

Ping Fong Jr.
University of Central Arkansas - Conway, AR

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Interviewer: Dr. Zach Smith, University of Central Arkansas

Transcription: Kaden Hendrick, University of Central Arkansas

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Project: Arkansas Chinese Heritage Project

[Begin Ping Fong Jr. Interview]

00:00:00

Dr. Zach Smith: All right, hello, this is Dr. Zach Smith. I'm here with University of Central Arkansas's Center for Chinese Language and Culture. The date is June 13th, 2023. And I'm here on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas to interview Mr. Ping Fong Jr. to talk to him about his Chinese heritage and his experiences growing up in Arkansas. So to start, Mr. Fong, would you please state your name, when you were born, and the town you were born, for the record?

00:00:33

Ping Fong Jr.: Okay, my name is Ping Fong Jr. I am 80 years old. I was born in Memphis, Tennessee.

00:00:43

ZS: And what was your birthdate, do you mind sharing?

00:00:44

PF: May 2nd, 1943.

00:00:46

ZS: Okay, fantastic. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. I guess I just wanted to start by learning maybe how and when your family came to the U.S.

00:00:59

PF: Okay. It might help if I showed you this document when my father came to the United States. I have several documents here which I will leave with you because I made copies. His name, when he came over, was not Ping Fong Sr., but Hong Sheu Pong. And sometime later, he

changed his name to Ping Fong. He came over, really, as a young boy, 14 years old. And he was sent over to work, go to school, and earn a living, and then send money back to China so that their families could participate in that income. And I have documents here that I copied for you, which actually my niece found that showed some immigration papers, and it might be of interest to you to see those. Let me see this, he changed his name in 1952 to Ping Fong. Hong Sheu Pong, I don't know why he felt that that was not acceptable, but he changed it to another name that was phonetically translatable. And here's a document that says when he was born. So my father came over early, I guess my grandfather sent him over to work and send money back, and perhaps it was at a time where it was difficult to earn a living in China, so they felt like the land of opportunity could provide more income.

I think many of the people that came over at that time, many of them were young, and they came in and were received by an older family to show them the ropes and also to learn the language. And I think people like my dad probably came over and only had maybe one or two years of schooling and then they became employed, either in the grocery store or department store, and then went back to find a wife, and so in my dad's case he went back and married my mom, and my oldest sister was born in China, and then my mom, when she came over to America, she brought my oldest sister, who was around two years old at the time.

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ZS: So I see in these documents, for the oral record, he was born in July 6, 1909. Do you know about what year he would have first come over to the U.S.?

00:04:06

PF: Yes, I have a document that shows when he immigrated, in fact I'm going to leave this with you as well, but here, in fact here are his entry papers. This was written or compiled by my niece. So the language that you see is in her first case presentation, and she, interesting enough when they were children, my niece wasn't interested in any of the heritage, but then as she got older, she wanted to find out, and I think that happens to probably a lot of families, especially if they were immigrants in this case. So she researched this, I didn't even have this document until she presented it, but she wrote this, probably initially for the benefit of her mother, who's no

longer living now, but it shows that, one of these shows, I can't see it upside down, but it shows that he entered the country when he was 14, is that 14, 14 years old?

00:05:30

ZS: Yeah, it looks like he arrived on November 14, 1923, which would have been when he was 14, yeah, in Seattle, Washington.

00:05:38

PF: Okay, then later, he would travel back and forth to China, and eventually he married my mom, and so this shows that my oldest sister came over when she was about two or three years old, so I'd be happy to leave this copy with you if that's of value.

00:06:06

ZS: So when your dad first came over, was he the first member of his family to come to the U.S.?

00:06:14

PF: By conversation, I'm told that my grandfather came over, but when he went back, he stayed back in China, whereas my father's generation came over, they may have debated when or not to go back to China, but most of the people that I grew up with, when they came over in my father's generation, they stayed, partly perhaps when the children were born in the U.S., they probably would have rebelled if they had to go back to China.

00:06:57

ZS: So when your dad came over, did he initially come to the south, to Memphis or Mississippi or Arkansas?

00:07:05

PF: The papers will show that he was helped by a family in Lake Village, Arkansas, but then I was told that he had spent some time in St. Louis, okay, before he eventually arrived in Arkansas. There was a family that we would go visit, and I remember as a child, that family

appeared to be a sponsor, and this was the Man Fong family in Marianna, Arkansas, and so I remember early that we had a store in Brickeys, Arkansas. Brickeys a population of maybe 60 people, and we had a house across the street from this business, and by the way, that building is still standing, and it was a brick building, and it may have a marquee that says Fong's Groceries, and I'd say that, eventually, I think it would just decay and just disappear. So my dad was in partnership with three or four other families, I believe in reading the documents. I knew of one family that he was a partner with, but then these documents would say that he was partnered with probably a total of four families.

About 19, let's see, 19, I think I was four years old, so that would be 1948, he moved the family to Hughes, and we lived in the back of the store, and I wanted to show you this photo of our store around 1947 or 1948, because I was about four or five years old, and so the store was not a self-service store, as you see these days, but we had all the merchandise behind the counter, and when the customers wanted something, they would tell us or they would point to the item and then we'd pull it out of the shelf. Now, this store probably didn't have a lot of volume throughout, because it would take all this time to pull the items off the shelf, and my mom told me that when I was four years old, I was already checking customers out, and I was working the adding machine. It wasn't on a cash register that would automatically add up. You were adding, and then you had to pull the lever, and whatever.

00:10:19

ZS: Did any of your other family members work in the store?

00:10:22

PF: We all worked in the store, we all lived in the back of the store until my dad found enough money to build a house, and he built the house in Hughes, which is just about, you know, two miles down the road (from the store), and interesting, I think in Brickeys when he was partnered with the other families in Brickeys when they had the store, there was a flood, maybe it flooded a number of times before they built the Mississippi levee. So when he moved to Hughes, because he experienced flooding in the one-story house in Brickey's, he decided he would build a two-story house, so that would minimize the danger of any flooding. So if you

drive through Hughes on Third Street, you would see our house, which is now surrounded by all these other houses, they're all one story, but our house is two stories, and it was like one of the first houses on that block.

So he built the house. The store which we occupied, and we lived in the back of the store until he built the house, was owned by a family, the Wise family in Hughes, and the R. B. Wise family owned quite a bit of property, rental property, I believe that they owned all the buildings along that area, like four buildings, they built it all, rented it out, and I remember Mrs. R. B. Wise, she was really a nice lady, and it appeared that each of the families, I know in our case, there was this one family that seemed to care for our families, so they became not necessarily sponsors, but kind of helping our family get along in the community.

