation.

SC: Oh, I see.

SM: But I think people do have a little different interpretation of that, especially when someone comes as a child.

SC: Yes. Because when we look at Japanese you call Nisei, that's a first generation.

SM: The Issei are the first generation.

SC: Issei.

SM: Yes. And then the Nisei are the American born, right.

SC: Right. Yes.

SM: Yes. And he wasn't American-born.

SC: No.

SM: So I think he would be first generation.

SC: Is that what you consider first generation? The first generation in . . .

SM: Yes, the ones that were born abroad somewhere.

SC: And first generation to be arrived. Is that . . .?

SM: Yes.

SC: Okay.

SM: That's the way I look at it. I'm not sure what's the official way. [Chuckles]

SC: Yes.

SM: Well, and then to compare your family life as a child with say the family life of you and Marvel and your daughter. Would it be quite different or would it be similar? The same kind of relationships between husband and wife and father and daughter or [unclear].

SC: I think so. Although now in China it would be a maternal family, because the mother or the grandmother is generally the ruling person.

in Projecti **SM:** Oh yes, that's true. Would that have been true in your childhood?

SC: No, no.

SM: There was no grandmother?

SC: Well, no, I was raised by my grandmother.

SM: Oh, that's right. You went to live with them, didn't you's

SC: Yes, right. Yes.

SM: I see, and that was in Portland. And so you went to live with your grandparents.

SC: Right. Yes.

SM: That wouldn't have been too uncommon in China either.

SC: No. No.

SM: I see. And then did you have siblings that stayed with your parents?

SC: I had two brothers that stayed with my parents.

SM: Yes. Did you spend much time with your parents' household, too, or was it largely with your grandparents?

SC: Well, no, because I moved to Portland and lived in Portland and went to school there through the major part of my grammar school, and then of course through high school.

SM: Okay, I see. And did they send you there particularly for educational reasons?

SC: Well, no. Both that and also for the fact that my aunt had no sons.

SM: Oh. Did she live with your . . .?

SC: Right.

SM: Ah. I see. And she lived with your parents?

SC: Yes.

SM: So and that would have been a fairly common kind of practice in China, too, if someone had no sons that were closely related.

SM: I see. So you went to fill the role of a son [unclear] family.

SC: Yes. Right.

SM: But was her husband there, too, then?

SC: No, her husband had died.

M: She was widowed then. So your seed to see the seed to see th SC: See, my father and my aunt's husband were very close. In fact, they were together in Yakima.

SM: I see.

SC: And then when he died, well then . . .

SM: Had they immigrated together?

SC: I don't know about that. But they were in business together, evidently.

SM: Were they brothers?

SC: No.

SM: No. [Unclear].

SC: No, two different names. Yes, brother-in-laws by their wives.

SM: Yes. Alright. Well, that's very interesting. But in China then, the grandmother would have ruled the family. The children at least and so on.

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: And was that the case then there in Portland, too?

SC: I think so. Yes. It wasn't really noticeable, but now that I think back, I'm sure it was.

SM: I see. But then, your grandfather would have been the head of the family in other ways, I take it.

SC: Yes, right.

SM: Making decisions about farming or . . .

SC: Yes.

SM: I remember when we talked before . . . oh, well, we shouldn't get off of that yet. [Chuckles] If we want to compare to now, say your family now is . . . would there be some marked differences? Or is it pretty much the same kind of a situation?

SC: You know, I...

SM: Or is it maybe more equal relations?

SC: No, I think it's very equally relation . . . our relationship is . . . people have commented about it. Because both Marvel and I work together all day long. And we've had many people ask us, "How can you stand each other all day long?" [Chuckles] "And then go home and still be good together?"

SM: [Chuckles] You seem to manage very well.

SC: [Chuckles]

SM: So it would be a very equal kind of situation.

SC: Yes, it is. Yes.

SM: And then with your daughter, is that more of a traditional relationship or more like other American families? Or would it be similar to you and your parents when you were growing up? I guess I'm thinking of the traditional more authoritarian approach of parents to children, rather than the American . . .

SC: Well, being an only child, I suppose that she was given a great deal more freedom than otherwise.

SM: Yes.

SC: Maybe I shouldn't say freedom, but I should say that . . . allowances were made.

SM: I see. And so it wasn't a matter of learning a lot of forms she should use with grandparents and this kind of thing?

SC: No, because she . . . no, she didn't have a chance to meet her grandparents. They were gone.

SM: So that would be a big difference, yes. She didn't meet them at all?

SC: No.

SM: Did she have other relatives that were around here?

SC: Well, see, she met her grandmother but not her grandfather.

SM: Your mother?

SC: My mother, yes.

SM: Oh, so she did know one grandmother?

SC: Yes.

SM: But didn't really live.

SC: No.

SM: [Unclear] too much. So I suppose she might have grown up like most American children in many ways.

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: And she went to an American school?

SC: Right.

SM: Of course, you did, too. But you also went to China school.

SC: Just for a period of time in Portland.

SM: Oh. Yes. So maybe it would have been . . .

SC: Because they did have a Chinese school there, which we went to after the . . . three o'clock.

SM: Oh, I see. Did that make a big impression on you besides learning to read and write?

SC: Well, I don't think that the children in Portland took it as seriously as they might have.

SM: [Chuckles] That seems to be a common complaint, I guess.

SC: Yes.

SM: Well, did that though . . .? Besides, you know, learning the language, did that also make you feel more of a part of the Chinese community or more . . .?

SC: No, it didn't.

SM: It didn't. [Chuckles] Okay.

SC: Because for one thing, you see, in Portland, the Chinese community was quite concentrated. And we didn't live in that area.

SM: Oh, I see, yes. You lived in a rural setting?

SC: No, in the city.

SM: In the city.

SC: But at that time you might say at the outskirts of the city.

SM: I see.

SC: Because it was closer to my grandfather's farm.

SM: I see. So you didn't have too much contact with the rest of the Chinese community, is that right?

SC: As an individual, no. But my grandmother and grandfather both did a great deal.

SM: Oh, I see. They had more contact than you as . . .?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: Than you or their daughter did. I see. They went to a lot of . . . was it family functions?

SC: Family functions, yes.

SM: I see. So they had other relatives around?

SC: Oh, yes. See, my grandfather had eight children.

SM: Oh, I see. Well, but you didn't go along with them to these things?

SC: Not always, no. Because many times they were business things that my grandfather went to.

SM: I see.

ad all SC: Because he was considered one of the elders of the city, and he would always be called on for decisions.

