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Interview with Albert Fong (2012)

Albert Fong

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Chinatown Renewal Project
Interviewee Albert Fong
Interviewer: Thomas Shefflet & Theresa Eckert
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Thomas Shefflet 00:02

It is October 24, 2012. I'm Thomas Shefflet with Mr. Albert Fong. Just for the recording sir can I have your verbal permission to record both the video and audio?

Albert Fong 00:14

Yes, you do.

Thomas Shefflet 00:17

Welcome, we appreciate you taking time out of your day to come down here to talk to us. In your previous interview you talked about Chinatown and being a kid. Can you talk about how Chinatown was like when you were younger?

Albert Fong 00:33

I first started working at the republic, I was asked to help. I was 13 at the time and it was kind of— more of a one-time two time situation and then later on i think they needed me to help more and it was like helping to wait on tables or busboy, then i ended up being promoted to washing dishes and the years went by pretty fast. I was in high school and I was doing other things like sometimes occasionally helping cook a little bit, clean up tables, and servicing the clients or customers that came into the restaurant. It's kind of interesting because back then, Chinatown was more lively and but it's not the kind of things that you think in a clean area because when I was kid I would come out here and there were a lot of alcoholism, a lot of fights. One time coming to work around. It was about one o'clock in the afternoon, two o'clock and afternoon. And people were picking up bottles breaking on the curve to fight with the other guys that were the chains, stakes, whatever they could find. I usually tried to dodge and they just went to work.

Thomas Shefflet 02:26

And was that more of the nightlife scene?

Albert Fong 02:29

Actually it was early afternoon and it continued into the night. And I would get— finish work from the restaurant after nine because the restaurant closes at nine and After teaming up and all that it was kind of dark and kind of spooky for one person or going home at nights and I lived in East MSL. So I would most the time just really run quickly home. Yeah. I got there pretty fast.

Thomas Shefflet 03:08

So were you the first person in your family to work at the Republic Cafe?

Albert Fong 03:12

No, actually the reason I started at Republic Cafe was because I had a cousin. That actually— his name was Tony. And that's my nephew's father. Parker Fong. Tony worked as a cook in a restaurant. And he's the one that kind of got me to come in and help because he was a relatively— an older cousin.

Thomas Shefflet 03:42

And as he obviously he's probably the reason that Parker also started working here at the Republic Cafe?

Albert Fong 03:48

Parker lucked out; he didn't work here.

Thomas Shefflet 03:51

He didn't work here?

Albert Fong 03:52

No he just lived at this restaurant. He was still pretty young. When he was at this restaurant, so he never really got involved in doing too much except in the later years. He helped my brothers I have two brothers that actually helped with the janitorial service, janitorial team, and Parker would help us later on. They were getting old.

Thomas Shefflet 04:20

So they had the young ones help you out?

Albert Fong 04:24

Half of these [inaudible] younger than us.

Thomas Shefflet 04:27

And how long did you work? At the Republic Cafe?

Albert Fong 04:30

I work since I was 13 on and off and after I came back from college, I was in my early 20s I came back and still helped a little bit with the janitorial cleaning, things like that for a while till the restaurant finally closed down in the mid-70s. But it wasn't indication do that. Because I had a job what would you say that it was like working at the Republic cafe? I had a lot of fun. I always enjoyed work. That just kind of learning about how to cook and how the Chinese foods were made. Because this restaurant made pretty authentic Chinese food. And that was interesting part but then also the cleaning and the janitorial work was interesting and we did get paid. So it was it was kind of neat. You got some money. And also there were some other interesting times that when they had the Chinese New Year's celebration, and it was around February March and April the they would— there's two Tongs that celebrated the new years and it's the Su Sing and the Bing Kong Tong and they're just down the street here. And when they had the event here celebrating the new year's they would have Republic Cafe do the restaurant meals, like they had an early lunch at 12 than they had another one that follow up because the restaurant only holds up to 200 people and if it's more than 200 they would have a second meal right

after that somewhere around one o'clock to 1:30. And then they would have an afternoon lunch. Sometimes they would have like four o'clock but they'll have an evening dinner. And they could have one back to that because if it's more than 200 that capacity of the restaurant could hold. They would have one at six o'clock and one right after that 7:30 And they would have an evening dinner for the people that stayed because these events that they had the celebration they had to Chinese opera, dancing and musical at the associations that they have. And then they have the late dinner right around 12am And that lasted until like 1:30 and I stayed most of the time to help with the kingdom, the washing the dishes in preparing for the next day because they will it was would be a two day celebration Saturday and Sunday. So it was a long weekend for me and I would work some time until like 3:30 in the morning. Just getting everything cleaned up. And it was school the next day, so busy weekend, but that pay was pretty good. Long hours but

Thomas Shefflet 08:05

Would you say that the Republic Cafe participated in other community events like the in Chinatown?

Albert Fong 08:14

Not really because it's like mostly just Chinese food here. And I think in the earlier interviews I might have mentioned that they had like big events here. I remember like Dr. Cheung, he had a lot of his doctor friends in the community. They would have their dinners here with Chinese foods and also the Japanese community. When they're whenever they had an event, whether it's might be a birthday or a memorial, they would have their lunch or dinners here. And also the Filipinos had family dinners and so did the other Asian cultures so that a lot of different cultures coming in there.

Thomas Shefflet 09:06

So it's a pretty popular place.

Albert Fong 09:08

Yeah, it was. I remember one time I was working here during the Como Del Rodeo parade. My cousin had to close the restaurant at like 7:30 because we ran out of ingredients to make the food it was just that busy. And but that was just one time I remember that happening. I remember that. There were weekends where it was very busy. And that was in the late 60s that I was working here.

Theresa Eckert 09:51

What was that parade you mentioned? What was it like?

Albert Fong 09:53

It's called the Como Del Rodeo parade. And if you're from Salinas, they used to have that annually, right towards the conclusion of the rodeo in California or Dale and that was on a Saturday and for us it was really exciting and fun because you see all the floats and they were very beautifully decorated. And they're sweet stake prizes back then for the parade. And then afterwards a lot of people would go to the carnival and that was I think it was somewhere else there. They've changed locations a couple of times. That was a lot of fun.

Thomas Shefflet 10:38

I've been to that carnival.

Albert Fong 10:40

Yeah. Prior to that, on Wednesday, they had what they call the Kiddie Kapers Parade. On Wednesday night. That was for the children. And that was kind of exciting because if you participated you could get prizes or money they usually give you like \$1 but for kids \$1 was a lot of money— went a long ways. And I believe they gave movie tickets to them sometimes, you know. So there was like a lot of interesting things during that time— it was a lot of fun time for people in the community.