00:12:41

ZS: And is that the Man Fong family?

00:12:43

PF: Well, Man Fong was in Marianna, but in Hughes, this landlord, Mrs. R. B. Wise, would help our family with things, like I would go over to her house, and she would treat us to dinner and things like that.

00:13:01

ZS: And she was not Chinese.

00:13:02

PF: No, she was not Chinese, she was not Chinese.

00:13:08

ZS: So help me with the timeline. So you were born in Memphis, and at that time, your dad owned a store in Brickeys.

00:13:16

PF: Yes, and my oldest sister, and by the way, we were spread out three years apart. My oldest sister, Carolyn, but her original name was Yit Jun, she was born in China, then number two sister was born in Brickeys, because that's where the store was, number three sister was born in Brickeys, and by the time I came along, I guess they felt like it was going to be a boy, so he had to be born in a hospital, so I was born in a hospital in Memphis. But we were living in Brickeys at the time, so Brickeys was nine miles away from Hughes, where my dad moved the business from. Well he escaped the partnership in Brickeys and then became his own owner in Hughes. So Memphis was like 30 miles away (from Hughes), so this was from Brickeys, it would be like 40 miles away (from Memphis).

00:14:25

ZS: So the store in Brickeys he had in partnership with another Chinese family, or maybe these four Chinese families.

00:14:32

PF: Yeah, evidently there were four, but then, as I remember, there were only two, but the four may have been earlier in time.

00:14:43

ZS: So when he opened the store in Hughes, had there been a Chinese grocery store there previously? Did he buy it from someone else?

PF: No, he rented the building from the R. B. Wise, who built this line of businesses, and another one would have been a department store, another one would have been a drug store, it was like a mall.

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ZS: And what was the name of the store?

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PF: Ping Fong Groceries. It was on a marquee above the store, but that building is no longer visible.

00:15:23

ZS: So what were some of your earliest memories of the store? You mentioned you started working there pretty young, age four. What all other kind of tasks did you do at the store?

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PF: Well, when I was young, I would help stock the shelves, I would play in the store. As I mentioned, I actually was cashier. My mom told me I was cashiering when I was four, but I really don't remember that very well. My sisters now, it's interesting, they each had a, I think Lucy's family, she remembers this too, each of my sisters had a way to collect the cash from, they may have a box, might have been a cigar box, but they had money that they would make change out of that box. So I think my parents gave them a percentage of the money that ended up as profits from the store. I never got to that point where I was handling the money as a percentage. But when my dad died, I was only, as I mentioned, 10 or 11, I don't remember exactly. I had to go back and check. But by then, I was no longer working in the store. But then later on, I would help my cousins as part-time help or stocking shelves in my time after school.

And they would pay me, I think, around a quarter an hour or fifty-cents an hour, whatever the going rate was.

00:17:23

ZS: That's right. Yeah. And what kind of goods did the store sell? Do you remember things that people, it was just kind of a little bit of everything, or-

00:17:32

PF: Well, dry goods, and he had a meat counter in the back, but he would cut his own meat. I mean, you wouldn't have any pre-packaged meat. I don't think there were even pre-packaged sandwich meat. I remember big loaves of, let's say, lunch meat, and he would slice it per the request of the customer, how much they wanted. And I do remember slicing the meat. I remember a big butcher block where he would buy, let's say, a half-loin of beef, and he would cut it and slice it with a hand saw. I kind of remember, maybe he had an electric saw that would slice a steak to size. It was all pretty much hand-done.

00:18:33

ZS: Yeah, hand-done. Right, his labor.

00:18:36

PF: He would mix, he would have a grinder that would put the beef in, and he would make hamburger himself. Now, interesting enough, he would make a hamburger, like today, you buy hamburger, you buy the percentage of fat, right, or the percentage of lean, and so if you buy something like 80 percent, it wouldn't have as much fat in it as if you bought something with 70 percent. So my dad, when he sold hamburger meat, he would put more fat in the meat that he sold, but when he made hamburgers for ourselves, he would put less fat in the mix.

00:19:16

ZS: Just to be-

00:19:17

PF: Well, just because it was a higher quality mix.

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ZS: Yeah, what do you remember about the kind of customers who shopped in the store?

00:19:32

PF: Oh, okay. Our store was, even though it was a town that was around 2,000 or 2,500, depending on the year, but it was around that number. There was a railroad track that went between our store and the other stores, and we were on the side of the track that, down the street, were a lot of the Black people's homes. At that time, the schools were still segregated, so we went to the Caucasian school, the American Caucasian schools, where, as I understand, some of the people raised in Mississippi, the Chinese had to go to the Black schools. But our store was located kind of at the border of the Caucasians or other nationalities and the Blacks. Interesting, as a kid, I had a newspaper route, and I would ride the bicycle down and distribute the papers to the Black community. It didn't bother me, because the crime rate was really nil. The Blacks were very friendly. We got along. Our customers, I would say, was 99% Black. Occasionally, you would have a Caucasian person come. Of course, all the delivery people from the warehouses would deliver stock, and they were white predominantly.

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ZS: But the majority of the customers at your store were Black customers, and you were positioned on literally sort of the railroad tracks. People talk about wrong side of the tracks or whatever. There literally was a railroad track.

00:21:37

PF: Literally, actually, was a railroad track. I think more Blacks were on one side of the track than the other side, but if you drew a line across the railroad track, pretty much predominantly the Blacks were on that side of the track, but the track really cut through both sides of the city. There was not exactly the railroad tracks separating the Blacks from the whites. It was kind of cut this way, the track was this way, but the Blacks were on both sides of the track. It was more maybe separated by a highway, by the main street, as opposed to the railroad track. But it was certainly visible, I think more visible from the main road as opposed to the railroad track.

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ZS: I see. And so, did anyone else work in the store other than members of your immediate family?

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PF: No, we did not hire any outsiders. I think at that time the family felt that they wouldn't trust any outsiders. Perhaps the family had children, and they expected that the children would be enough help for the stores.

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ZS: And you were the youngest, right?

00:23:03

PF: I was the youngest.

00:23:04

ZS: So you had three older sisters, and then you.

00:23:07

PF: Two now are gone, so it's just the sister that's three years older than I am, that are still living.

00:23:16

ZS: And can you go ahead and tell me their names?