SM: An elder of the city?

SC: Yes.

SM: Or an elder of the Chinese . . .?

SC: Yes, among the Chinese.

SM: Ah ha. Well now, what would make you an elder?

SC: Well, for one, his age. And his leadership.

SM: His being an early arrival, would that make a difference?

SC: Yes. Oh, yes.

SM: What about the amount of land he owned, would that have anything to do with it?

SC: No.

SM: That didn't [unclear]. It would have in China though, right?

SC: It might have.

SM: Might have, anyway?

SC: Yes.

SM: I think that Marvel mentioned that he owned some of downtown Yakima.

SC: Oh, that was my father.

SM: Oh, it was your father?

SC: Yes.

SM: Okay. Interesting. So he was really in on the beginning of Yakima.

SC: Oh, yes. Yes. There were many more Chinese, of course, in Portland than there were in Yakima, because ours was the only family there for a long, long time.

SM: Oh. Have you any idea at all what year about he might have come to Yakima? [Chuckles]

SC: Oh . . . we're in the process of trying to dig that out.

SM: Trying to figure it out.

SC: Yes.

SM: I suppose by his age maybe . . . or if you knew what age he was when he came. But it will take some figuring [chuckles] to figure that out.

SC: Yes.

SM: But that might have been about mid-nineteenth century, do you think? Or later?

SC: Well . . .

SM: Because maybe your grandfather came about mid-nineteenth century?

SC: No, it would be . . . be earlier.

SM: Oh, earlier?

SC: Oh yes, early nineteenth.

SM: Early nineteenth century?

SC: Well, wait a minute. How do you figure centuries?

SM: Oh, I mean . . .

SC: Early twentieth century, wouldn't it?

SM: Oh, you think it was early twentieth?

SC: Yes, 1900 . . . 1901 would be twentieth century, wouldn't it?

SM: Yes, that would be. It would have to be, yes. Right. Then your grandfather probably came before the turn of the century.

SC: Yes.

SM: Yes. Okay.

SC: But what we're planning on doing now, you see, when I was out in Yakima just recently, there were eight children and only two did not marry, and four had children. And we're planning a reunion in 1981 of all the descendants.

SM: Oh, that should be nice.

SC: And just roughly we thought there would be pretty close to a hundred.

SM: That's really something. It's too bad your father or grandfather couldn't be there to see them all.

SC: Yes.

SM: Well, that's really a lot of people. A hundred descendants from your grandfather.

SC: We figure it would take that long to plan the thing so that we would be able to find a place. Well, we determined that it would be on the West Coast, because most of them are on the West Coast.

SM: Oh, yes.

SC: And we want to find a place that would have family activities for everyone from the young children all the way up to the older ones.

SM: Oh, that's going to be a big event. [Chuckles]

SC: Yes. And we're making up a family tree.

SM: I see. Well, that's good.

SC: So that everyone can have a copy with photographs and so on.

SM: Yes. Well, that's good to figure it out while you still can.

SC: Yes.

SM: [Chuckles] Because as generations progress it will get harder.

SC: Because of the eight children, there's only one left now.

SM: Oh. I see. But there are lots of grandchildren.

SC: And great-grandchildren.

SM: And great-grandchildren. I see. Well, I guess we don't know exactly why they came, but a Orall History Projectly

a Orall Historical Society evidently for economic reasons.

SC: Oh, I'm sure it was. Yes.

SM: What about your reasons to come to Minnesota?

SC: Same.

SM: Same reasons. [Chuckles] Okay.

SC: 1929 . . .

SM: Oh, yes. The Depression.

SC: Yes.

SM: You must also though maybe had some contacts here?

SC: Oh, I had an aunt here.

SM: Oh, yes. And did she have a business here then?

SC: She had a gift shop.

SM: I see. So you came in what year again?

SC: That was 1934.

SM: 1934. It was a pretty bad time to find work, wasn't it?

SC: Oh, yes.

SM: [Chuckles] So did you help her in the shop then?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: I see, so you weren't . . .?

SC: That was the first year that we worked in the International Folk Festival. [Transcriber's note: I believe he is referring to what is now known as the Festival of Nations but wasn't able to completely verify this.]

SM: Oh.

SC: That was the first year they had it.

story Project **SM:** Oh. That was then by the Institute, the International Institute?

SC: Yes. The International Institute, yes.

SM: I see. And you were in on the first one?

SC: Right.

SM: 1934. What did you do in it?

SC: We put together a booth where we had exhibits of art objects as well as food.

SM: Oh.

SC: And that's what it's evolved into now, is a homelands exhibit, a food exhibit, and then the typical dances and so on.

SM: Yes. So that was the first year. The first year they had it, Chinese took part then?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: That's good to know. Well, the Chinese really have a pretty long history around here, especially compared to the other Asian groups.

SC: I think it probably does go back to the earliest . . . because of [Woo] Du Sing and [Woo] Yee Sing, who were here a long, long time before that. [The Sing brothers opened the first Chinese restaurant in Minnesota, named the Canton Café, in 1883.]

SM: Right. And there's some businesses listed in the city directories in the 1870s.

SC: Is that right?

SM: Some laundries.

SC: Yes.

SM: And so that's long before any of the other Asian groups.

SC: Yes.

SM: Well, there might have been an occasional Japanese, but not in any number as well. Of course, there weren't large numbers of Chinese either, but the Chinese certainly have the longest of the Asian groups. Well, wasn't there some connection with Walter James, with this aunt?

24. Historical **SC:** Yes. Well, you see, Walter James's sister [Selma James] and my aunt started the shop.

SM: I see. What was the name of that shop?

SC: They called it the Chinese Gift Shop.

SM: Oh. Do you know what year they started that?

SC: Oh, it must have been probably in . . . 1923, 1924.

SM: I see.

SC: That was when the mah-jongg fad hit.

SM: [Chuckles] It was?

SC: And that's why they started it, because they taught mah-jongg as well as had the gift shop. That was one of . . .

SM: Oh, I see. Oh, they taught Americans to play? Is that it?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: Oh, that's interesting

[Background conversation]

SC: Oh, okay. Excuse me.

[Brief recording interruption]

SM: We were talking about your aunt's gift shop. It was called the Chinese Gift Shop. Which part of the city was that in?

SC: It was on Ninth Street [57 Ninth Street South, Minneapolis, Minnesota].

SM: On Ninth Street.

SC: Right across the street from the 'CCO, WCCO [TV station] in the Steiner[?] Building.