Thomas Shefflet 11:15

Did you ever participate in a Kiddie Kapers Parade?

Albert Fong 11:18

Actually, I participated almost annually in the Kiddie Kapers Parade—I mean not in a big way, but if you jumped in there you got something, maybe a prize or something. Definitely they gave free tickets to go to the Rodeo too for kids. And it was really fun and also when I was younger, I think around maybe 10 the—I went to Chinese school, which is the building on one California Street. If you've been by there. They would have like the Chinese American Citizens Alliance—would sponsor a float and they would build a float and I did remember participating in one or two of the parades and we would dress up in our Asian outfits for the parade.

Thomas Shefflet 12:16

When you say Asian outfits were those traditional Chinese Garments?

Albert Fong 12:23

It's made to look like traditional but it was I remember the pants were green. The Chinese coat was red, and the black beanie that was on the top of the head. And we walked around the float holding a streamer. And ladies were on the float.

Thomas Shefflet 12:50

Would you say that that's how your interest in Chinese Americans Citizens Alliance started? When you were younger?

Albert Fong 12:59

I remember my uncle belonged to Chinese American Citizens Alliance. And they had a lot of events for their children. For the community. And they have different things like Easter egg hunts. And it was kind of interesting because we would participate with the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, Easter egg and then also participate on Sundays at one o'clock with the city's sponsored Easter egg, usually at Lincoln school. And we just kind of had two good events as kids to participate in. And also the Chinese American citizens also sponsored other events like Christmas programs with Santa Claus and giving gifts and also the dinners and they still do that now. I started getting involved because I was involved with the youth with the Chinese school also my church. So I was participating in a lot of the youth advisory activities. And since I have four kids, it kinda like it worked together well and ended up being in the Chinese American organization and becoming an officer. And then later on the national board.

Thomas Shefflet 14:27

That— You briefly mentioned that in your previous interview, you hold a chair with that Chinese American citizens Alliance, don't you?

Albert Fong 14:36

Yes, I'm on the board of directors of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, which is headquartered in San Francisco. And currently, I'm the vice president of our local chapter here.

Thomas Shefflet 14:51

What kinds of things is your local chapter involved in Are they involved in the Chinatown renewal project in anyway?

Albert Fong 15:01

Yes, they are. A lot of the members are supportive of the ACE since the nation I forget what exactly you remember the name sorry.

Theresa Eckert 15:19

Asian Cultural Exchange?

Albert Fong 15:20

Yes, Asian Cultural Exchange. And I have a lot of friends involved. They've had different activities like sponsoring the— getting these Republic Cafe signage line to be put on and we've had some cleanup days in Chinatown. And I was privileged to paint the Chinese characters at the Bing Kong Tong because it's we had to get a gold color paint for them. It's kind of neat to do that.

Thomas Shefflet 15:59

So what is the ACE program, the Asian cultural exchange program?

Albert Fong 16:06

I don't know that much about it, but they're trying to I guess, rejuvenate or revitalize this part of Salinas. And just maybe getting the Republic Cafe kind of started as a museum project and I know that CSUMB is involved with them. As they participate in some of the cleanup activities here in this part of town.

Thomas Shefflet 16:36

So do you say that it's kind of a way to bring cultural awareness of the historical importance and a lot of these cultures that had in the Salinas area

Albert Fong 16:47

I think so because there's a lot of this history that just kind of gets lost. And I think the city is supporting it. There's a lack of funding. It's kind of difficult to do that sometimes. believe they just want to kind of bring back some of the history that we have in this part of town.

Thomas Shefflet 17:14

Yeah, if people don't talk about it can be lost.

Albert Fong 17:21

Exactly.

Thomas Shefflet 17:23

So kind of on that note, were there a lot of people that you met in the community in Chinatown, when you were a young man that kind of left an impression on you?

Albert Fong 17:39

I actually growing up as a kid kind of knew a lot of people in this community that the Chinese, the elderly, the seniors, because I could relate to them because I knew a lot of them. And my dad was actually came into Salinas when he immigrated to the United States. And that was in 1918, he was 17 years old at the time. And he's telling me stories about the people in this town. The Chinese people and I, I ran into a lot of room in the community because the Chinese people back there was very closely kind of close knit community. So everyone kind of knew each other. I remember there was a gentleman that actually went around town, just asking for donations, and he would collect a new like \$5 \$10 from people just to support the Chinese community activities and the Chinese have this organization called Jolla, which is it's just a Chinese community and I think you find out a lot of the big cities like Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco. We have a lot of those organizations like Jolla that actually helps the Chinese into community and they that organization still exists today. And there's no dues as long as your Chinese you can belong to that organization.

Thomas Shefflet 19:24

And how did they participate still. Are they also part of the Chinese—or the Chinatown Community Renewal Project?

Albert Fong 19:36

Yes, they are. It's a larger number of people in the community because you don't need to pay dues and you're automatically a member if you're Chinese. You don't have to be Chinese to participate. But that was the way it was in the earlier years. I know that some of the communities like New York collect an annual dues, like \$99 I believe, I saw that the internet. But Salinas this, we still kind of ask for donations, if you want to give to the organization that will help sponsor the events as they do sponsor and co-sponsor a lot of things, including giving high school scholarships since the Chinese American citizens, Alliance members and also the Jowa members are pretty much the same members. They we do a lot of things co-sponsor a lot of the events. We co-sponsor to scholarships for that because we don't want to just do the same activities and things since it's the same people so we do it together.

Thomas Shefflet 20:59

But when you talk about that organization, it makes me think about the Tongs that are down the street, were they interacting with each other?

Albert Fong 21:09

You know, when I was growing up, I just knew that they were just separate associations. I think growing up as a kid, I think that you think of these. What I hear from my mother is that these organizations were kind of like gangs, but they were just kind of a group of people that support each other. And there's two of them in Chinatown, and I think they still kind of exist today.

Thomas Shefflet 21:45

They're still there.

Albert Fong 21:48

Yeah. It's more of a fraternal organization, Social Club. Today, and I think that's the way it was. When I was growing up. It's more like a social club.

Thomas Shefflet 22:01

You have to pay dues.