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PF: The oldest, okay, let me tell you the story first. On the papers, you'll notice that her name was Yit Jun, initially Yit Jun, when she was born.

00:23:34

ZS: And can you spell it?

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PF: Y-I-T, I say J-U-N, it may be spelled Y-U-N in the papers, but that's how it phonetically was spelled, Yit Jun, Fong Yit Jun. The names typically coming over, the family name was first, and then the first name was last. But we quickly adopted the first name first and the family name last. So her name was Yit Jun, number two sister, her name was Ping Shong. She was born in Brickeys, Arkansas. And then the third sister, Hing, was Yit Hing Fong, and then I was

the fourth. We were spread out three years apart. But Yit Jun, when she became older, she didn't like her name, so she changed it to Carolyn. So when people ask me my family's name, I tell her that, well, we had four, three of us were born over here, my sister Ping Shong, my sister Hing, and I were born over here, Ping Shong Fong, Hing Fong, and Ping Fong Jr. My oldest sister was born in China, her name was Carolyn, but I get a chuckle out of that.

00:25:11

ZS: Did she ever talk about why she wanted to be known as Carolyn?

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PF: I guess she felt like really an outsider, and at that time maybe she was one of the early kids in the community. She may have felt out of place. I don't know. I could ask my number three sister, my sister, why, but she may not even remember herself.

00:25:44

ZS: Was there- So for this project we've talked to a lot of individuals who have very Americanized names, you know, Frank, Joe. Was there any particular reason why, did your parents ever kind of talk to you all about why they wanted all of you to have Chinese names and to use your Chinese names?

00:26:09

PF: Well interesting, my Chinese character is not phonetically Ping Fong. The concept of junior may have been ingrained in the south. I think there are juniors in the south, but in the north there are not juniors.

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ZS: Yeah, not to the same extent I don't think.

00:26:32

PF: Perhaps in my father's generation, he may have felt that he was in this bridge where he may have gone back to China. His father, my grandfather, who I never met, when they came over, they were (here for awhile), and when they went back to China, they stayed.

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So I was going to ask, did your family maintain any contact with the kind of branch of the family still in China?

00:27:04

PF: Oh yeah, because my parents came over, they also had family back in China, because my dad came over by himself as a kid. And then the rest of his family stayed in China until later, even when I was in grade school, I remember that my family began to help bring the rest of the family over. So they came over later, later. Now over time, some of the other family members had businesses, and some did quite well. And I remember my aunt, who was one of the youngest family members of my dad's family, she married a physician over in Hong Kong. And as I recall, when I became more aware of the family members in China, they all escaped, let's say, Communist China, and they were now living in Hong Kong. So I did visit them. The only time I've been in Hong Kong was like 1959, when my mother went back to visit her father. And my mom had been over in the U.S. 25 years before she went back even one time to go visit her family.

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ZS: So do you know where in China your father and mother's family were from, kind of originally?

00:28:55

PF: Yeah, the village is considered Guangdong, which I think is now Canton. I think they call it Canton. But they call it Guangdong, and Cheung Sha is another name that comes out in this document. I'm going to leave it with you. Cheung Sha, I don't know if Cheung Sha was like a county or what, but Guangdong, I think, may have been a city and my mom described that before she came over to the U.S. as a mother, that they had no vehicle, they had no cars. So, wherever she went, she had to walk. And when she came over, she didn't know anything about America. I think she came in through Seattle. I don't know how my dad retrieved her, maybe they went by train or something. So, she landed in this town of Brickeys, Arkansas, a little house in the middle of nowhere, where she grew up in a big bustling city and I guess she was shocked. She told me that her first encounter with a Black guy was, my dad was out of town, let's say Marianna. This guy lost his direction, so he knocked on the door and my mom was just shocked because she saw this Black man. She had never seen a Black man before, right? So, that shocked the heck out of her. She told me that story sometime along the way.

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ZS: And so, first of all, her name was?

00:31:02

PF: Seid Mei Yen. Seid is a family name. Some people call it Sit, as S-I-T. So, there are several different translations of the alphabet.

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ZS: And how did she spell her full name?

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PF: Seid, M-E-I, S-E-I-D, M-E-I, Y-E-N, Fong. Seid Mei Yen Fong is how she wrote her name. Sometime later, maybe she wrote it in Mrs. Ping Fong, but on her papers she would be Seid Mei Yen.

00:31:46

ZS: Yeah. So, did your father continue- Because originally you said he came over to send money back to China. I'm sure it became more difficult once he had a family of his own, but did he still continue to send back money or letters?

00:32:02

PF: I don't know as far as the money part. I think when he started raising the family, he probably, if it were money, he probably didn't send much. There were, some money value that's described in that document I'm leaving you that talked about how much the business earned and how much profit they had. I found that kind of interesting. But it was almost like the whole year revenue was like \$9,000, \$10,000 or whatever. But back then, that was worth a lot of money.

00:32:43

ZS: Yeah! Well, with a family of four kids, I can imagine it still only goes so far. So, you also mentioned your family kind of helped other members of the extended family use the word escape kind of, especially kind of, I assume, during the Civil War and kind of after the Communists started to take over. Did your father or anyone in your family kind of, were they involved in politics in China at all?

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PF: I don't believe so. They had help from a lawyer, I think in Memphis, his name was Bunker, B-U-N-K-E-R, and he helped to bring over, with the right papers, he helped bring over other

relatives. And many of those relatives stayed at our place, some helped in the store, but then they were then assigned to other grocery store relatives to help in their store. Let's say if a relative didn't have their family over, but my family brought over somebody, we would- And there would be relatives or some distant relatives, they would assign that person to help in another relative's store until things got settled, until that relative got old enough that he could have his own business. So it's kind of a domino effect where one family helped bring over other members of the family and that expanded the businesses.

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ZS: And was it always, because it seems like there's a pretty extensive network, basically, of placing people. Is it all connected to a family relationship, or was simply being a Chinese immigrant, kind of, and being able to speak the language enough?

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PF: Depending on the community, there may have been different family names. I brought a copy of this for you. In our town, in our town, we had a number of Fong families, and these were the family's children. Let's say my first cousin generation. So these people were born from families who were, let's say, my parents' generation. And so I kept a track, and I have a yearbook which I mentioned that I have that I didn't bring. Actually, it's at a friend's house, so I've got to retrieve it. But these were the years that they graduated from high school. So I graduated in 1961. These people, see, they all are deceased, except for just a couple. My sister and then this one person, Mayo, my sister, Ping Shong's age. She's still alive, and she's in California. And so the Fong family had, in that directory, the stores. Most of them were Fongs, so that would tell you that there was kind of a clan association community. In another town, it might have been more diverse, but I believe that in that time where my dad had the store, we probably had as many Chinese merchants than any other in Arkansas at one time.