SM: Oh, I see.

SC: In fact, at that time, it was the Minnesota Theater that was in there.

SM: Oh. I've been told there was, until about the 1950s, a small Chinese concentration around Washington between about Fourth and First Street or . . . do you remember?

SC: There was on Washington.

SM: On Washington itself?

SC: Yes. But there was another concentration of a few stores on Third Avenue.

SM: Oh.

SC: It must have been between Sixth and Seventh, I think.

SM: Between Sixth and Seventh?

SC: Yes.

SM: So there's several concentrations in different parts of the Cities. There's one by . . . well, there's still that small one . . .

SC: Yes, those two . . .

SM: By Glenwood and [unclear] First.

SC: Yes. Right.

SM: And then there's this Third Avenue between Sixth and Seventh.

SC: Right.

SM: And then Washington . . .

SC: Well, let's see. There was down on . . . yes, Washington and Second Avenue.

SM: Oh, Washington and Second.

SC: Second Avenue South.

SM: Oh.

SC: There were about three or four stores there.

SM: I see. Somebody thought that during the war years there was a kind of a concentration of speakeasies and Chinese businesses and there was also sort of a jazz subculture in that . . .

SC: Hmmm.

SM: I think on Hennepin they said, between Third and Fourth. They weren't quite sure of the area though.

SC: Third and Fourth.

SM: Do you ever hear of anything like that?

SC: Well, see, now what years are we talking about?

SM: The war years, I think. In the 1940s.

SC: The 1940s . . .

SM: You didn't hear of anything like that?

SC: No.

SM: Well, it is interesting that there are a few little concentrations, although there was never a big Chinatown.

SC: No, there never has been a big Chinatown.

SM: In Saint Paul, too, there was a kind of concentration around Wabasha and Seventh and Saint Peter, around there.

SC: Well, just restaurants, that's all.

SM: A few restaurants, yes.

SC: Yes.

SM: Just a few restaurants. Well, these others were more than restaurants then?

SC: There were stores. Yes.

SM: Stores. I see, and restaurants, too?

SC: No.

SM: Just stores?

SC: Yes.

SM: I see. They would be gift shops or grocery stores?

SC: Grocery stores.

SM: Oh. So that meant Chinese lived in the area?

SC: Well, they had rooms there for some of the bachelors.

SM: Oh, I see. And they would be upstairs of the stores?

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh. And in each one of these there would be something like that?

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh.

SC: Because, you see, when people came in to work as cooks, or maybe some that were no longer able to work, why then they provided rooms there for them and took care of them.

story Project

SM: I see.

SC: Well, you might call it . . . it was the Chinese of Minneapolis's own welfare program.

SM: Right. Well, how many would there have been, do you think? I mean there's just . . . I understand just a few left now, but would there have been plenty more single men that had come to work here and [unclear]?

SC: Oh yes, at least that.

SM: At least that. Thirty living here?

SC: Yes. Yes. Could be. Yes. Because, you know, the problem was that they couldn't bring their wives, and they would be left home.

SM: Oh, yes.

SC: And they would be working here and then sending money home.

SM: Yes. And couldn't save enough to go home to get a wife.

SC: Right.

SM: Which [unclear].

SC: Or they may even have a wife and children there, too.

SM: Oh yes, that's true. Many of them were married.

SC: Yes.

SM: But separated by several . . .

SC: By law. [Chuckles]

istory project SM: Thousands . . . by law, yes. Oh, I see. So even in Minnesota then . . . well, of course, the law didn't change . . .

SC: No.

SM: Until after the [unclear]. So they probably remained here until they died then?

SC: Many did. And that's . . . in fact, at the Lakewood Cemetery you'll find many people . . . men there, buried, who were single. And some of them were buried in graves that were provided by Walter James.

SM: Oh, did he buy up a number of them there?

SC: He did. He bought up a block of graves there.

SM: I see. I wondered what . . . in the cemetery in Saint Paul they were all together, and I wondered if maybe a family association might have bought lots together.

SC: It could, yes. Yes.

SM: But Walter James definitely did buy several for the single men?

SC: Oh, yes. In fact, I'm sure that the records at the Lakewood would . . .

SM: Oh, I see.

SC: It could be ferreted out and . . .

SM: Who had bought them graves.

SC: Yes.

SM: Would there be any way to know through the inscriptions in the language that they were single men or . . .?

SC: No.

SM: No. They would say the same . . .

SC: I know who could help you on that, and that would be Ed Thom.

SM: Oh, yes.

SC: Because he was secretary at one of the associations for quite a few years.

SM: One of the family associations?

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh, and so he would know probably which men . . .

SC: He would know quite a few of them, I'm sure.

SM: And he's been very helpful about identifying the rest of the restaurants and so on, too. Is he getting better? Last time I saw him he was . . .

SC: Well, he called just the other day, and he felt that maybe next week he could come back.

SM: Oh, yes.

SC: Although whether he really can or not, I don't know.

SM: Yes. He seemed very weak when I saw him.

SC: But then we're not going to discourage him though.

SM: Right. I went to talk to him once at his house and I was a little worried about him, but . . . I think he did enjoy somebody coming around.

SC: It'll take him a while to get his strength back, I'm sure.

SM: But so he has managed somehow?

SC: Yes.

SM: But so on the inscriptions on the graves, they wouldn't list a wife or family even if they were in China?

SC: No, not necessarily.

SM: They would just say a name and . . . the ones that I saw were at Oakland seemed to say Taishan on them and just . . . and a date.

SC: Yes.

SM: Would there be anything else besides the name and date?

SC: I'm not sure, because I haven't looked at them that closely.

SM: I copied some [unclear] after we get through here. It was very windy and I had a hard time, but . . . and some are rather dim already.

SC: Yes.

SM: But most of them you could still see. Well, let's see. Maybe we should talk a little bit more about Walter James before getting off of him entirely. He grew up on the West Coast, is that right?

SC: Yes. Right. In fact, his home was right across the alley from our home in Yakima.

SM: Oh, I see. That's how your aunt happened to come here?

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh, so you were friends in Yakima?

SC: Oh, yes.

SM: I see. They weren't related though?

SC: No.

SM: Across the . . . what was it?

SC: Alley.

SM: Oh.

SC: You see, in Yakima, we have alleys.

SM: I see. So you were closely related to that family. Or not related, but closely associated with that family.

SC: Yes.

SM: I see.

SC: But Walter left though before I knew him.