Albert Fong 22:03

Right, right. Because I think years ago, in the earlier years, I don't think the Chinese maybe had the protection that they needed from law enforcement. Because that just didn't exist, I believe so they just needed to belong to an organization or a club where they could have friends where they can trust I believe. And I'm sure there was other things like they would help each other in other ways. Whether you know, they may need, you know, money loans or something for a business, or maybe they needed finances, to bring their spouses over, family over that might be some things that could happen.

Theresa Eckert 22:52

Did you ever interact with the Tong while you lived in this area?

Albert Fong 22:54

Not interact, I mean I communicated with them but not, not any kind of interaction because when I met these people, it was during the celebrations and they would have name tags and ribbons, given their positions in the organization because these supposed representatives from these tongs came from other areas like Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, you know, they came from Marysville, different places like that. And they were just the representatives to come for the celebration.

Thomas Shefflet 23:37

So the Tongs were an internationally wide brotherhood. So if you belong to one Tong was it—

Albert Fong 23:45

Not internationally. It's just nationwide, just here in the US. Yes.

Thomas Shefflet 23:51

So is it predominantly for Chinese Americans or Chinese immigrants?

Albert Fong 23:55

Chinese. Back then you wouldn't call too many of them Chinese Americans. In later years you would have the Chinese Americans because Chinese Americans refer to the Chinese that are citizens in this country. And the tongs where you could you didn't necessarily have to be a citizen. I believe it's more like an association in the big cities, rather than calling them to Bing Kong Tong or the Sue Sing Tong. You have family organizations like the Lee family. The Wong family or the Qin family. These were associations. And these people probably knew each other way back in the old country, because they were like the family organization that immigrated here from the southern parts of China. Which is Canton China or it was Guangdong.

Thomas Shefflet 24:57

The name actually sounds familiar.

Albert Fong 25:00

Guangdong. It's the southern part of China that the people that came to immigrated here, spoke Cantonese. Today you have a lot of the Chinese coming from everywhere, Taiwan, China, other parts of China, and they would speak like Mandarin, or any other dialects.

Thomas Shefflet 25:23

Which part of China did your parents come?

Albert Fong 25:26

From? My father came from Guangdong, China. And so did my mother, but they came from different villages.

Thomas Shefflet 25:33

Interesting. And they they're separated by a little time difference, right? Your father came here in 1918

Albert Fong 25:39

Right, and then they got married in 1926. And I have a sister that was born there, and she's passed away. Then my mom wasn't able to immigrate here to United States until 1948. So it kind of gave a big gap between my sister and the other siblings that were born here.

Thomas Shefflet 26:13

What were your brothers doing when you're all here in the area?

Albert Fong 26:18

My—I have two brothers one older brother, a year older, and a brother that's a year younger. They helped with the janitorial service for the restaurant. On the weekends. Saturday, Sundays and Tuesday when the restaurant was closed. We also came here to clean the restaurant, mop the floors and doing some of the cleanups. Cleaning the sinks and bathrooms and all that. But they had other jobs. My older brother Danny worked for one of the food stands so he knows a lot of produce. And then my younger brother. We also had other jobs. Back then we had a lot of jobs. I mean, I work for Driscoll berries used to pick strawberries on weekends and during the summer. I also grew up working in the onion sheds, peeling, bunching onions. Like a lot of kids in the area. We made extra money by helping our parents

working in a packing sheds and I started working, packing or bunch of onions when I was five. But back then the onions were brought to our home and we would bunch in and later on the business changed and my mom worked for another agricultural company had bunched onions and we would go to the onion sheds to bunch of onions and it was very flexible so my mom would go to work early in the morning, sometimes maybe as early as four or five in the morning. She would come back home and make sure that we got to school and then she got back to work. and because they didn't have— my mom didn't have transportation. She did a lot of it just on foot and actually my dad wasn't with this. My dad was a ranch house cook for Hanson farms. And that's like about five six miles from here. But he didn't have transportation so we rarely saw him except that when we got a chance to see him on the weekends we would go out to the ranch. So we had life interesting. Could you elaborate on that? What that length was like we were always busy because on the weekends after like Saturdays, we would be able to get transportation, either by one of the uncles, or one of my cousins would take us out to the ranch on the weekends and drop us off. Sometimes mostly most of time like on a Friday evening or Saturday morning. And then we would be picked up by either them or we would take a taxi and it'll— the taxi would take my two brothers, my sister and my mom to the ranch. We stayed with my dad for the weekend. And when we got a little older, we would get this opportunity to stay on the ranch during the summer. My dad would take on maybe one or two boys stay on ranch during the summer for a while.

Theresa Eckert 30:04

Did you enjoy that time out there?

Albert Fong 30:07

Yeah, it was a lot of fun because we had our freedom. But that was only up until we were 14 Then my dad actually retired from working on the ranch. Yeah, I had a lot of interesting jobs because I work for Pringles tractors. That was when I was like 17 and I was what they call it a gopher. I did everything there from moving these tractor disc to move the 55 gallon drums of oils and I would transport them between Salinas Gilroy and as far as King City and it's kind of interesting that there's a little bit about tractor parts.

Theresa Eckert 31:03

Did your dad ever live here in Chinatown.

Albert Fong 31:08

In the earlier years, I believe he did because he told me stories about when he first got here. He started working and I believe he probably helped my uncle or his uncle and his cousins and they have the— they owned the Perla hotel. But I believe they were involved in restaurant business because I know one of my other uncle's worked on a farm too. But I believe that my dad used to tell me the stories about working around Chinatown and he worked in a restaurant called the New York cafe. And I believe it's later became the Teco Taco that was on the corner there across from American Meat Market. I'm not sure if he's because there's a long time ago. And he also owned a restaurant with a partner. I think it was called the Canton gardens that that had to be in the 20s because from some of the stuff that I recently looked at that recently looked at some of their letters it sounded like you started working for

Hanson's farms in 1933. So there were some years there that I don't know what happened except that he must have lived around here in Chinatown

Theresa Eckert 32:37

Do you have a story that describes Chinatown or what it was like for him living and working here?

Albert Fong 32:47

I know that Chinatown there was gambling. It was the gambling parlors and I heard stories like there might be possibly opium. I'm not sure. But I know there was the gambling and my dad used to tell me that he stayed away from that stuff. So maybe that's why he kind of stayed out of trouble. I heard from people later on there was prostitution back then but I don't know too much more than that. But later on later years there was actually working girls into streets. So it's kind of like Salinas red light district. That was interesting. And I know coming to the restaurants working at Republic I used to see a lot of the girls hanging out in the streets.

Theresa Eckert 33:55

What did you think of them at that time?