00:36:56

ZS: In Hughes.

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PF: In Hughes. And all along the Mississippi River on the east side of Arkansas, on the west side of the Mississippi River, you would find a Chinese business establishment in a lot of many of the towns along that corridor.

00:37:18

ZS: Yeah. So you had mentioned earlier that kind of in the public schools, there was probably at least one Chinese student in almost every grade of the school. Is that right?

00:37:28

PF: Yeah.

00:37:29

ZS: Do you have a sense of how many families there were total living in Hughes?

00:37:33

PF: I counted at one time 10 or 11. 10 or 11.

00:37:41

ZS: Yeah. So did you have any classmates in your class who were also Chinese?

00:37:48

PF: No, not in my class. The closest one was probably Laura. So she was like, she's two years older than I am. And then my sister was three years older.

00:38:04

ZS: Right.

00:38:07

PF: And then in the next community though, like in Marianna, there was one family that I think had 12, maybe the largest family that I can recall. And that number 12 may be wrong. I need to go back and count, I forget. But there was a younger- The youngest was like two years younger than I was. And we were, because he was the youngest in the family at let's say 12, he really didn't work in the store because, in their store, because there were older siblings that were there. And so he, like me, when I didn't have to be in the store because my dad or my mom sold the business, we both gravitated to sports. And so we were very active in the school community and he and I competed in various sports. Whereas my wife, Lucy, her family, the kids really never were able to compete in the sports because they still operated the business. And so the parents really required them to work in supporting the business because they didn't hire outside help. Although I think Lucy's family did have one very dedicated Black man that packed a weapon, so he really helped defend the family. I don't know if they paid him or not. I'm sure they compensated him.

00:39:59

ZS: Yeah. So I definitely want to get back to sports and school stuff in a second. Before I go, I want to ask a couple other questions about connections to other Chinese families in the area. Because I know it was around this time that the Chinese Association of Arkansas was founded in 1943, I believe.

00:40:27

PF: Yes.

00:40:29

ZS: Was your family at all involved in that organization or formerly part of any other kind of community organization of Chinese Americans?

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PF: Yes. I would say yes. I'm going to give you this document that represented the association that started in 1943 in Pine Bluff. This document is an invitation to attend an annual meeting, but notice that this was dated 2011, but it's the 68th annual meeting. As you backtrack, they started in 1943, and I had a photo. I guess I don't have it now. But this list of members in that year, 2011, I expanded the list, so I'm going to give you this copy. In this list, the names Leland and this other name that I want to add as a contact for you, Joe Dan Yee, is still mayor of Lake Village.

00:41:48

ZS: His store is still open, too, I believe.

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PF: No, I think his store just recently closed. I have to ask somebody if it's still available, but I do have a photo of his storefront. He came to that meeting in Pine Bluff. Those are the only two names. Oh, Dr. Lum. Dr. Don Lum. He's on your list, also.

00:42:18

ZS: As far as you know, your family was involved in the early days of the Chinese Association of Arkansas?

00:42:27

PF: Yeah, it doesn't show up here, but I think somewhere earlier than this... see, my dad died 1950... let's see, 1953 or 1954. I have a picture of his headstone, and my mom's headstone, that I have somewhere. But it was around that time that he died. I was 10 years old, so let's say 1943, that would mean 1954, right? Or 1955, one of those.

00:43:10

ZS: So, did you have any memories of attending, like, any events from...?

00:43:15

PF: No, at that time... I think after my dad died, I don't think my mom... I don't think she ever drove to Pine Bluff, so we never went there. Some of my cousins went there, though. This name, Gin Fong. He was an older cousin from Hughes.

00:43:40

ZS: Do you remember any other social events? Like, would your family ever go to any kind of get-together with other Chinese families?

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PF: My dad... well, our dad closed his store. He did not operate his store on Sunday. Some of the other families worked all seven days. I think Wednesday or Thursday, he closed the store for half a day, and we would go to Memphis as a family to shop. The girls would go to shop all afternoon, and my dad and I would go see a movie, and we would have a pit barbecue

sandwich. Back then, I mean, they'd chop the barbecue. There would be a window from the outside that you could look in, and you could see the meat cooking in the store. And the smell would come out, and we'd go in, and we'd enjoy a barbecue sandwich, and then go see a movie.

00:44:51

ZS: Yeah. Did you do this often, to go see a movie in Memphis?

00:44:57

PF: Usually on a Wednesday, but we didn't go to Memphis every Wednesday. It was only maybe once a month that we went. And sometimes we'd go to the zoo as our entertainment. And we didn't have a... I don't think we had a drive-in movie. There was a movie house, and one that I recall even... My dad also owned a farm. He was basically a sharecropper, was the term. The local people would farm the land, and he would pay them one quarter, one quarter of the profits, I believe. This was the sharecropper percentage. He kept 75%. Or maybe he kept a quarter, and he'd pay the sharecroppers, distribute 75%. So he came out. He kept a fourth. So, getting back to the family gatherings, I recall going out to the farm, where he had the sharecroppers dig a hole, butcher two hogs, and barbecued them in this pit. And then, at this time, all the Chinese people that he invited would come to Hughes, where he rented a Chinese movie, had it played in the movie house as part of the entertainment.

And he did this at least one time that I remember. I don't know how many times he did it, because I was really young at the time. But I do remember a lot of people, and I remember these pigs in the farm. One time, I remember that we were driving out to see the farm plots, and we would walk out, and we'd go through this cornfield, and in the middle of this cornfield, the sharecroppers had planted a garden. And I remember my dad getting really upset, because it took some of the farm property and kept it growing their own vegetables. You know how these memories just flash when you've got me talking about this.

00:47:37

ZS: But your dad would, on occasion, host dinner and a movie, it sounds like. He'd screen a Chinese film at a theater, and then host it.

00:47:46

PF: I wouldn't expect that he charged everybody, but I don't know.

00:47:52

ZS: So, okay, we've talked a little bit about food. I kind of want to talk about Chinese culture more broadly in your home, or I guess also in the store. So, I assume both of your parents spoke Chinese at home?

00:48:15

PF: Yes, we did.

00:48:16

ZS: And everyone in the family pretty much spoke Chinese to one another?