SM: He was a bit older than you were.

SC: Oh, yes.

SM: I see. Well, how did he happen to come here? I suppose you don't know really, but did . . . was there something about going East? Did that seem very . . .?

SC: I don't know why. But he was in the restaurant business, and in fact, he had several restaurants here.

SM: Oh yes, and one in Chicago, too.

SC: Yes. Yes. The only ones I knew of were the Nankin here and then the one in Chicago also. The Nankin.

SM: I see.

SC: But Marvel probably knows a great many more of the ones.

SM: Was he a man of means before he came here or did he save it up and . . .?

SC: Not necessarily, no, I think it was . . . the enterprises were here.

SM: Yes. Did his father farm then in Yakima, too, or around that area?

SC: I don't remember.

SM: I see, so you probably didn't see as much of him as if you had lived in Yakima. You would have seen more . . .

SC: No. No.

SM: Yes, I see.

SC: I think he may have left before we were born though.

SM: Oh. So he's quite a bit older than you.

SC: Yes.

SM: I see. Was there any idea that there might be less discrimination or more opportunity in the Midwest?

SC: Definitely.

SM: Less competition with other laborers?

SC: Yes. Because it was a . . . it was the vying for jobs that made for the discrimination. There's no question about that.

SM: Right. Do you have an idea whether the Chinese that came here in the Midwest, whether any of them worked in the mines in the northern part of Minnesota or in the lumbering industries up there?

SC: No.

SM: There's always this sort of vague possibility, but you don't seem to know definitely.

SC: No.

SM: You never heard of any [unclear]?

SC: No, other than my brother-in-law who . . .

SM: Oh, he was an engineer.

SC: Yes.

SM: Now he would be someone that maybe would know if any worked in the mines.

SC: Yes, he would. Yes.

SM: Yes. He would be a good source for that, wouldn't he?

SC: Well now, they're moving down here in July.

SM: That's what Marvel said.

SC: Or in August, rather.

SM: That would be very good to get in touch with him. His name is Pan, is it?

SC: Yes. P-A-N.

SM: P-A-N. And what's his first name?

SC: W.P. [Wen Ping Pan, or W.P. Pan, married to Marvel's older sister, May Hum]

SM: W.B?

SC: P. P like in Peter.

SM: Oh, P. That's probably a very good person to ask, because he would have been aware of [unclear].

SC: Yes. Oh, yes.

SM: He was up in Hibbing most of his adult life?

SC: Yes, all of his adult life.

SM: Oh. Certainly he would have heard of it.

SC: Yes.

SM: [Chuckles] If anyone had. I see. Well, Walter James—to go back to him—as I understand it, was very civic-minded.

SC: Yes.

SM: And if you could talk about some of his things he organized for the Chinese here. I think that might be very interesting to have some . . .

SC: Well, I think that the one that encompassed the most people was when he took the upper floors of the Nankin, when it was across the street from where it is now, and converted it into club rooms.

SM: I see.

SC: We discussed that several times, and he agreed that that would be a good thing. So he equipped it even with a kitchen, a parlor of sorts, and a game room. Oh, it was completely equipped for any kind of social event.

SM: I see. And what kind of activities went on there?

SC: We organized Red Cross classes for the new wives. The ones that had children, why they were taken to the Red Cross headquarters for training in first aid, child care, and we had Chinese language classes there—English as a second language classes. Babysitters were inaugurated so al History Projectial that the mothers could get away.

SM: It was a little training class for babysitters?

SC: Yes.

SM: Or they had babysitters there to . . .?

SC: Volunteer mothers who would . . .

SM: I see. So it was like a daycare center.

SC: Oh, yes. Yes.

SM: Well, that was ahead of its time, wasn't it? [Chuckles] That's very interesting.

SC: And then once or twice a year we had an outdoor event at his farm in Howard Lake. One would be built around the corn festival in the fall. We went out to Green Giant and bought big gunny sacks full of corn on the cob and brought them back to his farm and they would make all kinds of Chinese goodies.

SM: Oh, I see.

SC: It would be like a . . . just a great big picnic.

SM: And then is there another particular time of year that . . .?

SC: Yes. Chinese New Year's.

SM: Oh, yes.

SC: Chinese New Year's we took over the whole Nankin buffet.

SM: Ah ha.

SC: The women were organized so they made all kinds of Chinese New Year's cakes. You know, the Chinese donuts filled with the coconut and peanuts as well as with the black beans. And we not only involved the Chinese community, but we tried to involve a lot of the Caucasian friends so that they would have a glimpse of what the Chinese New Year's festivities were and what it represented.

SM: Was that an idea that Walter James and you were particularly interested in?

SC: We were trying to bridge the gap that we knew existed.

SM: I see. Because a lot of Chinese events still are rather closed.

SC: Yes.

SM: I mean they [unclear] celebration [unclear].

SC: Yes. Well, the culmination of the whole thing was when we took part in the Aquatennial.

SM: Ah. What did you do in the Aquatennial?

SC: Well, it involved a lot of planning and it involved almost every Chinese in the Twin Cities.

SM: Oh, my goodness. What years was this occurring? Or when did that start?

SC: I think that was in . . . well, you see, they had the Aquatennial of the Seven Seas. I think that was their theme.

SM: Oh.

SC: And they went from one part of the globe to another, and then one was the Pacific.

SM: I see.

SC: And so then that was the year that we had involved . . . let's see, the Japanese were involved with it. The Filipinos, Hawaiians . . .

SM: Oh, is there a sizeable Hawaiian group here?

SC: Not too large, but there's some.

SM: There are some.

SC: Yes. But . . .

SM: And Chinese . . .

SC: Oh, I still have all the notes that we had, because we worked a full year on that one.

SM: Oh.

SC: Because it involved those who couldn't contribute labor, talent, they . . . we got them to contribute money.

SM: I see.

SC: Because we raised enough money to bring the Saint Mary's marching group from San Francisco [Saint Mary's Chinese Girls Drum and Bell Corps].

SM: Was that a Chinese group?

SC: Yes. Yes, that's from the Catholic church there.

SM: It was a band, was it? A marching band?

SC: It was a . . . yes, marching band. Yes. We brought them in and housed and fed them for a week. And then they took part in the two parades as well as in a lot of different local activities.

Maid

SM: Of Chinese organizations or . . .?

SC: No. No. No. Like the First National Bank Plaza, they entertained there, and then they also entertained out at Calhoun. And I think we took them to Apache.

SM: Oh.