Albert Fong 34:00

Didn't really think much of that. Something to avoid. I was too busy going to school and I finished—went two years at Hartnell and two years at UC Berkeley. I was too young to know about things like that. Too busy working.

Theresa Eckert 34:30

You mentioned earlier that the part of the process and part of this project is about recording the unwritten story the untold stories of this neighborhood, the community that existed here. What I mean it's there I mean, you lived here, what would you of all of your memories, what would you want to be recorded and to be known about this community? Or about this restaurant?

Albert Fong 35:00

I think this restaurant actually brought people together. And especially the Chinese people, because this area was still considered Chinatown growing up. We used to go to all the events at the Chinese community center. And there's so many names for that Chinese Community Center. It's called Jong Wah. It's called the Confucius Church. It's called Well, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance meet there. So there's lots of activities and growing up as kids. We were pretty excited to come to a lot of the events like the Chinese would hold these like the new year's event and another one was the what they call the Independence Day, which I don't think we call that anymore. They used to call it the autumn festival celebration or even the anniversary and when they do that they used to show like movies. And as a kid you know, you didn't get to see a lot of movies for free and especially when these movies were in Chinese and one of the things that was interesting is that you come to these movies you don't know what you're going to see. And I wasn't know— I didn't know what to expect and what I really wanted to see whether I wanted to see a love story or one of those Chinese martial arts movies. Back then they were produced by Redmond Shaw, later on the Bruce Lee show— movies came on, but we didn't see too much of that. I think maybe it would have cost a lot of money to rent those kinds of films back then.

But yeah, it was kind of fun to come to the end and they had the games. For the kids. We had a lot of carnival games. Were kind of smaller scale, but it was fun for us. Throwing our dimes into the bowls and dishes and all that stuff. But just to get together and also the refreshments, the foods was kind of nice. What was the most memorable dishes for you? You know what it was real simple. But I just remember that. The Chinese Cha Siu, they're called roast pork buns. Called Cha Siu Bao in Chinese and that was nice, it was just simple little refreshment because that was in the evenings and you come actually after dinner. So you got that a little later maybe during the intermission of the movie. They actually the gambling part that was kind of like it's a vice, but I think the Chinese used it as a fundraiser to sponsor and pay for the expensive dinners and the functions and all that. So I think a lot of people that they lost money they know it's going to a cause. Maybe a good cause. I mean, that was during my time. But prior to that, maybe it was for personal fundraising. It was interesting because the type of gambling, they had two kinds. They had the mahjong and it was more like for entertainment because you have four people playing and it's just kind of passing the time and it kind of exercises your mind to because you do need to think when you're playing that. I don't know if you guys know how to play Mahjong, but it's like the American Bridge and the British American Bridge. So you know, you have to kind of think about and they do use money but it's really kind of nominal. But then they had the other type of gambling which is called Pai Gow, which in Chinese literally translate to nine cards. And I remember learning the game and usually takes people years to learn it. I learned it overnight. It was like to me it's like interesting and exciting to learn these cards because I think there's 48 cards and you know you can get any combination of those 48 cards, and you have to you get four in a hand and you have to decide which way to go. It's pretty much the hands are set. And you really don't have any way of saying I can make my hand better or worse by you know, doing a certain thing because the hand is the hand you know, I mean, get pocket aces, you got aces, you know and you can't change that. So with Pai Gow it's similar but you get four cards. It was interesting to watch these people play sometimes because they would want to impress you by not looking at the cards and they can feel the cards because the Chinese dominoes have little indentations we feel it in their color too but without looking at you and know the color. But you could feel it and know the color where did you learn that game? I learned it from friends. We used to hang out with friends that worked in restaurants. And sometimes in the evenings after they're finished with their work, we would play recreationally the game and we learned it together.

Theresa Eckert 41:06

Did you gather at a particular point or did it change? Where did you meet them?

Albert Fong 41:12

Oh, actually. We had a cousin, a good friend and cousin that owned a restaurant called China house and he's LSL and I kind of picked it up from that. I used to see it during the times when I was growing up as a kid when I worked at the Republic and I would see the gambling that these tongs that I didn't know how to play and I was probably not tall enough to see the top of the table. Now but later on I think the Chinese community had fundraisers at the community center by playing busy. I knew how to play it

Thomas Shefflet 41:56

So I have a question. As an active member of the community in Salinas How would you describe the importance of renewal projects?

Albert Fong 42:09

I've seen it in other areas and you know anytime that you can make the area better for business for the community. To me, it's a good thing. It's a positive thing. It brings the community together and I think it's good for business. I've seen that a lot but, in any area, it takes money to maintain it. And you need people that I think that are philanthropic that are able to help out to split support it so I think that is needed in communities

Thomas Shefflet 42:56

Besides money, would you say that there are other elements that are also equally important to the renewal project?

Albert Fong 43:04

Definitely. I think that you need people to have an interest to support it. And to support the values of what it means to the community a lot of times it takes a lot of money to keep the projects going. Recently, I've been working with my own church and we're working with contractors in the city. It's a lot of interesting things that you learn about trying to get something like that together a building is gotta meet all the new city regulations and codes. There's a lot of new ones. So it's it takes a lot of money.

Thomas Shefflet 44:03

Is your church involved in

Albert Fong 44:06

It's my church is the Salinas, Chinese Christian church. Most of the members are part of the communities. I mean, we all belong to same organizations but it's a separate entity. It's a Christian church. This classrooms these high school, but it's we're Chinese a church, but a lot of Chinese were in our church. I would say as many as half are not from this area. A lot are maybe from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and they didn't grow up with the Salinas community so they really don't really have a great connection. So that's what you see some times because we have a lot of Chinese coming to our church that are from, like Monterey Bay Area that some of them are like professors at the Defense Language Institute to have some from a Naval Postgraduate School. So there's a lot of professional people that are not part of Chinatown community.

Theresa Eckert 45:26

Is this church that you attend now? Is it the same one that you grew up attending?

Albert Fong 45:34

Yes, but I didn't grow up in a Chinese church. I grew up going to American churches. And first Baptist Presbyterian was some of the trips I went to go at this kids. We had people that picked us up because my parents didn't drive so they took us and brought us to Chinese school. I mean to Sunday school and church. And that's how I got involved with Christian churches.

Theresa Eckert 46:02

So your parents were they Christian or were they

Albert Fong 46:07

They were not because our culture are not Christians. So a lot of Chinese are either other religions like Buddhists. I believe there's some Taoism, but another one may be like just ancestral worship, because the Chinese do believe in the afterlife with the

Thomas Shefflet 46:32

Ancestors.

