

NPS-150

JOSEPH YOUNG

BIRTH DATE: NOVEMBER 18, 1910

INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 11, 1984

RUNNING TIME:

INTERVIEWER: LISA CONYERS

RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME

INTERVIEW LOCATION: (UNKNOWN)

ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY:

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PATRICIA K. HILLIARD

PORT: HONG KONG

RESIDENCE IN CHINA: CANTON

RESIDENCE IN USA: NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

NOTE: Mr. Young's wife, Alice Eng Young, was also present in the room and participated in the interview at one point.

YOUNG: ...always send money home and other villagers, you know, they have a bigger plot of land and they work the land. And in our village, there are quite a few of the people either come to America or go over to Southeast Asia; it was different area (clears throat). So in our area quite a number of families, they're fairly well off, better than the average farmer. And most of the farmers trying to either go to America, go to Southeast Asia, or just different areas. And our village is actually fairly new, new village. We moved from an old village to a new, since my father have more money. And we have, we bought some land and (clears throat)...he always...I guess he always, you know, tried to get me to America to, more or less, so I could be independent. Because at home I was young, I couldn't do much work, and he is already came to this country, you know, to bring me here, but that's to further my, our family's independence. And that's all I remember about the village, because as a child we going to school and we have a very...a small school, since our village is small. We have our neighbor, very big village, and they have a big school. Usually when I...if I continue schooling, when I finish that school in our area, I would go to the big village and at that time I maybe was in second or third grade.

CONYERS: How many people were in your family, living in China?

YOUNG: In China at that time, it's just my mother and me.

CONYERS: Oh, so you didn't have any brothers or sisters?

YOUNG: No, I have, let's see, four...four brothers. They were already here. I was the youngest one.

CONYERS: Had your father already sent for your four other brothers?

YOUNG: Sent for my others already. They were already in this country. I was the last one expected to come.

CONYERS: How did you feel leaving China?

YOUNG: Well, I feel great because, you know, since most of my family is here except for my mother. But at that time I think may be, you know, hard for her to come because she doesn't know the language. And when I was younger, when I came, I was able to, you know, learn English.

CONYERS: How did you feel leaving behind your friends and your traditions there in China?

YOUNG: Well, at that time, I don't remember too much about it. You know, I was young and going to school. I would probably feel better to come to see my father, you know, with the other brother if they were here, rather than just stay with the children back home.

CONYERS: What had you heard about the United States before coming?

YOUNG: Not too, not too much, but everybody is saying that this country is a gold mine, and, you know, you come over here that you make, make a living. In China at that time (unintelligible), most of the people are fairly poor.

CONYERS: What do you...what did you bring with you?

YOUNG: I actually didn't get (he laughs), didn't bring too much. I came at that time I remember, when I came from the village I have Chinese clothes on. And there they gave me a suit of...American-made, a sailor suit with a flap in the back, like a regular sailor. And in that time, I think about August, it's still fairly warm, so when I came that time it is closer, very light sailor suit, white with a back flap at that time. But after I came here, it was cold. I think when I arrive at this country, I think at that time about September, it was fairly cold. I remember that the clothes that were on me was too, too cold.

CONYERS: What did you bring besides clothing?

YOUNG: We had some food that the people in the import/export shop would get for me. And we had sort-of...whatever clothes that my mother sent for me was already there - a few, few clothes, few change of clothes and nothing much.

CONYERS: How did you carry all this stuff?

YOUNG: In a big...in a big basket, in a big wicker basket, where they got everything in there - my food and my luggage.

CONYERS: Had you ever traveled before?

YOUNG: No, I was never out of the village. When I first went, you know, sent for me to Hong Kong, I never knew anything about the...out, outside the village.

CONYERS: What do you remember about the trip from Canton to Hong Kong?

YOUNG: Well, was from village to Hong Kong. The Canton is the area name.

CONYERS: Oh, I see.

YOUNG: See, our village is in Canton. From my village to the Hong Kong is just a few hours, maybe about five, six hours. We went by train, by train and then by boat to Hong Kong. And that trip is more or less new for me. I, you know, at that time, I was sent out and I didn't know any...anyone.

CONYERS: What do you remember about the things you saw during that trip?

YOUNG: From our village they told me that we are going to go on a big boat, the boat they told me that was as big as our village, but actually the boat was fairly big. Our village has got about thirty houses, so it wasn't that small. But I never saw a boat that size.

CONYERS: Were most of the people on that train going to Hong Kong to...going to catch a steamship to someplace else?

YOUNG: No, no, those were not. I was the only one that going from my village to, you know, to the store.

CONYERS: Had you ever heard of someone being sent back from the United States?