SC: But that was the scheduling that the Aquatennial Association arranged.

SM: I see. Are there any artifacts left from that, that might be good for an exhibit, for our exhibit?

SC: Well, there's a very permanent one.

SM: Oh.

SC: It's out at the state fairgrounds. We built a Chinese Arch and installed it on Nicollet Avenue.

SM: On Nicollet.

SC: Yes. It spans the street.

SM: And then it was . . . it's at the state fairgrounds?

SC: State fair, yes.

SM: But it was built at Nicollet and then taken there?

SC: No, we built it in Wisconsin.

SM: Oh.

SC: And one of our members is a contractor. And he supervised the whole thing. Then we had another man who is an architect. He designed. And then, oh, I guess maybe fifty people worked on assembling and painting it.

SM: Oh. And that's now at the fairgrounds?

SC: Yes.

SM: In all the times I've been there, I've never seen it or known about it.

SC: It's on Machinery Hill.

SM: Oh, Machinery Hill. Maybe that's why. I don't think I went up to Machinery. [Chuckles]

SC: In fact, I noticed that in some literature last year that they call it the Chinese picnic grounds.

SM: Oh, in an article somewhere?

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh, so if we took some photographs of that, that would be a [unclear].

SC: Well, I have some photographs of it.

SM: Oh, you do?

SC: On Nicollet Island . . . on Nicollet Avenue, rather.

SM: Well, that would be much more to the point then, wouldn't it?

SC: Yes. In color.

SM: Oh, that's very . . .

SC: And then there's . . . then you can get pictures of it over there now. It's been repainted. Now see, I think two years ago they repainted it.

SM: I see. It would be interesting to have the original on Nicollet and then have some of the present, too.

SC: Yes, I've saved several of the ones on Nicollet.

SM: Oh, that's really good to know that.

SC: But I think we raised something like fifty thousand dollars.

SM: Goodness!

SC: But I think the outstanding thing was not the money, but the fact that we got the full cooperation of the Chinese community of *every* organization.

SM: Oh . . .

SC: We had a steering committee made up of representatives from each one of the organizations.

SM: I see.

SC: And even involved the students.

SM: So when there's some big project going on, the Chinese do get organized. [Chuckles]

SC: I've never seen it again.

SM: Never have again. [Chuckles] That is interesting. Well, what spurred all this commitment to it at that point, I wonder?

SC: Well, I think it might have been . . . it must have been . . .

SM: Was it the leadership maybe?

SC: It must have been pride. Because we said, "If we're going to do it, let's do it right or not do it at all."

SM: Was Walter James still active at that point?

SC: Yes.

SM: He was.

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: Who was the leader of all this? Were you?

SC: Yes.

SM: I see. James must have been pretty elderly by then [unclear].

SC: Yes, he was. Let's see, now wait a minute. I'm trying to think. Let's see . . . yes, he was . . . yes. He was still in . . . I'm trying to think of when he died. [Walter James passed away in 1973.]

SM: Oh yes, that would be good to know.

SC: He's buried at Lakewood in the mausoleum.

SM: Oh, in the mausoleum.

SC: Yes.

SM: Is his name in English there, too?

netic of SC: Yes. Yes. Walter James. James is his name, which is a phonetic of his Chinese name.

SM: What was his real name?

SC: [Phonetically] Num Wah.

SM: How would you spell that?

SC: I don't know.

SM: N- G, Num Wah?

SC: Num.

SM: Maybe N-G-U-N?

SC: Yes.

SM: Num-wah. Oh. And he was from Taishan, too?

SC: Yes.

SM: Let's see, how did it get to Walter James out of that? Oh, from the Wah. Is the Wah?

SC: No. Num.

SM: No.

SC: Num.

SM: Oh.

SC: And they just changed it to James.

SM: Did he have a third name, too?

SC: He must have, but I don't recall it.

Airnesota Historical society

Airnesota Historical society **SM:** But James was what the family name that he used?

SC: Yes. Now he has a brother living yet.

SM: Oh [unclear].

SC: Living yet, yes.

SM: In this area?

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh, what's his name?

SC: Harry. Harry James.

SM: Sounds like a musician.

SC: [Laughter] Yes.

SM: And he's still living.

SC: Yes.

SM: Is he quite an elderly man?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: Oh. Does he speak English?

SC: Oh yes, yes.

SM: Oh he must, they're second generation. Well, that would be interesting to get in touch with him. That's really quite interesting that you and he were really leaders [unclear] but also together.

SC: Yes.

SM: But you don't know what year that Aquatennial was? I'm sure I can find out somewhere, but . . .

SC: I think it was 1970.

SM: Oh, it was pretty recent. I guess I wasn't [unclear] then. Well, now we should get to your Oral History Rivers work maybe. When you came you worked first with your aunt?

SC: Yes.

SM: What was the order of events from there?

[Recording Interruption]

SM: Now was it an American restaurant?

SC: No, a Chinese restaurant.

SM: It was Chinese. Who owned that? Or did you

SC: That was John's place.

SM: Oh, that was the name of John's place.

SC: Yes. John's place was downtown on Sixth Street and then they had this satellite on upper Hennepin.

SM: Ah, I see. I wonder if that's noted in the city directories where they list those restaurants. I haven't seen John's uptown.

SC: That was in the Carling Hotel.

SM: Carling Motel?

SC: Yes.

SM: Hotel did you say?

SC: Yes.

SM: Is that C-A-R-L . . .

SC: L-I-N-G.

SM: Oh, Carling Hotel. I see. And so this must have been about late 1930s?

SC: Yes.

SM: And then you were doing some landscaping, too.

SC: Yes.

SM: You had to do a lot of different things to survive in the 1930s, I guess. [Chuckles]

SC: Oh, sure.

SM: I see. And then when did you start the International House of Foods?

SC: Oh, that was after the war. That was in the 1945s, I think.

SM: Oh. You must have done something in between there. Oh, I think you were telling me in your last conversation about during the shortages during the war. You would go out to the suburban . . .

SC: Yes, that's when we started. That's how International started.

SM: By bringing rice into the stores here.

SC: Right. Yes. We operated a gift shop in between . . .

SM: Oh, you and your wife?

SC: Yes.

SM: I see.

SC: Up until the war. And then . . .

SM: What was that called?

SC: Well, that was the Chinese Gift Shop.

SM: Oh, that was the Chinese Gift Shop, the same one your aunt had had.

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: I see. Your aunt had died then?

SC: No, she married and moved away. And then so we bought it from her.

