

Chapter One

Early Arrivals and Origins before 1943

These family accounts provide views of Asian American experiences that begin before 1943, although some include substantial discussion of life in later periods. The stories personalize the adaptations necessary for survival, including the limited range of economic options and dependence on restaurant, service, labor, and agricultural employment at a time when restrictions and exclusion were at their peak, and the manner these changed over time and generations. Immigration is not a one way process, so some of these stories reflect returns to Asia and later re-immigration to the US. These accounts also describe changes that occurred for those Asian Americans already in the United States when long standing restrictive laws began to crumble in 1943. This transition period is discussed further in the next chapter.

Asians have been coming to the Americas for a long time. Most early arrivals prior to the 1840s were Chinese or Filipinos associated with maritime occupations or trade in Latin America. Chinese were also present in small numbers in California even before the United States took control of the region from Mexico in the 1840's and Filipino migrants formed communities in the Louisiana in the 1700s while the area was under Spanish control. Large scale movement of Asians to the United States began with the immigration of Chinese to California during the Gold Rush of 1849. By 1860, Chinese comprised about 10% of the population of the state of California. During the 19th century they were also found in significant numbers in several other western states and territories.(1)

Japanese and a few Korean immigrants began to arrive on the mainland in large numbers later in the 1800s, with a peak in immigration between 1900 and 1907. Other Japanese and Chinese became residents of the United States in 1898 with the annexation of Hawaii. Filipinos were living in Louisiana as early as 1750, but large numbers of Filipinos did not arrive in the United States until after annexation of the Philippines in 1898, with large numbers entering between 1920 and 1934.

When Chinese first arrived in the 1850's, immigration to the United States was relatively unregulated. There was no Immigration and Naturalization Service and if a person had the means to arrive they could enter. Under Federal guidelines dating from 1792, naturalization was limited to free Whites and handled locally. Despite this restriction, a few Asians were able to become naturalized. However, racist responses to the arrival of large numbers of Chinese soon led to an end of

unrestricted entry for Chinese and by 1882 the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act and associated legislation virtually halted entry of most Chinese and explicitly forbade their naturalization.

Beyond suppressing the growth of Asian American populations, this history of discriminatory regulations had considerable impact on Asian American communities and individuals. Restriction and exclusion, most notably in the case of Chinese Americans, created a situation in which most entrants were illegal, commonly as "paper sons" of men already in the United States who had actual or paper claims to U. S. citizenship. It was also difficult for men to bring their wives and families to the United States. "Split families," with husband and fathers in the United States and wives and children in China became a common form of family structure, sometimes for several generations. Alternatively, men remained unmarried. Both Chinese and Filipino American communities had a disbalance of men to women for many years. The impact on Japanese Americans was less extreme because provisions of the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1907 allowed for a period in which wives and children could join men in the United States. These and other consequences of Asian American immigration history are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Father's Memories, Mother's Hands by J. F. Quan(2)

My father tells me little about the past. Time is blurred. People are not named. Perhaps that is because all Chinese had the same goal -- a better life in which mere acquaintances are made dear "relatives." Yet most Chinese came by this goal circuitously, on a slow boat at first and then afterwards encountering many acts of prejudice.

Perhaps the first of our family to leave for America, then famous after the discovery at Sutter's Mill and renown as *Gam San* or the "Gold Mountain," was my father's grandfather. Welcomed for his promise of hard labor, he landed in San Francisco and went on to help build the transcontinental railroad. Like it he traveled, and in Pittsburgh ("Pittsburgh?!" I gasped. With a terrible look my dad shut me up to go on with his narration) our family line continued; dad's father was born. He became a house boy in San Francisco or Santa Rosa around 1900. Later, he went "home" to Kwangtung to marry, come back, go back to China, produce a son, come back, and then in 1914, produce a second son. That second son was my father, Fung Leong Quan.

The Kwangtung childhood was an insular one. Money and distant authority from my grandfather was sent occasionally but all that was family for my father was his mother; "I was the only child she raised." Home was tile roofed with walls of fired

clay bricks, the floor was dirt. One room served as kitchen, parlor, and bedroom. The little village had 14 such homes, total. There was a large courtyard where adults gossiped in the local language, Sze-yup, and children played their games.

But leisure was rare. The modest village demanded constant labor from its inhabitants. Outside were sections of earth and scattered wells where the families - parents and children - grew their rice. When very young, Fung Leong also stooped over the family's small patch of land to plant shoots of rice. Not for him was the practice of two lazy women in the village. "They bought their rice!" he remembers indignantly and enviously.

Bisecting the rice fields was small stream that offered some fish and clams and intersecting this was a mile long dirt road that led to the older village with a market which opened from six in the morning to noon. There, the adults could haggle for fresh *toy*, or vegetables, and, on holidays, for meat or squawking white-feathered chickens. There were also schools there. Although his father died when Fung Leong was six, he stayed in his home village for a few more years, his uncle or cousin Jack sending money from America for his education.

Then it was time for Fung Leong to also leave, seek and make his fortune. At fourteen, he was to become head of his family. Much was dependent on another cousin to arrange the proper papers, pay the passage, and instruct Fung Leong about his going to America. In 1928, at four o'clock one morning, his mother woke him, gave him breakfast, and put him on a fellow villager's sampan. He went down the Pearl River to Canton, then on to Hong Kong by riverboat, where he worked briefly in an acquaintance's sewing factory. After that, it was eighteen to twenty days on a ship to Angel Island.

At Angel Island, what happened would depend much on luck. Fung Leong knew that he was a citizen of the "Beautiful Country," the United States of America, because his father had been one. But the authorities demanded his visa and further proof that he belonged. They confined him to a building filled with mostly Chinese men, some of whom had been there as long as two years. Some who had been detained longer had likely hung themselves rather than be shamed with deportation.

Fung Leong was later summoned to an office, there to be questioned by an "examiner," a "tester," and interpreter, and someone from the Justice Department who would sometimes shake his head, "uh-uh, you can't ask him that." Nevertheless, Fung Leong was asked the most detailed questions: "Where did your door face - what hung over the mantle - how large was your room?" They questioned and questioned

him, testing to see if his answers would mismatch his father's and uncle's. He was there about eighty-seven days, he lost count after eighty.

Finally, he was told: "Fung Leong ... seung fow! - Fung Leong, go to town." He quickly shook his head, "okay." In the "big city," San Francisco, he visited a cousin who had a popular grocery store at 766 Clay Street. Then he continued his journey; after a train ride of three nights and four days he was in San Antonio, Texas, staying with yet another distant cousin. Just a few months after Fung Leong arrived, the cousin that had sponsored him over died of tuberculosis.