00:48:20

PF: Yeah, Cantonese.

00:48:21

ZS: Cantonese, okay.

00:48:23

PF: Well, the kids, my siblings, we all spoke English. As far as I can remember, we spoke English among ourselves, but when we spoke to our parents, we spoke Chinese.

00:48:38

ZS: Did they speak English?

00:48:41

PF: Well, my dad spoke better English than my mom, so it was kind of broken English.

00:48:50

ZS: Did you ever have to serve as translators between your parents and members of the community, or could they mostly get by?

00:48:59

PF: Each of the families that had kids probably helped their parents with certain words, but my mom, she read the Wall Street Journal later on. I don't know if she read it when we were in Hughes. My dad, he was very industrious. I look at that, and he was more of an entrepreneur than I ever was. He had the store. I'm digressing a little bit, I know. He had the store, he had the farm, and he invested in the market. I think today, even back then, I think he did much better than I did in the market. Of course, back then, the blue chip stocks, he bought at a time where it just skyrocketed.

00:50:07

ZS: How did he know? Were there Chinese newspapers that followed the stock market, or was he reading?

00:50:15

PF: I don't know that. I do know that they did have Chinese newspapers. My dad seemed to have adopted the American way. He entered lotteries. I remember, he entered a contest, he won a TV set. The TV set back then was like that size of a screen, maybe seven or eight inches in diameter. I remember only a couple of shows. I remember Hopalong Cassidy, or maybe.

00:50:52

ZS: So, you're still mostly speaking Cantonese with your parents at home. Did your parents practice any other important traditions or any other family practices that were related to their Chinese culture or heritage?

00:51:15

PF: Well, Dad actually did take some time. Maybe it was Wednesday afternoon when the stores were closed. He held a Chinese school in our house where many of the Chinese kids came to our house where he tried to teach us the Chinese language. I probably rebelled, and all I wanted to do was play at that time. At that time I was probably seven or eight, because he died when I was ten. But I do remember those classes. I probably did attend, but I really didn't want to.

00:52:11

ZS: Were your parents religious at all?

00:52:14

PF: I think they were probably Buddhist. I'm just guessing they were Buddhist. But when they came to America, they didn't practice, they didn't go to church. But the kids went to church, probably encouraged by the friends. So all of my sisters and I were baptized Southern Baptists.

00:52:44

ZS: Were your parents mostly okay with y'all attending church?

00:52:48

PF: Yeah, they seemed like they were fine. Now, as far as a custom, and this was not common among all the families, but my parents, well, my dad died before I was older. My mom, I think there was an expectation that we would marry within the Chinese population. In other communities, that was not the case. But in Hughes, I think there was an expectation, and if that did not happen, the parents really got angry. So I remember my mom, when my sister, Hing, married a Caucasian. She wouldn't come out of her home for three days. She was so upset. But when their grandchild was born, it was fine. So as time went on, she loved those grandkids just as much as any grandkid.

00:54:06

ZS: Was your sister Hing- Did your other siblings end up marrying other Chinese or Chinese Americans?

00:54:12

PF: Yeah, the first two, Carolyn and Ping Shong, married Chinese, and I married Chinese. Somehow, let's say my generation, the youngest of the group, it was kind of mixed. Some married Caucasian, some married, and some didn't marry. For some reason, whatever, I felt like that I needed to carry on the heritage. Maybe that's why I'm doing this. I don't know. I can't explain it.

00:54:53

ZS: You don't have to answer this, but was it important to you that your own children married other Chinese?

00:55:05

PF: We left that up to them. I think that our son didn't get married until he was 40. We didn't think he was ever going to get married, but we left it up to him. We didn't divert any of his beliefs. Interesting, we never demanded that he go to church. Eventually, he decided that he was going to go to a Baptist church. When he married Mu Yun, they went to the Chinese church in Salt Lake City. That's where he is now.

00:55:57

ZS: Is it a Chinese Baptist church or just another Christian denomination?

00:56:02

PF: It's just a Christian denomination.

00:56:06

ZS: I have a couple more questions about Chinese culture at home. You mentioned food. We have pit barbecues, we have barbecue sandwiches. Did your family ever eat Chinese food at home?

00:56:21

PF: Predominantly. We would have rice pretty much every day. In the store, they bought things from the wholesale house. We had all kinds of food, but they would order Chinese supplies from either Chicago or San Francisco who had merchants that specifically, you know, had Chinese goods. They would be shipped either by rail or by bus or trucks to get to the

community. They would order food periodically. We would always have Chinese greens. My mom had a garden, she also raised chickens in the backyard in Hughes.

00:57:30

ZS: Part of the vegetables she would have grown herself and then some of the other ingredients you sourced from other people. Do you have any particular dishes that you really remember eating as a child?

00:57:44

PF: The Chinese vegetables would be cooked with meat. Generally, they would be flavored with some of the Chinese spices, the soy sauce. Any specific dishes? While I grew up, all I wanted to eat were hamburgers. There were some unique dishes like this cured duck. I think Lucy mentioned this flat duck to you. It was cured and it would taste like Virginia ham. I don't know if you have Virginia ham. In the Carolinas, they specialize in this. It's not something that you would eat like a ham steak. It's really salty.

00:58:39

ZS: Oh, yes. I know exactly what you're talking about.

00:58:44

PF: You can get it at Cracker Barrel. Cracker Barrel has this ham that's really salty.

00:58:50

ZS: My folks just call it country ham.

00:58:54

PF: Country Ham that's what it is. I think you can buy a whole half shank at Kroger. So you've had it before.

00:59:01

ZS: Yeah. So this flat duck was kind of similar, like a salted duck?

00:59:05

PF: Yeah, it was cured. Mom would cure it, just like Lucy described, and hang it up and let the oil drip. It's a flat duck. But it would then be cut up in pieces or sections, sometimes cooked in a pot, in a pot with rice. And the meat, this chunk of meat, would be put on top of the rice after the rice had cooked halfway, where the water has disappeared in the pot. And then the rest of the steam would cook the duck. And then this flavor of duck would be immersed in the rice. That I could consider a unique dish.

00:59:53

ZS: Did you ever, did your family ever sell any Chinese goods or food to the customers in the store, or was it just for your family?

01:00:05

PF: At that time, we probably did not have any Chinese groceries. I think they were all ordered through the wholesale houses like out of Memphis. That would be the quickest supplier. And maybe they would go to Pine Bluff on occasion. I do remember my mom and I going to Memphis to a butcher shop and buying a side of beef. And then she would just cut it up at home. This was when I was able to drive.