SM: Oh, I see. And where did you say that was located?

SC: On Ninth Street.

SM: Oh, yes.

SC: And then when the war came along, why, I was drafted. And so we sold out.

SM: Oh, I see. And then you were . . .

SC: And I spent some time at New Brighton in the ammunition factory and then I went out to . . .

SM: Oh, after you were drafted, they sent you to New Brighton?

SC: No, I was drafted and then they discharged me because of my asthma. They didn't like that.

SM: Oh, I see.

SC: I sneezed too loud.

SM: Well, that was lucky for you. [Chuckles] But in the meantime you had sold out your shop.

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh. Well that was too . . . well, did some Chinese buy that?

SC: No, we just closed it up.

SM: Oh. What a shame. And then you were discharged?

SC: Yes.

SM: So then you went out to New Brighton then. Was that . . .?

SC: For a short time there, about a year.

SM: That was a munitions plant there?

SC: Yes. And then I went out to Hanford, Washington and worked on the atom bomb project there.

SM: Oh. What was the town called again?

SC: Hanford.

SM: Oh. Oh, what kind of work did you do there?

SC: I was an instrument engineer.

SM: I see. Did they give you training, too, or were you already trained?

SC: No. I had background for that.

SM: I see. Instrument . . . what was it?

SC: Engineer. Yes. That was an interesting place there. Out in the desert, nothing around for miles and miles. In fact, I drove sixty miles one way to go to work every day.

SM: Good night, sixty miles each way. You lived in . . .?

SC: Yakima.

SM: Oh, in Yakima?

SC: Yes.

SM: So you were back home again.

SC: Yes. I was the only Chinese on the project.

SM: Oh. Then did you stay with your family again in Yakima?

SC: Yes.

SM: Your family are still there then.

SC: Yes. Actually, we went out to take care of my mother because she was very ill. And I found work at Hanford Project.

SM: I see.

SC: That was being operated by DuPont at the time.

SM: I see. So that was your main reason to go out to the West Coast.

SC: Yes.

SM: [Unclear].

SC: Yes.

SM: Well, it seems that most people [unclear] Chinese [unclear].

SC: No, I've got it wrong.

SM: Oh.

SC: Wrong way. My father was still living.

SM: Oh.

SC: My father died after my mother did.

story Projecty Society SM: I see. So most of the Chinese when they died, weren't sent back then to China?

SC: No.

SM: It seems to be a myth . . .

SC: No. No.

SM: Well, some were.

SC: They . . . a lot of them were

SM: Oh . . .

SC: No, they . . . in fact, in . . . I believe in Australia there are lots of remains waiting to be transferred to the mainland.

SM: Oh, they're still waiting?

SC: Yes.

SM: I see. Well, what about in Minnesota? Were quite a few sent from Minnesota?

SC: I'm sure that there were some.

SM: That's right, I think Marvel mentioned some she thought that [unclear]. There seem to be quite a few bones in that Oakland Cemetery, too.

SC: Yes, there are. Yes. But then you see they do have what they call [unclear – Chinese word].

SM: [Unclear – Chinese word]?

SC: Yes. You know, they have a certain kind of a . . . an urn. And the bones are gathered and placed in a certain way in this urn for return to their home burial grounds.

SM: I see. So first they would be buried here.

SC: Yes. Yes. And after so many years why then the bones are recovered and placed in that. And I understand that they must be placed in a certain position in these urns.

SM: I see. Well, so would some of those plaques be where the bones had been sent away?

SC: I don't know how they indicate . . . though now again . . .

SM: In two places it looked like it might have been dug out.

SC: Again, Ed might be able to better explain that to you.

SM: Well, I wondered if maybe when things got difficult, like the war and so on, whether . . .

SC: Oh, everything stopped. Yes.

SM: Right.

SC: Yes.

SM: But now there was one long row of people that were all buried around in the 1920s, from 1919 to about 1923.

SC: Yes.

SM: And that would have been before the big disruption, but here they could have . . . it could have been the flu back then, you know, that influenza.

SC: Yes, because I lost two brothers in 1918.

SM: Oh, did you? Well, there were so many in that same few years. So it could have been something like that.

SC: Yes. It must have been the flu. Yes.

SM: Oh, in 1918 . . . [unclear]. Let's see, where were we. Oh yes, the organizations. The Chinese organizations. You seem to have been in the forefront of these organizations from the . . . well, at least from when you arrived. [Chuckles] When you worked with Walter James and then . . .

SC: Yes.

SM: But the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese American . . . Chinese American Association of Minnesota [CAAM] is what that stands for isn't it?

SC: That . . . that one, yes.

SM: It was a recent . . .

SC: That was one that we were involved with, but I've had very little involvement with the Chamber of Commerce.

SM: Oh, you were more with CAAM.

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: And were you into organizing that?

SC: Yes.

SM: I see.

SC: But in the current years we haven't been active in it, because we feel that the younger generation should be doing that.

SM: I see. Are they doing it?

SC: Yes, it's still active

SM: Is that a cultural organization? It isn't a businessmen's organization?

SC: No, it's culture.

SM: Oh. What are some of the aims of . . . originally, what were the aims?

SC: Primarily to act as a liaison between the Chinese and the non-Chinese community.

SM: I see. Oh, I see. So that would be quite different maybe from the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

SM: Although they'd probably be interested in that, too. But so they would have . . . what kinds of programs then would they then have . . .?

SC: They tried to have speakers available at all times.

SM: Oh, to go out to other organizations?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: I see.

ınclear]. **SC:** And to also . . . it was non-political, more social work.

SM: Oh, it did have social services?

SC: Yes.

SM: Sort of like Walter James's organization [unclear].

SC: Well, that was it. That . . .

SM: Oh, it was a continuation of that?

SC: No, this is it. This is what we finally evolved, that CAAM evolved from . . .

SM: Oh, I see. So this is what came out of Walter James . . .

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: I see. I didn't understand that.

SC: This ... we formalized it under that.

SM: Oh, while he was still around?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: I see. And was that in 1968, around that time, was that when you were president?

SC: I guess it was about that. 1967, 1968, I think.

SM: And you were the first president?

SM: I see. Is that pretty active now too then, you said?

SC: Yes, they are active. Because we get bulletins from them periodically.

SM: And they have a directory.

SC: Yes. Yes. Oh, that . . . that was one thing that we tried to do, too, and that is get a directory "oup, w' the of all the Chinese people. And we finally ended up by having it in two segments, one to include the permanent residents, and then the students.