San Antonio was a city with a cosmopolitan mix of inhabitants. There was a dispersed but growing Chinese minority. Fung Leong's belief was that this was due to the Mexican revolution. Its leader hated the Chinese and would, in his leisure, slaughter them. The opposing American leader, however, adopted the Chinese as camp followers, encouraging their immigration; they were considered good cooks and waiters. Perhaps that's how Chinese ended up running restaurants in Texas, that what the distant cousin did.(3)

Fung Leong waited, bused tables, and washed dishes for a room over the restaurant, meals of leftovers, and a dollar and a half each week, one third of which he sent to his mother. Summers, for four years, she also worked as a the porter at a nearby hotel. He attended elementary school for two or three years, reaching third grade and learning English with a strong, stubborn Texas accent.

San Antonio, much of it still country-side, had a restlessness which rubbed off on Fung Leong. The restaurant served cheap American and Mexican food, much of it local beef. Cowboys stopped in to order meals and rested in nearby hotels. Fung Leong made friends with them. Sometimes he was invited to neighboring ranches for weekends of hunting and trapping, which he enjoyed. What he couldn't like was riding. Horses kept throwing him, bucking or racing under low hanging tree limbs. Instead, he learned to drive a Model T Ford on the "San Antone" dirt roads.

At San Antonio's edge were also two airfields, Bleu Field and Randolph Field. As the planes flew over him, Fung Leong would watch, thinking about the men earning their wings. America was still called the Gold Mountain, money seemed abundant, bills seemed then to be twice the size of currency now and mingled with silver coins and occasional gold pieces. There was opportunity Fung Leong would claim.

He hoarded so that, at 18, he was able to leave San Antonio for Chicago and an education in electronics. But his four years of saving would pay for only two years of tuition. Books and board he earned by busing tables again. He graduated among the top of his class.

But he was smack in the middle of the Depression. Hoover had left his office and country in despair. Franklin Roosevelt, whom Fung Leong had been too young to vote for, had not yet affected change. There were no jobs for electricians, especially Chinese ones. Fung Leong couldn't even find enough work to feed and shelter himself. Hamburger at fifteen cents a pound became a luxury, two slices of a nickel loaf of bread and water made meals some days. then there was nothing. Only a classmate, a "rich boy" from Memphis, Tennessee saved Fung Leong from starving. George Kong, saying, "Quan, you shouldn't have to live like this," lent him fifty dollars.

So Fung Leong started anew. Back in San Antonio he set up a grocery store with Uncle Jack and a third cousin. At twenty-six, the richest Chinese in San Antonio offered him any one of his three supermarkets and the hand of his young, beautiful daughter. Fung Leong refused.

World War II was heating up. With his poor eyesight and a promise to do wartime work, Fung Leong was classified 4-F by his draft board. He migrated to the West Coast, where there were growing numbers of defense factories, and joined the large and close-knit Chinese population of San Francisco. He stayed briefly at a hotel on Broadway and Columbus, the borderline of where Chinese could safely walk, then moved to "the cheapest room" (five dollars a month) on Stockton Street. From there he commuted daily to a Marin shipyard, the Metro International.

After the war was over, he, his buddy Tommy Choy, and the other Chinese went their separate ways. Fung Leong became a bartender/bus boy at the Yankee Doodle, a bar on Powell and Geary. He was saving money for a visit home. In 1947, he returned to a mother who was supposedly ill but not so much so that she couldn't choose her 33 year old son a nice girl from the village. But instead, he accepted Lai Sing Chung, a young woman from another village five miles away; her mother had chosen him. They were married in a traditional ceremony, the bride, in red silk gown, carried to her husband's house in a sedan chair. Afterward, Fung Leong registered himself and his new bride with the American Consulate.

During an almost year long stay at his mother's house, Fung Leong went back and forth four or five times, ninety miles each way, to Canton to see the consulate about reentering America. These arrangements could be difficult, some desperate men even slept on the consulate steps. Fung Leong was luckier than most, with a permit to return, all he need were two witnesses to the consulate procedures and there, also trying to go back, were Tommy Choy and his cousin.

That formality done with, there remained only the tickets "home" to be bought. Fung Leong went to the President Line, where the Chinese clerk slowly flipped

through entries, finally sighing his regrets when no bribe materialized. Fung Leong marched to the manager, a Caucasian. He succinctly explained that he wanted to return to America with his pregnant wife. The manager in turn impressed on the clerk the importance of helping Mr. Quan. "Oh, you're so lucky," the clerk gushed, "two men just canceled. They've, uh, decided to take a later ship." The *President Cleveland* carried the Quans home to San Francisco, docking at pier 33 or 35. As the wife of a U. S. Citizen, Mrs. Quan was smoothly ushered through the customs check. Three weeks later, on August 1, 1948, the first child, a son, was born.

The young woman, Lai Sing, would soon have to become accustomed to so many things. She lived worse than she had, in a small, bare room, sharing a communal bathroom with the entire floor of a Stockton Street hotel. She lived afraid of strangers, there were few Chinese in the building and she spoke only Sze-yup. She lived almost alone, for her husband was away hard at work for long hours.

Childbirth soon changed the shape of her body and sapped its strength. Work, both at "home" and by necessity at sewing factories and seafood plants, changed her delicate hands. I hide mine when she looks at hers, remembering, "my hands were even daintier than yours." This new life changed her into the shrewish-voiced, domineering creature with the mouthful of bitterness that I know.

After all these decades, my father considers himself an American, leaning forward to watch *Bonanza* and other TV westerns like someone reliving his past, his big black armchair squeaking in excitement. But despite that, and some prosperity and a "better" life, my father still feels some fear, mistrust of the laws. He tries to armor himself with silence and hoarded savings. Although a U. S. citizen since the late 1970s, my mother still wishes aloud in Sze-yup that she could go "home." "In Kwangtung, the oranges were so much sweeter, the pork so much more succulent," she sighs. hard at work

Sausalito by Janet Choy

My paternal grandfather, Sam Wong, was born in 1892 in the village of Lung Tao Won, China. At the age of sixteen, he immigrated to the Port of San Francisco, California, under the paper name of Toy On, son of Toy Man, a born citizen of the United States. My grandfather came to the United States because he heard by word of mouth that the United States was the land of the "Golden Mountain." The "Golden Mountain" suggested the abundance of land and wealth and promised the opportunity for a better life.

Little is known about my grandfather from the time he arrived in San Francisco until 1930 when he was introduced and married to my grandmother, Sui Lai Jong. My grandmother was a widow before she came to the United States. She traveled for 1 month aboard the "Ta Fa Boat," a ship furnished with dancing, games, and good food. She liked America very much, including the weather.