01:00:54

ZS: The customers that came to your store, could they ever buy a cured duck?

01:01:00

PF: No. They never sold any Chinese goods. Like I said, predominantly they were 99% Black.

01:01:09

ZS: Did your folks ever cook any American food? Did you ever get those hamburgers at home?

01:01:29

PF: Oh yeah. Dad would mix up the hamburger and we did as long as we had the store. He would grind up an equivalent of 80% lean and then mom would cook it in the back. We lived in the back of the store until dad was comfortable in building this two-story house in Hughes. So I think we moved in when I was maybe in second grade. Maybe? Because that would have been... when I was eight years old in second grade. So he's still living.

01:02:08

ZS: And in the new house, what was the biggest difference from moving from the back of the store to your own house?

01:02:19

PF: What was the difference? I guess it was quieter.

01:02:27

ZS: Did you have your own room?

01:02:33

PF: Oh yeah. I had my own room but the girls shared a room. We had a TV. Mom and dad had a room. The garage, it was just a carport. In fact, I've driven back to see it. It's still a carport. Let's see, what else? Basement was unfinished but the kitchen was downstairs with the bedrooms upstairs and we did have a living room. No air conditioning initially and the only air conditioning eventually was just one room air conditioning. There was a large fan that was in the store that cooled the store before the store was air conditioned. The big fan was like six feet by six feet. He embedded that into the house. So at night he would turn the fan on. The fan blew out so the windows in the house were open so it would draw in the air from the outside.

01:03:41

ZS: So I want to ask, there's a couple more questions about the store and then maybe talk a bit about school and community. And if we need to take a break, just let me know. So I know your dad passed away and then your family continued to run the store for a little bit afterwards?

01:04:06

PF: A little bit after that until she could find a buyer. So that's when my first cousin from Holly Grove came out to help so he could support my mom in the store. Maybe my sisters worked in the store as well. But I didn't do much because I wasn't old enough to. I never cut meat. I never sliced meat. I did stock the shelves. At some point the store went from this to self-service. And I think my dad was involved at that time before he died because I remember the store when my mom sold it. There were shelves in the middle and then the ones on the counter, some of those were accessible.

01:05:02

ZS: And then the buyers who bought the store-

01:05:10

PF: They came from New York.

01:05:12

ZS: Okay, and did your family know them somehow beforehand?

01:05:14

PF: No, we didn't know them. I don't recall that they were related at all. They came through maybe recommendations or maybe they read the ad, the Chinese ad.

01:05:28

ZS: So they were another Chinese family who came down and bought the store. Do you know how long the store stayed in business?

01:05:37

PF: I knew that they were still in business when the youngest kid graduated from Hughes. I don't know what happened to the family. In 1961 when I left high school, I left the community basically in '61. But when I would come back to visit, they were still running the store. So they at least had the store for 10 or 15 years. But eventually, I don't know when this was, maybe in the Martin Luther King days, those stores began to disappear.

01:06:28

ZS: Yeah. Well, I'm sure there are a lot of factors involved.

01:06:32

PF: Yeah, a lot of factors involved.

01:06:34

ZS: And so your mom, I mean, how did she support four kids after selling the store?

01:06:41

PF: Well, she had Social Security. She had rent from the farm. She had stocks. So basically, she retired before she was 50 and then supported each of us through college. But see, she invested in AT&T, American Airlines, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco. She invested in the blue chip stocks back then when they were just skyrocketing.

01:07:17

ZS: And was able to basically support all of her kids just on that incomet. Wow.

01:07:24

PF: Yeah, no, not everyone went through four years of college, but all of us went through some college. After my bachelor's degree, I told her that I don't want to be supported anymore. So I went on and got two more masters.

01:07:44

ZS: So, okay., I've been telling you we're gonna talk about- we got back into school so I want to ask a couple of quick questions about school, so. You mentioned that you were big into sports. What sports did you play?

01:07:56

PF: I played basketball and I ran track. My mom refused to let me play football because she felt that I would get hurt. And I rebelled for a little bit, but then I accepted it. And now looking back, I'm glad I didn't play football. By the way, I have to tell you this. In my senior year, in our class, they were in classes (levels) depending on how big the school was. So we were in the, let's say, the A class. I think they called it B. But we were, our class was 31, graduating, so it was a small school. So in that class of all of Arkansas, I won the 100 yard dash, I won the 200. Our team won the 440 relay and our team won the 880 relay. And since I ran all four, I won 12 and a half points. I won the high point for the whole state. Now we had a, in my senior year, the winner of one and two, first and second, of each race. Of all the sizes of school, qualified to go to the meet of the champions. And I ran a 10.1 100 yard dash, and the fastest kid that ran it at that time, these were all white Caucasian kids, not with the Blacks. He could run a 10 flat, as his record, maybe 9.9. So I was in there if I wanted to go to the meet of champions. But I decided that my high school days were over, and I applied to Purdue. But I felt like that was such a big school that I wanted to get a head start. So I decided to go to summer school right after high school, and that started two weeks before this meet of the champions. So my coach wanted me to go to the meet of champions, but I said, I really can't do this. I've got to go to college. And so I kind of left that behind. It was another chapter or so.

01:10:16

ZS: Did you do any athletics in college?

01:10:19

PF: I thought I could, because I went over to see the stadium and I said. 'No, I can't do this.'

01:10:27

ZS: What got you into it in the first place? What made you interested in track?

01:10:33

PF: Well, at that point, let's see, why was I interested? Oh, I think my first cousin, who was 10 years older than me, in Holly Grove, he ran track. He ran hurdles, high hurdles. I said, 'I can't do that'. But I saw him, and I think he was my mentor. He also was the one that helped us in the grocery store with my mom. So I think, he became a mentor of mine. And of course, being a kid at home, I was getting into everything. I mean, I played table tennis. I would go, in the summer, we played baseball. I played regular tennis, I was actually pretty good. And I guess about the ninth grade, I was probably my full height. I think the tallest person in my class was like 5'10". We didn't have seven foot tall kids, right? At 5'10", I don't think there was a six footer. So in basketball, at 5'6", I could compete.

01:12:04

ZS: Yeah. So, most of your kind of social circle, was that hanging out with other people through sports, or did you have other friends?

