

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

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

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

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

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

SS: Did many of them work in the orchards?

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

MLL: Not too many orchards in Walla Walla.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SS: Was that his first time here?

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

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

30:02

MLL: A quarter acres of land, maybe.

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

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

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

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

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

SS: It was all farming?

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

MLL: Living in the village there.

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