My grandparents saved together some money to rent a unit on Broadway Street in San Francisco's Chinatown. On that same street, they opened a dry goods store shortly before their first daughter, Mae, was born. While my grandfather ran the family business, my grandmother took care of her daughter, Mae, and her two other children, David and June. After a short time of sewing clothes for the National Dollar Store on Stockton Street, my grandmother bought twelve pieces of sewing equipment for \$1,200. Before their daughter, Mae, could finish high school, she was instructed by her father to run a sewing business to help in financially supporting the family. My grandparents moved their business to Stockton Street to sell clothes and sundries. In 1942, my grandparents and their family bought a four bedroom house on Bannam Place for \$2,500. Two years later, they bought a six-unit building on Green Street for \$25,000. They resided in one of the flats.

My grandfather worked hard, long hours throughout his life. Occasionally, he would take my father to the Verde Theater for a movie and a free bingo game on Saturday nights. He would also take my father on the trolley car to Ocean Beach and then walk to the zoo. A few times a year, my grandfather would take the Greyhound bus to his friend's farm in Fairfield, California. While his three children worked on the farm, he would visit the people he knew around the farm during their 4-day stay.

My grandparents had very few activities outside of the business. Their children recall them as leading "separate lives." My grandfather worked and my grandmother stayed home while their children went to school. But because they came to America and provided food and shelter for their family, their children were also able to have the opportunity to start a better life than what was in China, both materially and perhaps spiritually.

My mother's family was a little different. In September of 1934, my maternal grandfather, Yee Tock Chee, took my grandmother, Leong Shee Yee, from their home in Sausalito, California, to San Francisco to give birth to my mother, Jacqueline Ellen Yee. My mother was delivered by a midwife in a rooming house on Stockton Street in San Francisco's Chinatown. It was common in those days for Chinese women to have their babies delivered by midwives rather than by a physician in a hospital because in China, babies were only delivered by midwives. The building in which my mother was born consisted of three floors. Each floor had about six rooms,

a community kitchen and a bathroom. As soon as my grandmother recovered from her delivery, she returned to their home and their four other children in Sausalito.

My mother lived in the back of and on the floor above my grandfather's grocery and fruit business on Bridgeway Avenue, namely the Marin Fruit Company. In 1919, my grandfather's cousin, Wing Mow Lung, had decided to return to China and sold the business to my grandfather. Throughout my grandfather's life as a businessman in Sausalito, he had good relations with everyone he came in contact with. Whenever his customers needed money for any personal reasons, my grandfather would lend them the amount they needed and never asked them back for it and sometimes he even refused to be repaid. One time an old friend of my grandfather's, Mrs. Cyril Hansen, received an emergency message that in order to see her brother alive again, she would have to arrive in Illinois very soon. She asked for some help and my grandfather gave her a blank check. Due to my grandfather's kindness, generosity, and goodwill towards everyone he knew, the former Princess Park was dedicated to my grandfather and named Yee Tock Chee Park in 1974, one week after his passing away. Mrs. William Young, deputy city clerk, describes my grandfather, "Willie (his nickname) is a prince of a person, generous, public-spirited, and good-hearted in his very own, quiet way." Willie had one good, close Caucasian friend, William Melburn. Mr. Melburn was a taxicab driver who got to know my grandfather and his family and vice versa. In later years, for the first time in their 30-year friendship, Mr. Melburn invited my grandfather to a birthday dinner at the Alta Mira Restaurant in Sausalito.

During her early childhood, my mother would play outside in the backyard with three other kids -- a black kid named Billy Thomas, a white boy whose name she does not recall, and a Chinese girl named May Lee who belonged to the only other Chinese family in Sausalito at the time and who lived right next door to my mother. May's family operated a laundromat. My mother remembers roller skating, and playing in their tree house or on her rooftop whenever she got together with her neighborhood friends. She got along well with her friends and recalls never being discriminated against because of her ethnic difference. My mother's family was treated with common courtesy and respect just as they were treated by my mother's family. My mother admired the upper-middle class families who lived in "the nice homes up in the hills." These families were well-educated and well-mannered. My mother never felt any prejudice from these Caucasian people. Among all of the people she knew, she felt closest to her friend, May. Because they were of the same ethnic background and because they lived so close to each other, they were able to maintain a close and secure friendship.

During grammar school, my mother would argue with her mother about going out with her friends because her mother thought that she was too young. My mother

resented her mother's restrictions and would constantly argue and rebel. As my mother approached her teens, she found herself very attracted to her friends of the opposite sex such as Bill Debo and Billy Fowler. Although she felt that they were attracted to her also, they never seemed to want to get serious. Of course there were white couples among her friends, but she soon learned that in high school, a mixed couple would stick out like a "sore thumb." She never quite understood why she could dance with or go out as friends with the Caucasian people, but was never asked out on a date.

After grammar school, my mom went to Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. In one of my mom's autograph books, a good friend of hers, Rose Marie Lopez, wrote: *ROSES ARE RED VIOLETS ARE BLUE, YOU ARE A CHINA WOMAN AND A NICE ONE TOO.*

This poem is probably the extent to which my mom experienced any racial distinction or discrimination.

After her second year of high school, and still no boyfriend, my mother was sent to San Francisco by her father to live with her sister and husband in order to go to school and to meet some Chinese boys. And lo and behold, she meets my dad, an American born Chinese. Once she had found a boyfriend and future husband, to whom she proposed marriage, she decided to return to Tamalpais High School to graduate with her long-time friends.

Overall, my mother recalls being very happy while growing up in Sausalito. She has many fond memories of good times and good friends. She never really felt ashamed of being Chinese, although she admits to being ashamed of living in the back of a grocery store, which consequently impeded her from inviting her friends over. Nevertheless, she was treated very kindly by her Caucasian friends of all ages, and did not feel any prejudice or experience any discrimination.

Now that she has five grown children and a thirty-two year marriage to my dad, she can say that in a very subtle way, she was treated with empathy because she was a minority. She also realizes that because she is Chinese, she was denied the opportunity to develop serious or long-lasting relationships with both Caucasian men and women by both her own parents and the Caucasian parents. But that is in the past. We cannot relive the past, but we can create the future.

My mom's hometown of Sausalito touches a soft spot in her heart. She feels a strong attachment to her hometown because she remembers herself as being very happy there.