01:12:17

PF: We have sports in, let's say, class associations like the book club, or honor society, or speech, or whatever. So we participated. I participated in probably as many school activities as I could. Because I felt like I could do everything, right? That was at least my vision. I wanted to do everything. And so, I really didn't pay much attention to grade point average. But at the end, I think I got beat out being valedictorian by just a few points. But this gal and I would be called to the Blackboard. This was really a chalkboard at the time. And the teacher would give us like, math problems. And we would compete to see who would do the math the fastest. And sometimes she would beat me getting it. We competed. But she ended up being valedictorian. But I claimed she took all the easy classes, like she took home economics- and all that. But that's probably not true.

01:13:56

ZS: Did you ever face any kind of discrimination at school? Or was it hard being the only Chinese kid in the class?

01:14:04

PF: No, I think from my standpoint, I never felt any discrimination. My older cousins and my older siblings may have. But I don't think they ever told me that they felt discriminated against. And perhaps because we had so many families in that town. Now, when I went and played, let's say, basketball and competed with another town. I remember when I was on the court, I felt they were calling me names. I could hear them. But when my cousin on the other team, when he was playing, they cheered him on. So it was like, it was parceled out. If you're part of your own team, no problem. If you were competing with somebody else, big problem.

01:15:07

ZS: Your family traveled to other places. Did you ever encounter any kind of discrimination elsewhere in Arkansas?

01:15:16

PF: I think when we went to St. Louis, because there were not a huge number of population of Chinese at that time, little kids who had never seen Chinese would point to us and call us names. But in Hughes, there was such a large Chinese community there.

01:15:40

ZS: You mentioned that the vast majority of the customers at your family's store were African American. I know this would have been when you were younger, but did you ever have any friends growing up from the community who were African American friends?

01:15:56

PF: No, didn't have any.

01:15:58

ZS: So socially, the store was located in the Black part of town, and y'all lived in the store for a while. But socially, there wasn't a lot of interaction between your family and the Black community in town.

01:16:12

PF: No.

01:16:13

ZS: And then once you went to school, you were in the white schools.

01:16:17

PF: In the white school, yes.

01:16:19

ZS: I see. And your church community, I assume, that was also a predominantly white church?

01:16:23

PF: Yeah, it was all white. And we had every denomination. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian.

01:16:33

ZS: So what really made you interested in pursuing college? And then why maybe leave Arkansas? I imagine there aren't a lot of Arkansans going to Purdue.

01:16:50

PF: Let me pause for a minute. I need to send a message

01:17:00

ZS: So we took a brief pause. We're back. I wanted to ask, what influenced your decision to attend college out of state? I can't imagine there were a lot of Arkansans going to Purdue at this time.

01:17:15

PF: We had a counselor in high school, and I asked my counselor questions about colleges, and probably my strongest curriculum was probably math. And my counselor was advising me. I asked her, I said. I asked her, which school should I go to? I had no mentor in any of the colleges, except, you know, my sister went to Ouachita Baptist, and maybe because of our church relationship, that's where she went. And some of her friends went there. But I had no friends going to undergraduate at Purdue. So she suggested Purdue, maybe she suggested some of the other "Big Ten" because of my math. And she said, well, you could be an engineer. And I said, what does an engineer do? And she said, I don't know. Now, whether or not I dreamed that or not, that's the story I tell people. So I decided to start off in summer school because I felt like I was so far behind. And literally my highest math was trig, trigonometry. But some of the kids already had calculus. And so I had always felt behind, probably during the whole time I went through college. I felt like I never could catch up.

01:19:01

ZS: And you felt that all the way through graduation?

01:19:04

PF: Yeah, that's why not only did I go to summer school, I went to summer school after my freshman year, and summer school, I think, after my sophomore year. So by the time I ended up, the aero engineering degree, I think, required only, let's say, 150 credits. I had like 190 credits.

01:19:25

ZS: Yeah, just from extra classes and stuff. Was your mom supportive of you going out of state?

01:19:32

PF: Oh yeah, she just left it up to me to go.

01:19:37

ZS: Real quick, did she support all of your athletics?

01:19:40

PF: Except she refused to let me play football.

01:19:45

ZS: That's nice. Yeah. Okay, so you went off to Purdue, and then after that, just very briefly, what kind of, what the rest of your educational career looked like?

01:20:06

PF: So education-wise, well, I received my bachelor's degree in 1965. And then the other schooling was while I was working, and the employer actually paid for my two masters. At the time they were willing to support, because they felt like that if their employees got an advanced degree, it would actually help the company. And so, but typically when I got my master's, I searched around and actually found a company that would employ me at a higher rate, you know?

01:21:00

ZS: Yeah, I'm sure.

01:21:02

PF: I may have stayed around a little longer, but you know, I was free to go anywhere, really.

01:21:11

ZS: And once you were in college, like at Purdue, did you join any Chinese student organizations, or work with any other Chinese students?

01:21:20

PF: Yeah. I was attracted to the Chinese Association, and it turned out that at Purdue, at that time, there were very few women of any nationality at that time, not like it is today. So the Chinese Association had maybe 30 or 40 members, and because some people spoke Cantonese, and some people spoke Mandarin, the common language is English. So I felt very, very comfortable being in that setting, and I was the only southern Chinese, and so they laughed at my accent at the time. And there were a couple of women engineers in the class. And one interesting thing, because it was a 'Big Ten' school maybe, it was customary that we would, at one part of the year, invite another 'Big Ten' school Chinese Association to come and compete in some sport, and then have a dinner and dance. So from a social standpoint, we intermingled

with other colleges. We would go there one year, and they would come to our campus the other year, and we would find a room, a ballroom, we would decorate it. I never could dance, I never danced.

01:23:11

ZS: Yeah. Is that where you kind of first started, you know, you said there weren't any other Southern Chinese, people would talk about your accent. Is that the first time you really felt like a southerner, or you felt like that label was applied to you?

01:23:29

PF: Let's see. I guess I felt comfortable in the South. Possibly when I went to college, maybe it was pointed out to me that I had this accent, and maybe I was different.

01:23:51

ZS: Yeah.

01:23:53

PF: But I felt part of the Chinese community, maybe that's, but I had to choose that, you know, I had to choose to be in that association. I remember this one family, the professor family, and the guys would talk about how pretty this girl was, but she would never come to the Chinese meeting. Maybe because she was the daughter of a professor.

01:24:27

ZS: So can I ask, how did you meet Lucy?