SM: Oh, but it's in the same directory?

SC: Yes.

SM: I see. Because the two are quite intermixed?

SC: Yes.

SM: They do things together?

SC: Not . . . not too much so, no.

SM: Not so much.

SC: And unfortunately, among student group, why then they have the Hong Kong group, they've got the Taiwan group, and then they have the . . .

SM: Mainland?

SC: No . . . not yet.

SM: Not yet, but maybe next year!

SC: But they have the Taiwan . . . original Taiwanese and then the ones who came from mainland to settle in Taiwan.

SM: Oh, yes. And that's a pretty tense relationship, I suppose. [Chuckles]

SC: Yes.

Unknown Speaker: I think I'm going to turn that fan off.

SM: It's getting really cool, isn't it?

[Fan is turned off and background noise diminishes significantly]

SM: Is there something called the Chinese Student Service Center?

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: Now which group is that?

SC: I am under the impression that it's probably mainland.

SM: Oh, that's the . . . that is a group from Hong Kong. But it's pro-mainland, you think?

SC: Ah, yes.

SM: I see. And then the Taiwan ones are pro-Chiang Kai-shek or whatever we want to call it. [Chuckles]

SC: Yes. That is the . . . well, let's say there is a nationalist group of Taiwan and there's a Taiwan group.

SM: Okay. Oh, there are two Taiwan groups. And one is national [unclear] Guangdong?

SC: Yes.

SM: Oh yes, one is Guangdong, and the other is the native Taiwanese.

SC: Yes. And there . . . that is really political division.

SM: Yes. So they don't associate together much.

SC: Not too much.

SM: So there are really three political groups there.

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: How do the Taiwanese and the pro-mainland get along, [chuckles] just out of curiosity? Do they relate at all? I suppose the Taiwanese are a little leery of . . .

SC: Yes. There's . . . they're concerned.

SM: Yes. Hmmm. But you think this Chinese Student Service Center is the PRC [People's Republic of China] one?

SM: And you don't know the names of these others?

SC: No.

SM: I see. Well there is an Asian American Student Center. But that's Asian American, [unclear] Chinese Americans.

SC: Yes. But all of these groups have directories.

SM: Oh, I see. So there are at least three different student groups.

SC: Yes.

SM: And then the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, you didn't take a hand in that.

SC: No.

SM: But do you know when that started?

SC: Oh, that's maybe about five years old.

SM: Oh, I see. And is that . . .?

SC: And that's associated with the national [organization].

SM: I see. And was that initiated by the Chinese businessmen?

SC: Yes.

SM: Did larger organization encourage them?

SC: Encouragement, but no support.

SM: [Unclear]. No support.

SC: No. I mean . . .

SM: But they didn't discourage them?

SC: No.

SM: Oh, but no financial support.

SM: Well, is that quite a business benefit to them or . . .?

SC: Well, I don't know, really. I have my reservations. That's why I'm not active in it.

SM: Yes. What do they do anyway?

SC: Well, for one thing, they try to exchange ideas.

SM: Oh, they get together?

.ybe two SC: But then generally their meetings are from eleven o'clock to maybe two o'clock in the morning, and that . . .

SM: Eleven in the morning or eleven at night?

SC: Eleven at night.

SM: Oh.

SC: You see, when the restaurants close.

SM: Oh, sure. Yes.

SC: Or maybe even twelve o'clock. And it's just a little bit harrowing to try to work those kind of hours in with my hours here.

SM: Right, because they can sleep a little longer in the morning. [Chuckles] I see. So would it be mainly social, do you think?

SC: No. No, not.

SM: No, it's more . . . maybe planning, any kind of cooperation or . . .?

SC: That's what they've been trying to do. And I don't think they've been too successful.

SM: I see. Is it that it isn't too active or just that their plans haven't really . . .?

SC: They haven't been able to get them to gel.

SM: I see.

SC: Because they've been talking about cooperative buying.

SM: Oh.

SC: Cooperative shipping of merchandise from Taiwan and so on.

SM: I see. But they haven't managed to get together on that?

SC: No.

History Project **SM:** I see. Well, was there a Chinese American Club at some point?

SC: Yes.

SM: Was that part of Walter James's . . .?

SC: That's the beginning of CAAM.

SM: Oh, I see.

SC: Further back, when we had the club.

SM: That was the beginning of CAAM.

SC: Yes. But not formally. Not formalized, because CAAM is a non-profit organization, formally incorporated and so on.

SM: Oh yes.

SC: And the club was just from more James's generosity of . . . along with the use of his facilities, and he was willing to do whatever we could show was to be of benefit to the group as a whole.

SM: I see. Well, this is good to get this straightened out. Have there ever been any women's organizations?

SC: Mmmm, no. They were all together.

SM: They were always together.

SC: Yes. Because, as you have undoubtedly seen, it's a family affair.

SM: Yes, it's a very family-oriented community.

SC: Yes.

SM: I see. Now how do these churches fit into this?

SC: Well . . .

SM: Was Walter James involved with Westminster [Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis]?

SC: No.

SM: Or was that Yee Sing?

SC: Yee Sing.

SM: I see. Okay. So he wasn't a member or . . .

SC: Well, I'm not sure whether he was a member or not, but he was not too active in the church.

SM: Okay.

SC: Yee Sing and then Henry Yip were two of the ones that were quite involved.

SM: Oh yes. I see. Well, was Yee Sing the one who endowed that pastorate there?

SC: No, that was Walter James.

SM: Oh, he did do that though.

SC: Yes.

SM: But he wasn't active in a religious way?

SC: No.

SM: But he did endow that.

SC: Because he was more active in the Salvation Army, the YMCA, and the Rotary.

SM: Oh, I see. He was members of them?

SC: Yes. He was on the board of the Y.

SM: And did [unclear] and so on?

SC: Yes.

SM: The Y and the Rotary.

SC: Rotary.

SM: And what was the other one?

SC: The Salvation Army.

SM: Oh, the Salvation Army.

SC: I think that Walter was on the board of the Y.

SM: Oh, he was really quite a civic leader, wasn't he?

SC: Yes.

SM: But he did endow that pastorate of . . .

SC: At Westminster, yes.

ordera **SM:** Oh. Well, how did he . . .? He just did that in a civic way then, without being particularly tied in religiously?

SC: Well, I don't know how religious he was, but he also did the same thing in Chicago for the Chinese church.

SM: Oh.

SC: He helped to build the church there.