Adventures in the Mori Family by Misako Mori

When this paper was first assigned I had mixed reactions. Being Yonsei, fourth generation Japanese American, I did not feel that this assignment was for me. Three generations of my family have all lived in the United States. I was worried that there would not be enough information and the information would be boring. In one of my conversations with my family I complained about the assignment. My Father just laughed and told me that it would be easy to write, and I should come home to talk to my Grandma. After spending a weekend with her I learned that my family is quite the opposite of boring.

My mother's mother, Chiyo Shimada Sahara was born in Los Angeles, California on July 18th, 1908. She grew up in the West Los Angeles area with her parents, 3 brothers and 2 sisters. She married Hideo Sahara, also born in America, and had their first child, Robert before the world war II broke out. When the government began to relocate the Japanese living on the west coast, Chiyo and Hideo moved to Utah with the rest of their family. They lived there until the war ended and then moved back to Los Angeles, California. While in Utah they had another son, Fred.

Hideo was a gardener in Los Angeles while Chiyo would stay home and watch her children. On June 24th, 1950 my mother, Wendy Chiyo Sahara, was born. She was named after a character in Chiyo's favorite movie, "Peter Pan." She was the only daughter and quickly became "Daddy's girl." Chiyo began to work at a sewing factory to help support the three children. About this time Hideo decided that the family needed another source of income because their oldest son was about to go to college at University of California in Davis. He decided to take all of their families money and buy the entire apartment complex that they were living in. This way if anything were to happen to him they could always have a steady source of income. They were happy and comfortable living this way with both parents working with one son off studying to be a veterinarian. Suddenly their comfortable life was turned upside down. While Hideo was trimming a palm tree he slipped and fell 30 feet to the ground. He was rushed to the hospital, but there was nothing the doctors could do because he fell and hit his head. This is why my mother never let me or my sister climb trees. My mom was forced to work to make up for the loss of their main source of income.

Wendy took the loss of her father the hardest. She quit girl scouts and her grades at University High School in West Los Angeles began to drop. She was able to graduate and then she attended Los Angeles City College, but dropped out after two years. During this time the Vietnam war broke out. My mother was at the forefront of the anti-war movement and she was part of a group known as Yellow Brotherhood.

They not only protested but they also helped their community. They helped people of the Asian community find jobs, housing and encouraged them to get an education. My mom never talks about her involvement in Yellow Brotherhood, all the information I have learned was through her friends. The only sign she was a member is the small tattoo of a star she had on her wrist. Each of the five points represent one of the five things all humans should be allowed, they are; shelter, food, health, education and freedom. (Wendy Mori, Interview)

My father's mother, Tsutaye Mori, was born on February 4th 1921 in Gardena, California. She is known as "Tee" because in elementary school no one could pronounce her name. She had three older sisters when she was born and three more came after her. Her parents were both from Fukuoka, Japan. Her father came to America to farm in 1906. Nine years later in 1915 his wife came over to America as a picture bride. There were many children because they were a farming family who wanted sons to help out with the work. Unfortunately, there were only girls, but they worked just as hard. Because Tee's parents were not naturalized citizens they could not own land, therefore they would rent land to farm on.

They lived in a four bedroom house in West Los Angeles, California. It was a large house, however when there are nine people living together, it can get cramped. They had to share rooms as well as beds. My Grandmother recalls always fighting at night over space and the use of the blankets. While they lived in West L.A., Tee attend Sawtell Boulevard Jr. High School. Every day after school her and her sisters would go to Japanese School for an hour. This was the worst part of their day because they hated going to school again after they had finished American School. Tee never saw the point in learning Japanese. The only people she spoke it to were her parents. Her first language was English because that is what her sisters taught her when she was young. Her oldest sister, Yuriko, spoke Japanese the best because it was her first language since she did not have any sisters to teach her English. Yuriko would act as her younger sister's mother for parent meetings at school, because it was too complicated to translate back and forth during meetings

While growing up Tee attend West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple on Cornith Avenue. Her and her family attend service every Sunday morning and then went to sunday school afterwards. Her parents were good friend with many of the members of the temple. This was their community, they would do many social activities with them and many of the men farmed together. Because Tee had six other sisters they would usually sick together. They were all very close, sharing school books, beds and clothes. Their summers were spent together on their farm picking beans or pulling weeds to help their father out.

In 1939 when Tee was a junior in high school her family moved to Ocean Side, California. She began to attend Capistrano High School. There she played on many

of their sports teams. She competed in, hockey, tennis, basketball, volleyball and soccer. She was the tomboy of the sisters. Because of this her parents put her in charge of distributing the weekly allowance the girls got according to how much work each did.

When the war began the Mori family was forced to leave their home in Ocean Side and get on a train to Arizona. They lost their farm and sold their home and everything they could not pack up. Tee and all of her younger sisters stayed together with their parents and went to Poston. Yuriko, Mary, and Yo, her older sisters, were married so they were separated and sent to Manzanar, Santa Anita and Pomona, respectively. Much of what happened while they were in camp is unknown because Tee and her sisters don't talk about their experience there. (Tsutaye Mori, Interview)

However, a few years ago my father and I were grocery shopping and was looking at the special 50th anniversary edition of Time Magazine. When there was this one picture of a funeral service at Manzanar my dad stopped me from turning the page. He took it from me to get a better look. Then he asked me if I knew who the people in the picture were. I looked closely but to me it just looked like a bunch of sad people standing around a casket. I said that they were people from our temple, because I knew some of them were at Manzanar. He said that he thought it was his mother and her sisters. I was confused because I knew they were separated and I didn't think that anyone we knew died at camp. My dad then made me go around collecting all the copies I could find at the store so he could distribute them to the rest of the family. We then rushed to my grandma's house to check that it was really her in the picture. When we showed her the picture she stopped talking and turned off the TV. Then without looking up she told us that it was a picture from the funeral of her oldest sister, Yuriko. She died during childbirth in Manzanar because of the lack of good doctors. The Government bussed their whole family there so that they could hold a funeral for her. My dad was surprised because he always thought that she had died before camp due to illness. That is the only time my grandmother or any of her sisters spoke about life in camp. When I asked her about it again for this paper she pretended not to hear me and instead asked me if I saw Barry Bonds hit a home run.