Theresa Eckert 46:34

Was there ever any tension within your home because of you being pulled into the Christian faith? Or how did your parents feel about that transition?

Albert Fong 46:45

I think my parents were very understanding and we will talk about things like that, but there was no real any conflict that my mom and my dad both for Christians now that they didn't become Christians until a lot later in life. My mom I believe she didn't become a Christian till about like 80s but she lived into 103. So she did live a long life.

Theresa Eckert 47:15

How did your mom feel about this community here? Having been an immigrant to this area?

Albert Fong 47:21

I think my mom was like just very supportive of the Chinese community. And I mean, everybody's kind of like a Chinese like family. So we just all kind of got along. And we share things and that's why they're able to, you know, help each other with different things because my mom didn't speak English. My dad didn't either lived here, but they never had any real need to work. I mean, to learn to English language because of their work.

Theresa Eckert 47:53

So did you grow up bilingual?

Albert Fong 47:56

Yes, actually. We knew how to speak Chinese when we were little kids. But with Chinese there's so many dialects because every village that people came from spoke a little bit differently. And even my mom's good friends spoke different dialects and I ended up growing up interpreting for her was some of the things with our friends, because I actually went to Chinese school for almost, I believe, 10 years. So I actually learned the main Cantonese dialect. Although it's not that great. I'm able to understand the different dialects a little bit. My dad spoke, Sze Yup, which is from his village, which is Jiushan. My mother was from Weiping and she has her dialect. And my wife is like from Sunwei, which is another dialect, but they're similar, but there is a little difference in the language. And we have to learn the tried to learn the main Cantonese dialect, which is the dialect that is spoken in Hong Kong. But then there's been Mandarin speaking now for all of China. So I'm picking up a few words. They're actually eight to

10 weeks of Mandarin when I was going to UC Berkeley, but that's not enough to learn. The entire night because there's a major difference between Cantonese and Mandarin.

Theresa Eckert 49:35

So can you talk a little bit more about being a young individual in this community and being a translator you know, so being a voice for your parents, to other members of the community and to other members and to your parents? What was that like?

Albert Fong 49:53

For me? I kind of think that you know, we were called ABCs because that's means American Born Chinese. But that's kind of degrading, because they're telling you that you're born here and you don't know much about anything else. And they also call us joke things, which is kind of derogatory. I don't know if that's the right word. But it means that you're like, bamboo. If you've ever seen a bamboo, it's like got sections on it. So I've heard different meanings like you know, it's blocked off so you don't know this. You don't know that you don't hear this. You don't hear that. I'm not sure. But I never took it as being insulted. I mean, I'm born here, raised here, and I think I have the best of two worlds. You know, I have the best the Western culture and the best of the Asian culture. So I get to look at both. And it's kind of interesting because I go around and people don't know if I could speak Chinese, but I can understand and under speaking, and sometimes people think I'm an immigrant and cannot speak English. And that's okay. I was born and raised in Salinas. I can understand Spanish a little bit too. So you get the best of three [unclear]. And I like seafood. I like seafood, let's see what else do I like, I mean, I just like all kinds of foods. But it's kind of neat. Growing up as a kid I had to help a lot of my elderly people that didn't speak the language. We would be their interpreters. We would help them fill out forms and things like that. We have neat things like if you didn't feel well, and as kids, my sisters and brothers, we never abused it, but we could have. We could have just not go to school and just wrote a note and signed it said my mom signed it because she couldn't write so she can barely sign her name. So that we learn to have integrity. And that was important because we could've faked anything we want if we were kids, but you know, once she's going down that road, then you're in trouble. But yeah, it was interesting. They would need help and everything, all these Chinese aunts and uncles that didn't speak English, and I'd have to help them interpret and take things I remember as a kid, I would have to do my parents banking, and I was only eight or nine years old, but you know, it's kind of the feeling that you can be trusted. So you don't want to defy that trust into something that they can't trust you. Yeah, how would a nine year old do your parents banking? What did that look like? It was, at times kind of scary because you would hold a lot of money and go to the bank and hope that someone doesn't beat you up for the money. But back in those days, things were safer, but you wouldn't want to flash it or anything but you know, it wasn't too bad.

Theresa Eckert 53:22

If the people in the bank ever kind of look askance at a nine year old coming in and saying here's my family's money,

Albert Fong 53:32

I never had that issue. In fact, one time my mom had me take a sum of money to the bank it was a larger sum of the money. And when I came back home, she goes, there was \$100 more than what was

there and I didn't know I was just told to bring it to me. So I went back to the bank and I told him I said my mom said this is incorrect. There's \$100 Listen. So I get kind of teary eyed talking about these things because sensitive things back then. And my mom didn't speak English so she told me to go back to bank and I went there and the guy said that they don't know and they will check and at the end of the day, he says if it's there if we packed up again, end of day, I went back to the bank, and they said it was there so they gave me it back.

Theresa Eckert 55:02

Powerful memory for you. I can see that that's a powerful memory for you there can you share with us why it's so? Really?

Albert Fong 55:14

I think it's because first of all my mom, like she was a lot kind of maybe a generation older than she should be. Because she was already in her 50s When we were growing up. And I think you know, we've grown up kids used to think is that your grandmother coming with you? And you know, we didn't really feel bad about it. She is my loving mother. But it was just good to know that people trust you. Growing up as a kid, they would depend on a lot of things. I mean, I was five and then we were already working in 13 I was out working and I could just think my parents could trust us. But also worry about us because we're out in the streets and nights.

Theresa Eckert 56:12

So would you say that you were close to your parents? You mentioned— used the word loving mother. Were you close to her?

Albert Fong 56:21

I think I was very close with my mom because she would always share things with me and I you know after she passed away, I used to think that she must have really had a good life because for someone to live to 103 You really have to have, you know, good physical health. But you also have to have good mental health psychologically you have to be strong and not knowing how to speak English and some of the things she told me as a kid. Kind of interesting. She used to go like just be careful what you sign because you could just sign a document and sign your life away and maybe you'll be deported or something, you know, and those are examples she uses. But actually she I believe she was really spiritually strong too. And to me, it was like it was important for the family because she like the matriarch of the family, kind of all the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and also aunts and uncles because they always the cousins, my cousins, nephews and nieces all had great respect for my dad and mom. Whenever they had issues, they would share it with the family and I would hear things that go on. And I really believed my mom was just a wise person. She always knew what to do, even though she couldn't read or write.