SM: I see. Well, I used to . . . one summer I worked [unclear] in Chinatown in Chicago. I remember there was a Saint Teresa's. I thought it was a Catholic church [unclear] it was Chinese. Was that the one?

SC: I think that's the one, yes.

SM: Oh. Because I didn't see any other church there.

SC: And he also . . . I know that he took care of the expenses of the couple who were the pastor and his wife there.

SM: Oh. Hmmm. So he did this as a kind of philanthropic thing.

SC: Yes. But I don't believe that he was really that . . . a religious person.

SM: Yes. Because I talked to David Yip and he said his father was a very religious . . .

SM: But he saw himself as coming as a missionary to America and then wanted to . . . I mean, he was Christian, I guess, when he came.

SC: Yes.

SM: And then he wanted always to go back to bring Christianity, but he didn't get to go back [unclear]. Or maybe he went once or twice, but he didn't go back to live. Well, did your father -ociety hope to go back?

SC: Oh, yes. In fact, he built a home there and he built a school.

SM: Ah.

SC: But he never did go back.

SM: So he sent quite a substantial amount of money back then.

SC: Yes.

SM: Did he want to go back to retire or something like that?

SC: That was his hope.

SM: So he sent money back all through his working life then?

SC: Oh, yes. Yes. As I understand it, we . . . we have an uncle there, my father's brother, and then children over there.

SM: Oh, they're still there now

SC: I haven't any idea

SM: Oh, you don't have any contact?

SC: But they were living in the home that my father built.

SM: I see. Hmmm. Well, I think when we talked before, you described somewhat the way your father adapted Chinese farming methods to the situation in Yakima.

SC: Yes.

SM: Would you want to describe that just....

[Brief interruption]

SM: Amazing! Where did you get them?

SC: They came from Hong Kong. Yes.

SM: [Unclear].

SC: Yes.

SM: Looks very nice. I guess . . . do you have time to talk a little bit about the farming methods? Story Or is that going to . . .?

SC: I'm going to have to run pretty soon.

SM: You're going to have to leave.

SC: Yes.

SM: Okay, well maybe there's something else we should get to quickly. Well, I guess that was about all the questions I had then.

SC: Yes.

SM: But you think you'd rather just stop here? Or since we're . . .

SC: Probably take a few minutes here.

SM: Or maybe what we should do is talk about this . . . this . . .

SC: What's that?

SM: These are the inscriptions on the graves [unclear].

SC: Oh, unfortunately, I can't read them anyway.

SM: Oh, you can't read them. [Chuckles]

SC: No.

SM: Okay. Okay. [Chuckles] Well, maybe we should just leave it here then, since we're supposed to be concentrating on Minnesota. But it is interesting to know that your father did adapt Chinese farming methods.

SM: No Chinese farmed here though, right?

SC: Hmmm.

SM: Of course, Walter James had a farm. But . . .

SC: That was not a working farm, no.

SM: Not for farming here.

SC: But then, yes, there was some farming here.

SM: Oh.

SC: Mun Hing bought . . .

SM: How do you spell Mun Hing?

SC: MUN.

SM: MUN.

SC: HING.

SM: Yes.

and ra' **SC:** They bought a property and farmed it and raised their own celery and Chinese vegetables for their restaurant.

SM: Oh, for their restaurant.

SC: Yes.

SM: They grew Chinese celery?

SC: Yes. And many different things.

SM: Chinese vegetables, mainly?

SC: Yes. And actual American celery, because they use that in chow mein.

SM: Oh, I see. Ah ha. And where did they buy that then? Was it close to the Cities?

SC: Yes, it was close to the city, yes.

SM: What period of time?

SC: Well, let's see now. That must have been in the 1940s.

SM: I see. Did they supply more than their own restaurant?

SC: No. That was . . . well, see, Mun Hing had a chain of small takeout places throughout the city. And I think they may have had as many as twelve or thirteen places.

SM: Oh. And so he supplied all of those with his farm then?

SC: Yes. Their own use. Now one man who could help you on that is Billy Wong.

SM: Billy Wong?

SC: Yes. Now he used to own the Fireside Rice Bowl.

SM: Oh. Is that in Minneapolis?

SC: No, in Fridley.

SM: Oh, in Fridley.

 $\mathbf{SC} \text{:}\ Now they recently sold out, but then he . . . I think they still live out there.}$

SM: Is he retired then?

SC: Yes, retired. Yes. And his son is Glen Wong.

SM: Glen Wong. I see. Would he be in the phone book then?

SC: I'm sure he would be.

SM: Would it be . . .?

SC: William. William Wong.

SM: William. And did he at one time work on . . .?

SC: Yes, he was one of the owners of Mun Hing.

SM: Oh, he was one of the owners.

SC: Yes. There were a number of men. It was a partnership. But he could tell you about their farm operation.

SM: I see. So did they hire other Chinese to work on the farms?

SC: Well, they had some . . . their cooks also worked there.

SM: Oh, that's interesting.

SC: I don't know how they arranged it, but at that time cooks weren't being paid as much as they are now.

SM: I see.

SC: Now you couldn't afford to send a cook out to work on a farm. [Chuckles]

SM: [Chuckles] Oh, so they would just alternate their staff.

SC: Yes. Right.

SM: By sending someone out there. But cooks are paid pretty well now?

SC: Oh, yes.

SM: I see.

SC: Fourteen, fifteen hundred dollars a month. And sometimes with net . . .

SM: Hmmm. That is very good. So that must have been a sizeable farm then.

SC: Yes, it was. I'm sure it was.

SM: It was like a truck farm

SC: Yes. Yes.

SM: It was all vegetables. Did he have chickens or . . .?

SC: I'm not sure. They may have, may have had . . .

SM: You know what, no one's ever mentioned that before.

SC: Oh.

SM: I'm really glad to hear that. This is, you know, part of the whole picture. It's really interesting. I'll try to get in touch with William Wong then and see . . . or Glen Wong.

SC: Get a hold of Glen Wong because there may be more than one William Wong. In fact, I'm sure there is.

SM: Oh yes. Yes, I see. So they probably sold that farm . . .

SC: Oh, many years ago. Yes. They haven't . . . that's been . . . that was out of operation many years ago.

SM: I see. But you don't know of any other farming that went on among the Chinese people?

SC: No, nothing in . . . of any consequence.

SM: So they probably used Chinese methods of farming.

SC: Yes.

you any long SM: That's very interesting. Well, I mustn't keep you any longer. And thank you very much for your information.

SC: Yes.