Before the war ended my grandmother was released and she went to Chicago to attend sewing school. She wanted to move east thinking that she would be safer there. She lived with a Caucasian family while attend school for a year. It was too cold for her and she missed her family so she decide to move back home. On her way back to Los Angeles she stopped in Salt Lake City, Utah to see two of her sisters who were working there. While in Utah she met a man named Yasuo Mori. They were introduced to each other through friends who thought they might like each other. "Something clicked" said my grandma about their first meeting. He had been

living in Salt Lake City during the war, running his own tofu factory. Yasuo Mori was not born in the United States, he was also not born with the last name Mori. He was born on January 31st 1911 in the Mei Ken province of Japan as Yasuo Ishigaki. He has seven other sisters, no brothers. Since he was the only son in his family he was treated like a king. His older sisters felt that he was spoiled and that he needed to "become a man." One of his brother in laws was already in American and agreed to help him once he arrived in America. One of his friends, who went to America with him, obtained two green cards. It is not known for sure where or how the green cards were obtained. Some thoughts are that they were bought off of someone else because green cards in Japan are valuable, or that perhaps they were stolen. On the green card Yasuo's last name became Mori. He traveled to the U.S. on a boat with his friend, landing in Venice Beach, California.

He farmed in Southern California until W.W.II broke out. He quickly moved to Utah to avoid being sent to concentration camps. While there he opened up his own tofu factory. There he made and distributed tofu. While in Utah he met a woman whose last name was the same as his fake one. Tsutaye Mori and Yasuo Ishigaki were married in 1949 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Since all of Yasuo's paper work was under the name of Mori, and because his fiancé's name was Mori he decided to keep it that way. This way the family name, Mori, would be able to be passed on because even though Tsutaye only had sisters. Now Yasuo Mori was an American citizen because he married an American citizen. While in Utah they had two sons, Sam born in June, 1947 and Johnny born in November, 1949. In 1953 they moved back to Los Angeles, California to be closer to their family. They rented an apartment on West View Street, where my grandma lives today. Yasuo sold his tofu factory and became a gardener in Los Angeles.(Tsutaye Mori, Interview)

In Los Angeles my father Johnny attended Alta Loma Elementary School. He attended Japanese School every Saturday but he doesn't remember much of Japanese School. All he could tell me was "basketball at lunch was fun." He was also a Boy Scout at Senshin Buddhist Temple where he obtained the rank of Eagle Scout at the age of 15. At Senshin he was also a member of the Junior Young Buddhist League (YBA), a youth group for high school aged kids. A YBA function was where he first met my mother. It was also at Senshin where he first saw the taiko drums being played. He had seen them played before at Obons, but never in the performance form he saw at Senshin. The group he saw was the Kinnara Taiko group which was formed in 1969. This group was one of the first performance taiko groups formed in the United States. He immediately fell in love with the sound and style of the drums and began to play with the taiko group.

My father attended Los Angeles High School where he played football and volleyball. At school many of his friends were African American. Because he grew up

after the war there was still much anti Asian feeling in the community. He felt most comfortable with the African American students at his school. He felt that they did not judge him because of his race or religion. When he graduated from high school he attended Los Angeles City College where he earned an A.A. degree in Dental Arts. He worked as a dental technician from 1969 to 1970.

When Johnny turned 18 he registered for the draft like all Americans young men. This was during the Vietnam War and the draft was being run on a lottery system. His number was 174 and when his number was called he refused to fight. He felt that it was morally wrong to fight in the Vietnam War, so he filed for conscientious objector status. He went before the draft board at the Federal Building in Los Angeles. He was asked lots of questions about his religious beliefs and patriotism. Unfortunately he was denied based on his demeanor. He decided to appeal to the state Selective Service Board. With the help of Reverend Tets Uno and Reverend Masao Kodani he wrote an appeal. It took about 30 to 60 days for the appeal to be filed, so with the encouragement of Reverend Uno he decided to study at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley. He attended their summer session in the summer of 1971 and while there he met a law student by the name of Dale Minami who was attending the University of California at Berkeley. Together they went to court to appeal my father's case and they won. Because my father was granted conscientious objector status he had to complete community service for a non-profit corporation. He returned to Los Angeles and began working at Amerasia Bookstore in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. The book store carried books by Asian American authors and text books for the developing Asian Studies programs at colleges. He worked there from 1971 until 1977.

At the same time a band known as Hiroshima was formed in Los Angeles with my father as one of the members. The band mixed jazz with traditional Japanese sounds. One of these sounds was the Koto and the other was the Taiko drums, which my father played. To my father the "band is considered historians, documentarians, who captured the voice of Asian Americans and Japanese Americans." Hiroshima is the Asian American perspective on contemporary music. And now thirty years later the band has released 12 albums and continues to perform around the U.S. When he is not touring with the band he is at schools leading assembly about Taiko drums. His music has also appeared in many movies, such as; "Karate Kid" and "Mission Impossible 2." (Johnny Mori, Interview

Johnny and Wendy Mori first met at a Jr. YBA. event. During college they met again through friends at Los Angeles Community College. When my father graduated from college they decided to move in together in a small duplex on Hudson avenue near Los Angeles High School. Five years later they were married at Senshin Buddhist Temple. Three years later in 1983 I was born, Jessica Misako Mori. My

middle and first names were later switched because my mother decided that she liked Misako more than Jessica. My sister was born three years later. We both attended the preschool at Nishi Buddhist Temple in downtown Los Angeles. There we met many other Japanese American children, who became my friends. Outside of school most of the children I played with were African American and Latino because they were the ones who lived around me. When I turned 6 my family moved into the house they live in today. It is a small three bed room house located in central Los Angeles. My high school, Los Angeles Center of Enriched Studies, was right down the street from my house. The school is small and one of the more culturally diverse campuses in Los Angeles. There I played basketball and was a member of many clubs including, Young Asian Scholars and International Scholars. Because of the diversity I never faced the racism my parents often came up against.

One of the things my parents stressed most to me was to understand and be proud of who I was. But not so proud that I wasn't open to others. I attend Sunday school at Senshin and play basketball for the asian leagues. However, I also have attended many Bat Mitzvahs as well as a Quinceañera. My childhood was similar to my parents, going to school, temple and girl scouts. But it differed in many ways too. I never attended Japanese school and I never had to worry about racism. My life is simple and carefree compared to that of my grandparents. I never have been on a farm nor have I ever picked vegetables for food. I have always had a clear understanding of who I am. I feel that the schools i attended and the area I lived in has helped me to be the type of person I am today. The understanding of my grandparents lives has helped me to better understand they way they treat me and the things they say. I have also learned to appreciate my father more for what he does. Rather than take a job as a dental technician and make lots of money he chose to do what he loves and play taiko for a living. Also his being one of the first Buddhists in Southern California to be granted conscientious objector status is something to be proud of.

The Arago/Rosales Emigration by J.A.