Theresa Eckert 57:58

Did your siblings all go to her as well for advice rely on her in the same way that you did?

Albert Fong 58:04

I think that was me I can share this and I think my siblings all kind of agree. I'm more like my mother than my siblings. My siblings were kind of more like my dad's side. And I saw kind of interesting things like temperament and all that is very similar to my dad's. And I didn't really noticed temperaments because most of the My family's from my dad's side immigrated to the state and lived in the Salinas area or Northern California. Not until the late 1990s. My mother had a younger brother that had emigrated from China. And he came to live with his family down in Southern California in Los Angeles. And that's when I met some of the cousins, nieces and nephews and I'd kind of noticed that their personalities are closer to me and my dad. So it was kind of interesting— the temperaments. And then my mom was a very calm person. You know, I know she worried about things but she would never show it. I don't know she and she always looked at everything in a positive direction. So that I think that was one of the good things about my mom. She always looked at things in a positive way. My dad was just a realist. And he worked hard and save money and he was a good man. So it was kind of interesting that, you know, they were separated for like 20 years and they got back together and had the four children which I am number 4 out of the 5 children

Theresa Eckert 1:00:03

So the separating, that will be the time you're just referring to the time that your mom was still in China.

Albert Fong 1:00:09

Yes. There's been a lot of interesting things that happened. Like, Republican Cafe some of the foods that they had was like the specialty items, and I still remember the stuff that the restaurant made. I didn't participate much with some of the exotic foods. I usually help with some of the simpler foods that you know, the everyday things that they came into eat. And that some of the other things like roast duck, roast pork and stuff like that was done by a couple of cooks in the restaurant. But I remember like, I used to leave Republic cafe here at nights and I would tell myself if somebody's following. So I could run home really fast.

Theresa Eckert 1:01:15

So what were the dishes that you prepare that you remember that really hold special memory to you?

Albert Fong 1:01:22

They were really simple foods I helped with making the chow mein the fried rice, the seaweed soups and some of the other simpler items that you know people came in and ordered. And you can make it really fast. But that was the kind of food that you didn't serve during the banquet. The banquet foods were like, the really exotic foods that they have.

Theresa Eckert 1:01:48

So what would be a typical banquet meal?

Albert Fong 1:01:50

Typical banquet meals? Gosh, I have to think about that because they would have like the chicken and they would have like the sweet rice in it. But you would have to de bone the chicken and you would leave the chicken still whole and they were stuff it with sweet rice and mushrooms and pork and it's like really neat that it takes so much time to make foods like that. And some of the things they made like

seaweed so— or not seaweed soup but Bird Nest Soup or shark fin soup. Some of those were the exotic soups that you would see a lot of other items the sweet and sour things. They would have Sweet Sour Chicken, stuff like that.

Theresa Eckert 1:02:46

Now, I looked at the kitchen area downstairs. And you've mentioned that they would have banquets in this space, up to 200 people and possibly two or three sittings. At night. So up to 600 people an evening. How and where did you manage to store and prepare all of the food that would be served at that banquet? What was the system in the kitchen that facilitated that? Well,

Albert Fong 1:03:15

They had a pretty big storerooms and had they have a walk-in refrigeration. So you can handle quite a bit of foods. And not only that, but if you're already preparing for those meals, they're going to be served pretty quickly. So it's kind of out of your way. Is just all the dishes that you have to wash is kind of interesting. It gets kind of chaotic, when that's happening, but you could do it.

Theresa Eckert 1:03:48

How many people worked on a kitchen—in a kitchen during a banquet?

Albert Fong 1:03:51

Actually, wasn't that many there were, like, maybe normally you have two or three cooks and maybe have two assistants in the kitchen and waiting on tables. They did okay with two-three people. We had Mrs. Ahtye that handled it but I think originally, they got a couple of more people to help out. it was pretty organized.

Theresa Eckert 1:04:20

So was in charge of it. organized it was the head person

Albert Fong 1:04:24

I would say in the kitchen my cousin Tony was in charge of the kitchen when I was working here. But the dining room area was Mrs. Jenny had time. But I think that they were very cooperative in actually nobody's really in charge. Everybody does the work together. I think it's pretty much like that in the kitchen with the two cooks too. And it was Paul forget his last name and Tony my cousin that actually worked in the kitchen.

Theresa Eckert 1:05:04

And so you'd consider yourself to be a kitchen assistant?

Albert Fong 1:05:08

I was more just a helper either anywhere. I went around helping wherever I felt like I was needed. Yeah, they weren't very demanding. I just kind of did what I can wherever I helped in both the dining room area and also the kitchen.

Theresa Eckert 1:05:26

Did you do dishes and all that as well.

Albert Fong 1:05:29

Help with washing dishes, preparing some of the foods and preparing the tables and getting them all set up with the knives forks and things like the chopsticks.

Theresa Eckert 1:05:44

What would you make in an evening? How would you sit down which was your salary?

Albert Fong 1:05:49

That is interesting. It wasn't that much because I was actually like helping my cousin here. And I was paid on the weekends like \$7.50 a day. It was like \$13 for the weekend. But I would get to eat here. Good food. But on the times that we worked on the banquets, the pay was really good that the hours were very long. I would get anywhere from two to maybe over \$300 on the weekend. That was a lot of money as a kid. It was hard work. Long hours.

Theresa Eckert 1:06:31

What are you What was your age when you started helping out here?

Albert Fong 1:06:34

I started when I was 13. But back then it was just kind of a trial. And I think I started actually working more when I was 15 ended up working more regular at age 15.

Thomas Shefflet 1:06:57

Can you tell us one of your most impressionable memories at the Republic Cafe that stands out the most to you?