01:24:30

PF: Ah, okay. I would come home in the summertime, and I felt like I was so far behind, like I mentioned in college, that I would attend summer school. So Memphis State University, I don't know if that's what they call now, maybe it's University of Memphis or whatever, but I decided I would go there and gather some credits in the summer. Because there's nothing for me to do in Hughes, other than maybe work in my cousin's grocery store, right? So because it was a 35 mile drive, I decided to room in an apartment with a cousin of mine who was in Memphis, and so he and I were roommates, and it turned out he was my best man in my wedding. So while he was working, he was four years older than me, but while he was working, I would go to class. And so I met Lucy on campus, and found out she's from Helena, never knew she was only 40 miles away, you know?

01:25:50

ZS: Yeah.

01:25:51

PF: And that's where we met on campus.

01:25:54

ZS: Yeah.

01:25:55

PF: Memphis State.

01:25:56

ZS: Memphis State, yeah.

01:25:58

PF: And so I gained more credits by going to summer school.

01:26:07

ZS: Yeah.

01:26:08

PF: But I took classes like economics, I took electives instead of the, but I had to have electives anyway.

01:26:16

ZS: Yeah. So, and then after you graduated, did you ever come back to Arkansas? Or not until much, much later in life?

01:26:27

PF: Well, we came back at least once or twice a year, because Lucy's parents still had their store, operating the store in Helena. So we'd come back, but by that time after college, and after we got married, I moved my mom to St. Louis where I was working. But we would come back to Helena, and we would stay with our parents for the weekend, and help out in the store. And then later on, they decided to build a house. So Lucy grew up in the back of the store, and even when she graduated, they were still living in the store. So it was only later that they built a house, and Lucy helped them design the house with the architect and the builder.

01:27:23

ZS: Yeah. So, I kind of want to add, to kind of finish up our conversation, I wanted to ask some questions kind of about identity and legacy. You know, you've kind of used a couple of different

words to describe yourself over the course of our conversation. You've used the word Chinese, or Southerner, or Chinese American, or American. When you think about how you identify yourself, what feels most right to you?

01:28:00

PF: In one of those terms?

01:28:03

ZS: Yeah or you if you had to-

01:28:04

PF: I guess I feel I identify with all of those terms. Maybe at one time, I've never changed my name, for instance. I never felt that that was different, I guess I just accepted it. Where maybe, like my sister felt like she needed to change her name, but maybe it was a different era. I did feel, when I was younger, that I was different because of my name, and because there were not that many Chinese. I think if you go back and look at the number of Chinese in America, it didn't expand until after some period.

01:28:58

ZS: Right.

01:29:00

PF: So I never felt, other than the name calling and all, so I guess I'll... I just lost my train of thought.

01:29:14

ZS: Yeah, but you maybe did feel a little bit different growing up.

01:29:17

PF: Yeah.

01:29:18

ZS: Cause there just weren't a lot of other Chinese folks, but you never felt like you wanted to change your name.

01:29:22

PF: No.

01:29:23

ZS: You always felt like you were-

01:29:25

PF: Possibly, by going to Purdue, I got attracted to larger companies. Now, later on, I felt like that where you go get your education, the workplace comes after you, or you interview with companies that are kind of in that region. So if I had gone to, let's say, Georgia Tech, I would be interviewed by the companies that would be from around that area. So when I went to Purdue in West Lafayette, Indiana, the companies that would come visit us would come looking for engineers. So that's how come I was employed by McDonnell Aircraft. It was a choice between Boeing in Seattle, Washington, or McDonnell Aircraft in St. Louis, and I felt like it was closer to home.

01:30:31

ZS: Home, yeah.

01:30:32

PF: Which was Arkansas, so I took the job in St. Louis. And also my older sister had married by then, and so she and her husband lived in St. Louis.

01:30:48

ZS: So the way of maybe thinking about, you know, Chinese heritage and kind of Chinese identity. I guess I have two questions. The first one would be, and for the research record, you're a huge part of the reason why UCA is able to do this work. We got in contact with you, and you've been kind of a leader within the Chinese Association of Arkansas. I guess what motivated you to kind of start reconnecting with this history, to kind of think about the history of Chinese Americans in Arkansas? Why was doing that work interesting or important to you? Does that question make sense?

01:31:38

PF: Yeah, that makes sense, but I'm not sure. I'm not sure if there's one thing that did that. I guess just like maybe as my niece is getting older and she wanted to find out the history of their family. Part of that may be there are not many years left in this. I mean, just looking at the law of averages, that time is shorter for me than for my niece. So maybe part of that is that I need to relay this information in some fashion because I feel like that I'm part of this continuum. Part of it is also having worked in industry and moving from company to company. It's like you look at your leaders, and you find someone who can help you advance your career, and you want to bring up the people behind you. And so I look in the mirror, and I'm an 80-year-old guy, right? And I'm working with people like in this association, this medical association, I think I told you about it, the Medical Product Association. All these guys are younger. At some point, you have to excuse yourself, right? But I can't excuse myself from my heritage. And so I feel like that what brought me here today was part of my upbringing as who I identify with, and I really want

to have it carry on. And so I guess that may be the motivation. And I have a partner, I have a partner that wants to do the same thing, so that helps.

01:33:59

ZS: Ultimately, when you think about creating an archive for your son or for future generations of Chinese Arkansans. What maybe would you most want future generations of Chinese Arkansans or Chinese Americans in the South to know about the history of Chinese in Arkansas?

01:34:29

PF: Well, I'd like to know that they believe in hard work. I'd like for the younger people to know that they need to invest in the community that they're part of. I hope that they kind of remember where they came from and hope they leave that community better than what they found it. Whether or not they stay within the community in terms of their marriage and their kids, whether or not they stay there or not. I realize that at some point probably it all commingled, but that's a choice that they make on their own. But I hope that they don't forget where they came from, I guess. I don't know if that answers it, but...

01:35:37

ZS: Yeah. No, that's right. I mean, that sense of community. To me, one of the things that comes up in the stories that you told about your parents and about your own life growing up is that none of this would have happened without community connections, without sponsor support from other people and stuff. Are there any other questions that you think I should have asked that you wanted to share as part of the project?

01:36:09

PF: Probably as I walk out the door I would probably come up with these questions, but nothing at this point. If I think of things as I leave, I'll try to jot it down. I think I'll be seeing you more than just this one time.

01:36:26

ZS: That's right, that's right. It's a work in progress. Well, officially, thank you so much. I really appreciate your time.

01:36:32

PF: I appreciate having the opportunity to talk to you.

01:36:34

ZS: Yeah.

01:36:35

PF: Okay.

01:36:36