My family's emigration begins with the birth of my father, Pablo Arago, in 1905. His family lived in the barrios of San Miguel, in the province of Pangasinan. While growing up he worked as a carpenter, fisherman, house boy, and railroad worker while at the same time trying to complete his schooling in the system established by the United States after the Filipino-American War at the the turn of the century. He traveled to school in Boolinow by *caratela*, a horse drawn cart. It took him until he was seventeen to finish because of the need to help support the family but a principal made him go to school because she thought he was smart and he eventually completed sixth grade while living with the principal. After finishing school he became a carpenter and worked on bridges although he could have become

a teacher with the schooling he had. He later decided to come to America to what it was like and to look for work.

My mom says my dad arrived in San Francisco by ship at the age of eighteen. The year was 1923. He found work as a migratory worker in the fields of California, Oregon, and Washington, other types of employment and further schooling blocked by the racism of the times. He lived in Salinas, Stockton, Los Angeles and became part of what is now called the "manong" generation, men who were a prime source of cheap agricultural labor for the United States following the exclusion of laborers from other Asian countries. He faced much anti-Filipino sentiment during the 1920's and 1930's and worked for cheap wages both because he was Filipino and because it was the Depression.

According to my mother's recollection of what my father told her, he lived with other manongs in one bedroom apartments, usually sharing it with three to six other men. They worked in the fields and gambled with their earnings during the off seasons. The person who won each day would usually buy food for the rest and when spring came round again they would all work in the fields again. My dad performed this work from 1923 to 1941, living a bachelor's life. My mother has many stories he told her about the Filipino immigrants of that generation. She particularly remembers the story of an incident where the old timers and my father had to order food when they first arrived. They did not know the names of the dishes, so one of them got on top of the table and started flapping his arms and making chicken noises to get the waitress to understand him. At the expense of a degrading experience, the waitress understood they wanted chicken and they got their meal. On another occasion they were sleeping in a hotel and one of the manongs would not sleep under the covers because he did not want to get them dirty, instead he slept on top. My mom says they were an innocent group of simple young men. I say they are a part of Filipino American history which cannot be forgotten because they were heroic individuals who came to an unknown country at the ages of seventeen, eighteen and nineteen and lived in the racist, discriminatory atmosphere of American society.

At the start of World War II, my father found employment with the military, working as a carpenter and joiner on submarines at Mare Island Naval Base in Vallejo, California. During this time he had a Latina girlfriend in Salinas who left him for another Filipino, so he decided to find a wife back in the Philippines. He returned to the Philippines in 1946 and married a woman named Patricia. They returned to Vallejo had seven children. He worked as a carpenter and contractor, building and fixing homes which he then rented out. He ended up owning about ten homes and apartments which he lost to lawyers and detectives later during a divorce. His work for the Navy helped him become a naturalized citizen in 1948. After twenty-one years of marriage he divorced Patricia. The divorce prompted him

to worry about someone to take care of him in his old age and he decided to find another wife in the Philippines. He called up his niece, Carmelita Arago, who was married to one Ramon Lui. That's how he met my mom.

My mom was born in 1937 in the province of Pangasinan. She spent much of her childhood during World War II hiding in the rice paddies when the Japanese occupied the Philippines. After the war, her family moved to Longopo, Pangasinan, where she attended elementary and high school. After high school she worked for some time selling matches and then started college when she was twenty-three. It took her five years to finish her teacher training at the national Teacher's College because she had to work to fund her schooling. She started teaching history and English at a high school in Baclaran, Pangasinan and a year later moved to teach these subjects plus science at the Nany Polytechnic Institute, an all boy's school. She ended up teaching at Arellano high school, teaching English and history according to the United States point of view, which is very misleading because it leaves out the Filipino American War at the turn of the century. Despite this, she loved working with teenagers because it was exciting and made her feel young. She was the main bread-winner for her family, although everyone contributed. She did not mind the financial burden. My *lolo*, grandfather, was a book keeper, my *lola*, grandmother, a laundry woman. One uncle was a laundry man and my other uncle and an aunt were still students.

My mother explained that she met my father because of the family tree; my dad's niece, Carmelita Arago, was married to my mom's second cousin, Ramon Lui. Ramon contacted my mom in March of 1968, telling her his *tatan*, uncle, from America was coming for a vacation and looking for a wife. My dad arrived for a thirty day vacation on March 15th and visited the same day. My mom describes him as dressed in "American" style with a tie, his bald head hot and sweaty. Since his plans were to marry my mom, his family came to see my mom and family two days later. He disclosed his intentions and asked for her hand after recounting his time in America. He talked about the years in the fields, his work at Mare Island, the divorce, and his search for a wife to care for him and his children when he grew old. My *lolo* was against the arrangement and complained to the family, "What? Do you want your sister to go away with that man from another country. He is a divorced man, have you no pride?" My *lola* said not a word and was sad because she too was against the arrangement.

My mom was satisfied with her life as a teacher in the Philippines and did not particularly want to leave. Her sister Nancy and her aunt were very much in favor of my mom marrying this man so that they could all go to America. Unbeknownst to the rest of the family, my unmarried aunt Nancy was pregnant and she pushed especially hard for my mother to consider leaving the Philippines because of her own

disgraceful situation. Her aunt even said "What are you waiting for? There is nothing here." My mom's friends also thought it was great, they advised her to get away from the Philippines because there was "nothing there," they were happy for her and thought she should marry and leave even if my father was old. My *lolo* finally said it was up to my mother to decide. She considered and decided that they were right, things would be better for her family in the United States, so even though she wanted to remain she went ahead and agreed to marry my father to help the family.

My parents were married two weeks later in Pasay City on the island of Luzon. They had a banquet in a Chinese restaurant but she did not tell all her friends because it would have cost too much. Instead she told many that she would marry my father in the United States. They took off for their honeymoon in Baguio the next day and were gone a week.

On their return, my father hung out in my mom's city for a while. My mom was embarrassed to be seen with my dad, she would pull her hands out of her grasp and tell him to walk behind her. He did not say anything and returned to the United States after his vacation ended and petitioned for my mom to come as his wife. He filed an affidavit of support through immigration in America and my mom was questioned at the American Embassy before being allowed to depart.

My mom's first experience on a plane was her trip to the United States in the summer of 1968. Prior to leaving she confided to her mother that she did not love this man and had no feelings for him. She was scared and cried the whole plane trip over. On arrival she noticed the lights in San Francisco and was fascinated by their brightness. She was greeted by my father and the children from the first marriage, my half-brothers and half-sisters. They returned to Vallejo, where my father's current home, with five bedrooms and reflecting his carpentry skills, was located. My father took her to Mare Island, where he was working, the next day and showed her off to his friends. He was proud. My mom cried a lot and says she was upset. She did know this man and kept telling herself that she did it for "them," her family.