Albert Fong 1:07:10

I think that it's kind of interesting that my brothers and I worked here and it was kind of fun for us to just come into the restaurant with the keys and clean up the place and we had a lot of good times together here. And I had mentioned earlier that when we set up tables, we kind of just threw them down from the balcony and caught them on the bottom side to speed things up. And we made it look like we worked like really hard but we were just really having fun. Those tables were pretty heavy too. I think they're at least 20-30 pounds. And they're you know awkward because they have four legs and they're long—elongated tables and kind of threw those things down and through the big round tops that go on top of it for the Chinese banquet because Chinese tables dinner tables are round and it's usually for setting up 10 people. So they would have to put a round top on it during the banquets. And my brothers and I needed to set that up. And interestingly when we first started here doing that, they had partitions on the walls, and they were made of solid, solid hardwood. I don't know what kind of wood it was, maybe maple or it might've been oak. But it was really heavy. And I finally later years talked Mrs. Ahtye towards it. Maybe it was wise to not have to put all these partitions back because we just kept having to put them up, set them up, take them down. And there was one a couple of partitions there. I think they weighed over a couple of 100 pounds because I've lifted the animals before and it felt like you were lifting the piano and we finally just kind of set them in the back and not used those two partitions in the

middle because they was just so heavy. But I think the interesting thing was that an exciting thing was that my brothers and I shared in that my brother Gilbert and Danny and then after that we did our things like we roamed Chinatown. We frequent some of the other places that people come to during the nightlife, but we got decided see it in the day. And it's kind of like kind of dark, dusty and dingy. But it was kind of neat that you know, we got a chance to see all these things. In fact in the later years, there's an elderly man that lived down the street here that lived there. And I actually visited him because he actually bred pigeons. And he actually I believe sold it for food. And I visited him to still check the pigeons out. And he lived in a little kind of a little dingy, cubby hole down the street there that he was probably one of the later Chinese they were still living in Chinatown. He went to visit I believe probably like in the early 70s. 71 Because I was still working in at the republic in 1971 and went off to college that year. So I worked my college years when I was going to Hartnell I was still able to work here. Could you share what it was like to walk into the Republic Cafe today for the first time in a long time? the Republic Cafe is like it brings memories because I know exactly how it looked. And it's kind of like gutted and I only see the framework now. But I kind of knew the Republic Cafe well because I used to help do some of the maintenance they used to have this big tall ladder and I would go up to fix the change the palaces and the fluorescent lighting. And occasionally there was some minor plumbing issue I would help with that. It's just a little interesting the way things are looking now.

Theresa Eckert 1:11:47

What does it look like when you walked in? When you worked here? What was it like in the dining room?

Albert Fong 1:11:55

When I came in, I just knew that it was a very solid building. I mean, it was old, but you can tell that the quality of the construction was really good. And you could see that even the ceilings had kind of a curve to it rather than just straight up 90 degrees or 90 degrees angles. It just wasn't a straight up law it had kind of a curve to it. And back then it had wall sightings that were probably very interesting and expensive to put these days. The they also had this little buzzer with a button on deep booths that they had actually these dining room tables. had individual booths that you had to privacy when you're eating and we actually decided not to use them later on because it was so much work was to set them back up. So they didn't use them anymore. But it's kind of neat to go to a restaurant and you have that privacy where you know you had your own private booth and you had a little buzzer that when you needed the waitress, you would hit that button and it'll, you know, turn a number up on the buzzer box that's near the kitchen and come out tell people I've rarely seen too many people use it. Because if somebody wanted something they would just come out of their booth or later on. They didn't even have to come out in their booth. They'll just, you know, holler out to you because the acoustics in the restaurants really did. I mean, it's got a really good balance it's this opening, no carpeting. So everything's argue here to sound very distinctively clear. I mean that was about it What did the booths themselves look like? Were they mad out of wood? Were they carved or smooth? They were just wood partitions that the walls themselves. You actually had a roller on the bottom of it. And they were like eight inches off the floor. Maybe six or eight inches I forget but you can actually just roll them to the back of the wall to open up the whole dining room area. So in the pictures you see that all the walls are actually folded back or roll back. And it was the big partitions in the middle that my brothers and I had a lot of backbreaking experience. And they had those partitions because they would have smaller tables

with just two people. And it was interesting because kind of neat to come out to sit down and you know, just eat as a couple. And but in the years that I was kind of working at the Republic, it was kind of like considered not safe to come out to Chinatown, but you know, it's still worth it to come out to eat because the food and you just have to be more careful when you're outside.

Theresa Eckert 1:15:24

What were you afraid of outside were there were there specific gangs or organizations or just a lot of, you know.

Albert Fong 1:15:31

What? There was a bad element of just people rowdy because you know, there are a lot of bars out here. And when people are intoxicated, they just act differently and could you know be rowdy and maybe arm you if you're not careful, but that didn't happen too. Often that sometimes you would have these groups are kind of gang mentality type of people that just kind of just want to do bad things that could hurt you. So you know that those are possibilities.

Thomas Shefflet 1:16:08

Is there a lot of Gi presents because

Albert Fong 1:16:12

You know, I know that that the military people did frequent this area. I didn't see them in that way. I didn't see big groups of them. But I know that there were some around and I don't know if they came out here in their plainclothes or I don't think I saw too many people in uniform out here in my time. And I know that he's talking to people in the area that a lot of people came out here because the high school kids used to want to just drive through here because it was exciting to see. They call Chinatown Skid Row or everything else.

Thomas Shefflet 1:16:58

Why would they call it the Skid Row?

Albert Fong 1:17:01

I don't know. I don't even know it's an American terminology. I really know what that means. It was like it's just kind of a rough part of town. And to me, you don't want to be telling people that you came out this direction. And then later times I saw that people get picked up for what is solicitation. What's the other side of proposition? Forget something like that. Oh, growing up that when I was younger, I used to know that there were like stings. Is that what you call it? You would know like police officers would be hanging out in an unmarked car around the corners and you have some of these girls that are out there to actually work for the police department. So we got to see all that stuff. But you couldn't really tell sometimes

Thomas Shefflet 1:18:09

There was something that you would like to leave us with. And maybe even the people who could watch this in the future. What would you like to tell people?