She found everything new and easier in the United States after she adjusted. It was pretty, comfortable, and she had many conveniences including a washing machine, dishwasher, and vacuum cleaner. She did not have scrub the floor with coconut husks on her feet because she had a floor polisher. There were no mosquito nets to keep bugs always because bugs were not a problem. She noticed people ate out every payday, whereas she had to cook every day in the Philippines. Everything was much cheaper, too. She missed her family very much and noticed that people were not as close in America. She kept in touch with some of her friends and they told her they were happy for her.

After she had adjusted to America, my father suggested that she apply to work as a substitute teacher in Vallejo. She got the position and taught junior high level English and history. She noticed that students' behavior was different than in the Philippines. The students here would not listen to her and did not seem to care about school. She sent all her earnings back to her family. Later, after her temporary permit had expired, she was told she would have to go back to school if she wanted to continue teaching. She had already given birth to me and was pregnant with my sister so she decided not to continue. She would have had to commute to San Francisco State to continue and she did not know how to drive.

She waited three years to become a United States citizen in 1971. She passed the test and was sworn in with twenty other people a month later in Sacramento. She then petitioned for her mom and dad to come to the United States, filling out papers of support which promised the U.S. government that these individuals would not become a burden to the government. Her parents were questioned at the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines to confirm their relationship to my mother and after a one year wait they came by plane to San Francisco. My *lolo* worked in the canneries in Alaska for a while while my *lola* stayed with my mom in Vallejo, helping to care for my sister and me. My *lolo* and *lola* petitioned for my Uncle Jim, Uncle Sonny, and Aunt Nancy in 1972 and they all arrived in 1973. My Uncle Ben worked in the canneries in Alaska for a year and then became a field contractor near Fresno where my *lolo* worked for him. My Uncle Sonny found a job in a Japanese Tea, pruning plants and then joined the Navy. My *lola* and Aunt Nancy moved to a one bedroom apartment in San Francisco, later to be joined by my *lolo*. Now everyone of the family owns a house, a car (except for my aunt who does not drive), and all have jobs. Uncle Jim is still a contractor, Uncle Sonny is still in the Navy, Aunt Nancy works as a maid a big San Francisco hotel, and my *lolo* is retired and living with his second wife after my *lola* died in 1982.

When my mom and dad were first together during 1968 and 1969 they would go to a Masonic Temple in Oakland about twice a month for organizational gatherings with other Filipinos. My parents attended parties, meetings, dances, and banquets with other Filipinos that were organized by the Masonic Temple. My father also enjoyed watching big time wrestling, which my mother abhorred and they went to baseball games. The activity they particularly enjoyed was fishing, they went often because my father owned a boat.

When my father retired, my mom had to find work again and was eventually hired by Bank of America as a mail clerk. Later she found a job as an assembly person for Dee Laboratories. Except for the substitute work just after her arrival, my mom has not found employment related to her training and experience as a teacher, although she has an American modeled education she has not been able to teach.

One of her complaints about life here is that family lives far apart and only meets on special occasions and holidays instead of all the time. She misses the close family ties in the Philippines. From my own observations, here everyone does their own thing, I get no sense of the close ties I see in some other Filipino American families.

In conclusion, it has been fun and interesting to gather snippets of family history and put it together. I feel much further digging into my father's history is needed to have more complete picture of his emigration and life in America.

Three Generations of Immigration by Erin Rohde

When I first heard about this assignment, I literally cringed. I knew that doing this assignment would "open up a can of worms" - As with many Asian immigrants, there are a lot of hardships, lies, losses and trauma involved with immigrating. I knew the experience of interviewing my mother would be full of tears and heated debate. The tears would be due to the separation from her father and the arguing would be due to my frustration with my mother's inconsistencies, vagueness and secrecy in her story telling. Why not interview another family member, you may ask? Believe it or not I would get the most unedited version of my family's perils through my mother rather than through any of my other relatives. My other options are my grandmother Amy Chin, my Aunt Alice or Uncle Paul but from them I would get a story like, "I came over to America in 19--, worked hard and here I am, by the way remember to always respect your elders, your mother does so much for you, your father is no good, *slay bac-gwui* (damn white man or exactly interpreted as, dead white ghost.)" With these comments I would be rudely reminded of how comical it is that I am half white genetically, on the outside, but inside I am all Chinese. This is a complex subject to elaborate on, but I was raised with a strong Asian influence by all Asian people, my first languages being Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese. But without getting off the subject too much, I made a trip to my mother's house and diligently took notes while she was talking and held my tongue when I got aggravated.

The immigration of my family from China to America starts with my great grand-father. The story is a common one. The one factor that makes our family's story not so common is the birth of my mother. But I will elaborate on that later. My great grand-father on my mother's side was named Wa Juang Chun. His English name is not known. He was quite a character and not to mention adventurous. He grew up in Southern China in Toisan district. His family had only lived there for two generations. They had recently fled as refugees from former Manchuria. Needless to

say my great grand- father was Manchurian. The reason for fleeing was political prosecution in the late eighteenth century. My great grand-father lived in abject rural poverty in the village and when he was fifteen he sold himself to a white couple in Watsonville, California U.S.A. (Editor's note: This seems unlikely, probably he came on a credit ticket and someone arranged the position in Watsonville after his arrival.) He became their "house-boy." The couple was a young couple that ran a schoolhouse and had two small sons. My great grand-father seemed to benefit greatly from this move. He learned how to read and write in English, but ironically he never did become literate in Chinese.

Wa Juarng Chun learned to speak English fluently became an interpreter for the Chinese in the region and became very important in the small Chinese community. He also became very friendly with the police chief and with his protection and help from a few friends he opened up three underground gambling halls which turned out to be very prosperous. With the money he made from the gambling halls he purchased an orchard, canning factory and dry goods factory. The orchard employed about six hundred workers that were predominantly Mexican, Filipino and Japanese. The owners of these properties were Italian. Since Chinese couldn't own property at that time, the property stayed in the name of the previous owners. Lucky for my great grand-father, the couple didn't take advantage of him to cheat him out of any money or property.

My great grandfather married a pretty Chinese woman that had the misfortune to be barren. This was a huge problem, especially for a wealthy Chinese man in the promised land. The dilemma was great. They adopted a son, but it still wasn't the same, real heirs were needed with real bloodlines. Wife number one was understanding and allowed him to go back to China and acquire another wife for reproducing purposes only. There was only one condition, wife number two could never step foot in America. My great grandfather went back to his old village and picked the ugliest woman in the village to marry. His logic was that he didn't really like her and he knew nobody else would want her, so the paternity of her children would never be questioned. He had three kids with her. Two boys and one girl. The oldest was my grandfather Dick Chin. My grandfather came to America when he was about seven years old and wife number one raised him.

My grand-father Dick experienced a lot of discrimination. He still had a queue and was taunted endlessly for that. My grandfather and his adopted brother would stay up all night working as dealers at the underground gambling halls and rise early in the morning to patrol the orchards on horseback. Dick Chin attended University of Michigan and majored in electrical engineering and architectural engineering. High anti-Chinese sentiment prompted my great grand-father to move his whole family to San Francisco Chinatown. In Chinatown my great grand-father

and two friends built a Chinese theater. The building is still there on Grant (formerly Dupont St.) and Pacific. They also opened up a few restaurants. My grandfather married wife number one. The marriage was arranged and she was from Wisconsin. They had six kids (four daughters and two sons). Their names were; Mary, Benny, Betty, Lily, Tao, Paul (born in China). Then my great grandfather's first wife died. Shortly after her death there was the great stock market crash. My great grandfather lost a lot of money and was heartbroken and had a desire to die on "his soil". America had been good to him but he wanted to die and be buried in China.

So in the 1930's the whole family moved back to China, to the city of Canton. My grandfather became wealthy running and owning a construction business. He received a bid for the construction of the largest military school in that part of China. He also built the first real high-rise hotel. Dick's first wife died, the cause is unknown to me. He then married Amy Chew. Amy was no older than his oldest daughter and the marriage was arranged to pay off her step father's gambling debts. Amy was born and raised in America. She grew up in San Francisco Chinatown and had a sweetheart. She left for China when she was nineteen and ended up marrying my grandfather, then a rich old man. They had three daughters together, maybe four, (my mother's maternity is questionable).

My mother was born January twentieth, 1946, in the family house in Canton, China, at least that is what her papers say. This is where the story gets complicated. My mother claims to really have been born in San Francisco Chinatown, November eighteenth, 1946, to a mistress of her father's who happened to be Japanese. A third possibility is that my mother was born in Japan. My mother does not truthfully know her birthday. The main complication to these stories is my mother will change her mind every few years on which story is the real one. Imagine what havoc that caused me while growing up in nice stable, factual, politically correct America. When questioned too closely my mother gets very defensive. So the truth will never be known. I am used to growing up with a mother that has multiple parallel pasts. If I could get any three questions answered it would be, what is my mother's birthday? Who is my mother's mother? Where exactly was my mother born?

Right after my mother was born, her father received a bid to build an airport in Canton. Business was booming for him. It was late 1940's. My mother was called his "good luck charm." My mom and her dad were very close. My mother saw Amy around but never acknowledged her until years later during her exile in Hong Kong. Life was good all around, then started political unrest. My grandfather saw it coming. He had ten kids by now. He sent the four oldest to America, the next two were off attending Universities in China. He kept my mom by his side along with another daughter and sent Amy to Hong Kong with two daughters. Life started

getting really hard. There was a communist take over and he was jailed for being a "capitalist". Before he was jailed all his property was repossessed and he managed to send my mother off to Hong Kong with a family friend on her daughter's papers. The other daughter (number seven) became pregnant from the chauffeur (who was out to get money) and was kicked out of the house. She had a son but left him and escaped to Hong Kong to live with her mother, Amy, and other sisters. My mother saw her father for the last time when she was seven. She went to Hong Kong and met her "mother" Amy Chin. My mother also says she went to Macao, then Japan to visit with her grandparents.

Life in Hong Kong was lived in poverty. My mother was not used to the absence of a personal servant. She was also confused and home sick for her father. Amy was a stranger to her. She was told by people that Amy was her mother. After a few years in Hong Kong my mother's youngest sister Violet (number ten) died of a sickness. The death was unnecessary. If there was enough money to go to a doctor Violet could be alive today. Heart broken my mother, Amy, and two of her sister's escaped to America. My mom was twelve years old. They came to America on a ship. My mother couldn't remember what year, month or day it was. But she does remember that Bruce Lee was on that same ship and that he had a thing for some Spanish girl that was also on the same ship. They arrived in San Francisco and stayed with Aunt Dorris for one week. Aunt Dorris lived in an all white neighborhood on Filbert street. Aunt Dorris urged them to move on after one week because she was worried about image and the other inhabitants of the neighborhood being annoyed. They moved into a studio apartment on Washington St. that cost fifty-five dollars a month to rent. The studio had no refrigerator. The living conditions were poorer than my mother had endured before. At one time there was up to three people living in that studio. This may not sound bad, but for three formerly wealthy individuals this was drastic. They stayed there for about a year. My grandmother Amy Chin started working to earn her own living for the first time in her life working at a laundry. She then elevated their living conditions by applying to Ping Yuen. Ping Yuen is an apartment complex run by the government. The majority of the inhabitants are Asian. They got a one bedroom apartment on the sixth floor of the building on Pacific and Grant Street. This apartment came with a refrigerator, which was the best part. My mother was in a state of confusion during her first few years in America. She was enrolled into St. Mary's. She spent a year just sitting in the back of the classroom, not participating or understanding. Unfortunately there was no ESL program at that time. For junior high school she went to Francisco Jr. High. For high school she attended the infamous Galileo High School. At this point she started having lots of fun. She went to dances, acted in plays, played M.J. with a group of friends weekly, and baby-sat my cousins. My grandmother slept on the couch every night and was very strict with my mother. My mother learned English more fluently than all her sisters, brothers, mom, basically everyone in her family.

At the age of eighteen my mother left home and went to Los Angeles. She worked and went to school. A few years later she met my father and the rest is history. It has been forty years since my mother left China and Hong Kong. Although my mother has spent the majority of her life in America, those twelve years of her life have been the strongest in their effect on her life. A part of her will always want to return to a country full of her people, her food, her language and the place where she last saw her father.

Notes

1. Immigration is used here and throughout the book to refer to any permanent movement from other parts of the world to the United States, regardless of the legal basis for that movement.
2. The author has changed personal names, title is one provided by the editor.
3. Readers should be cautious about this explanation. Chinese were persecuted in parts of Mexico during and after the Mexican Revolution but the only American "leader" matching the description was General Pershing, who led an American force into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa in 1916. Pershing may have brought Chinese back with him, but the growth of the Chinese population in Texas was certainly more the result of other factors, including the proximity of a loosely controlled border.
4. Names have been changed at the request of the author.
5. Names have been changed at the request of the author.

RETURN TO TABLE OF CONTENTS