Albert Fong 1:18:20

I would like to tell people that the experience that I had in Chinatown was a good learning experience for me, because I see you know coming out here, you learn about people. You learn about how to interact with people. Grown up as a kid as we used to see people like the alcohol or I guess these days you come homeless and you can see him living just right by the railroad tracks. And I saw one time where these guys were cooking some soup and they had a fire and water and they barely had anything in the water like maybe some a couple of tomatoes and some vegetables. So you see that side of you know our society and is it was a good time for me. It's It was fun. And like I said it was a good learning experience and also for me to have a connect with the community. Because later on after I graduated from college, the economy was bad. And I couldn't find work I ended up helping my father in law with his he had a second answer, which was kind of reuse furniture store. And it was just about two blocks from here. And I still kind of like still living this part of you know, just part of town because the railroad tracks were open that you could walk across it and it was just about to three blocks down. And actually I had a lot of experience as a kid in this area because I had an uncle that that didn't have good eyesight and he would want his exercise so I would walk them from Alisel out every day in the mornings, and we would walk through this part of town all the way to Main Street and walk back. So I kind of saw a lot of this part of town and kind of know about the businesses. To me, it was a good experience and kind of fun for me. I ended up doing a lot of things in life. And in fact, my brothers and I own a produce company, but I don't work in it at all. That cooking part is kind of nice because I learned to cook from working in different restaurants like the Republic, but I also helped my mom in the household cooking. So I learned how to cook from her. And then my dad was a cook, but my dad was more of a what they called American food and cooked American foods. So I learned all the other things like cooking roast beef, stews, and all the other fun breakfast lunch and dinner items. So now it's kinda like I'm using some of these things. Sometimes I tell myself going so much is a purse because then you're doing everything because growing up as a kid I learned about electrical things. So I can do electrical and plumbing and doing plumbing since I was like eight or nine. I'm not a plumber, or electrician and cooking I could cook for 100 people fairly easily. Yesterday I cooked for 100 of our or actually 80 But then we had guests so we could have as much as 100 people and I had to cook it for two hours and that's including going to buy the stuff preparing and cooking. And at the same time. This doesn't need to be on the video but my wife was called to jury duty and I expected her to help but I have my granddaughter with me so she's two years old and I did all this with my granddaughter and it was kind of hectic. And one of the things that happened was when I was at the high school I accidentally locked my keys in the pickup my granddaughter was but she was napping and I left the window open enough where one of fortunately one of the girls had thin enough arms she stuck a close in your wire to pick up my keys of the saddle of the car or truck so in history was a pretty hectic Yeah, any other questions?

Theresa Eckert 1:23:32

Sorry to extend everything.

Albert Fong 1:23:34

No, that's fine.

Theresa Eckert 1:23:35

But do you share stories about your parents with your grandkids?

Albert Fong 1:23:43

You know, I should share stories with my children. Because I have four children. I don't share it with my grandkids because they're fairly young. My granddaughter, the oldest ones, only five and the one that I had yesterday is only two but we're very close. My kids are very close. And the way I share my life with them is not telling them. I share it because I experienced things with them. I still play tennis with my two younger kids. I go to like Cupertino to play with my younger son. My oldest son is involved in a lot of things. He has a restaurant business. He's actually a full time insurance agent for a big firm, but he also has he does other types of business experts and stuff like that. But that's we're very close. I mean, I have a son that works in New York, but we talk almost every day. And we probably see each other at least every two weeks because he works in New York but he flies back to live to his home in Dublin which is in Northern California. He has a crazy work schedule. He flies to New York on Sunday night. Either New York, Tampa or Pennsylvania and fly back the other way on Thursday night.

Theresa Eckert 1:25:15

Did your children know your parents did

Albert Fong 1:25:20

They—the boys knew my father. They know they're connected with all the uncles were as a family we're pretty close. My daughter didn't really know my dad because my dad died in 1979 My daughter was born in 81'. So good voice no my dad and maybe not my youngest son because he's pretty young. But the other two boys Yeah, they knew my dad, but they— all four the kids. My kids were very close to my mom and the grandkids and great grandkids actually saw my mom a lot. But in and they live in San Jose and I have a sister that lives in Union City and she's not too far away. She used to come home pretty frequently to see my mom and my brothers are in town so they very close to my mom thank you. Welcome and Belinda No, my kids do speaks in Chinese for because they have to speak to my mom in Chinese. So they try. But, feel free to ask me anything later on if you think about it. But you know for me, Chinatown. My growing up was very colorful. And I think my wife thinks that I'm really gifted with a good memory because things that happen when I was a kid growing up even in Chinatown. It's like it happened yesterday. I still remember those memories. I remember exactly how things were done in the Republican Cafe. It's just amazing. Some things I don't remember but things like that. I remember vividly.

Theresa Eckert 1:27:17

What are those vivid memories when you come back down here?

Albert Fong 1:27:25

You know, that's I—things happened, but I don't really have too many bad memories but you know, this was a rough part of town. And some of the things that I see. I kind of accepted but hoping to change it. I mean, I knew like when I was coming to wash the or, you know mop the floors and doing a gentleman, I would see like a beer truck parked outside and someone would run up to the truck in what we call lifted a case of or actually cases of beer. And that was not a good thing to see. I mean I don't like to see people steal things. Because it's not very expensive. You know, if you just work for it, you can probably buy a lot you know that. Things like that happen and like I just don't like to see that. Fortunately, there's

a lot of good people in the community and customers and that frequent the restaurant back then and hardworking people. And those are things that I remember. The restaurant was like I was working towards the low key end of the restaurant business. When the times the economics was getting bad in this part of town. But it was kind of neat to still see people trying to make it, struggling and actually they never showed that they were struggling. I mean they the restaurant during the tail end couldn't be making a lot of money. But it was a way of surviving because as I mentioned, there are people living here and they were eating here and working here. I mean your whole life is here. So it's kind of neat to see people do that and I think that if times get any worse, we may have to go back to those days working together and helping each other and that's kind of the neat part about it. That's what I hope to see happening. That's why I'm kind of involved with a lot of different things. I'm actually involved with the college I've been Hartnell college I've been on the foundation board for going on almost eight years. And I'm coaching that at high school with the tennis program and also, I was on the advisory board for the hospital. That is just if you just you know help a little bit. You know, it helps out a lot of people. And I know that the minister, the gentleman that actually works with possibly this project is Kavinsky. And he was one of my ministers at the church that I went to First Baptist Church. So he's a good friend of mine. So it's kind of neat to know him and see him in the community doing this too. And interesting things like when I was growing up, back then, like you'll see like different things happening with law enforcement, and lots of friends that were detectives back then. Now we have like, one of the gentleman's that's retired and he's running for mayor, his name is Joe Gunter. And I knew him when he was in the police force as a detective in that was a bit over 30 years ago. And so kind of neat that he still sees a lot of same people. And I met a financial advisor so I have clients and community so that's how I know a little bit more about the history of slaves because a lot of them are older to myself and they tell me some of the things that went on in the Chinatown area and also the slaves community. Maybe you could even introduce some of them.

Theresa Eckert 1:31:57

Well, we would love to so pass us their names or give them our contact information.

Albert Fong 1:32:03

I can. I'll give you some names and maybe you could start with that.

Theresa Eckert 1:32:08

We would love it. Absolutely. Well, I don't want to keep us much longer here.

Albert Fong 1:32:11

Okay. Thank you very much.

Theresa Eckert 1:32:15

No thank you so much for sharing.