YOUNG: No, I haven't. I haven't heard. I...after I came, I heard that they, you know, some of the people had got sent back, but to me I never heard of anybody sent back, that I know of, you know, of those that were with me.

CONYERS: Do you remember what you had to have in order to immigrate?

YOUNG: Well, since my father sent for me, I have all the information that is required for me to come. He is a...he is a native of the country.

CONYERS: Of the United States.

YOUNG: Yeah, of the United States. So he would be able to bring the son, to come over to this country, would be a son of a native. But the other people that would come, if they are immigrant, then they would have to have papers. I already have a paper that, you know, I would be come as the son of a native.

CONYERS: Do you...how many others were coming from China at that time?

YOUNG: That time the one that I knew, the people that stays in the store - there are two children about, one of them, I remember, was my age, one a little older. And another man that he came from this country and he went back, so he coming back from this country. So he was there at the same time. So he is supposed to look after us, because the three kids that was with the same store, that the first time they come, so he was supposed to look after us.

CONYERS: Can you describe your voyage from Hong Kong to America?

YOUNG: Well, from Hong Kong, so we...everything was taken care of, you know, our papers and things like that the people take care of. And also they bought all the food for us to bring, whatever we need in our luggage, so all the arrangement, it was made. So we send down to our storage area in the boat. In that time when we send, they have somebody that took us down and brought us down to our storage. And from there, were quite a lot of people in the storage, all the Chinese people there, must have been quite a lot of people, maybe forty, fifty, I guess. I don't know exactly how many, but now area is very crowded. We have our own little room or bunk bed. We had bunk bed. So I remember I could sleep in the

lower bunk. I know the other kids also and in the same area. And from there, I think our boat took us maybe about two weeks maybe or something like that. But within the two weeks, a lot of the children would be able to go up, up to the upper deck and would go...would let us go around and most of the older people from our area, they stayed down. A lot of them, as soon as the boat start out, they all got seasick. Most of the people got seasick, I would think, because not too many people would go up the upper deck. But the only...I remember just a few of the kids that wasn't sick. I wasn't seasick. I and other kids that, there were quite a few, maybe five or six, that I remember that go with us and we would be able to walk, you know, through the boat. I remember one time that we walk through the boat and we saw some women on the...on, I think that probably the first or second class. They talked to us and they would come out and speak to us. We'd be able to walk around. During that time, the food wasn't too good there and we'd be able to buy special food, like evening food, that we would buy and both - I could eat with or buy extra food. But most of the people (he laughs), they didn't want to have any food because of the seasickness.

CONYERS: What kind of food was the steamship company serving?

YOUNG: They serve in that area, they served Chinese food. They served rice with whatever that goes with it. But the food in there wasn't good. They not fresh food, but we used to a lot of fresh food. (Pause) But that's about all. Yeah, let me see now, after we got in the boat, we came in about two weeks. We would...we...our boat landed in Vancouver. From Vancouver, I remember that everybody happy to get out of boat (he laughs) and to, you know, have some fresh food. And the first thing that I remember is that we ate a lot, because the food was so good in Vancouver. At that time, the Chinese people were take care of all the Chinese people that traveled. They cook all the Chinese food. I was... everybody seems to, you know, to starve more or less from the food in the boat. And from there, I think we traveled on the ferry. We traveled on a ferry the first time that we would come through in a group, that somebody brought us in a group

through a ferry. The first thing I remember is somebody at the boat there, they gave us apple, you know. We didn't know what apple was at that time. I think there is a family with children and they saw us Chinese kids around, so they have a full bag of apples. I guess they thought that we could use, so they gave us apple. The first time we had apples for kids. And from there we come through like train from Vancouver to Montreal and that train ride was...I think it was maybe four or five days. I remember, remember how they're travel a long, long time. And I would...seen some of those scenery I never saw before. In that time a lot of the grass and things like that, they all wither, you know. They...I think about September then. But I don't remember any area in China the same way, because at that time the rice field is green and things like that. Everything was different. And I also remember when we landed in Vancouver. We...we saw all those big pine trees that we never saw before, with the whole area was full of pine. And we come through Canada, and one part I think was very hazardous, I think. The train was supposed to gone through, but we never saw it. It was through the night and we land...I remember we landed in Montreal. From there we have to take a boat from Montreal down to New York. And that trip was quite rough, I think. It was smaller boat, but I think we only stayed there maybe overnight, something like that. It wasn't, wasn't too long of a ride. Then when we get back, you know, down to New York, and we...that I think in...if I remember right now, it's the East River. Was probably East River and when we get off, of course, that they have Immigration people that were leading us through. And from the older people that came, I think that the man that came with us, he tell us that, as we travel by bus, from East River to Lower...to the South Ferry where we take the boat. And they show us that Chinatown was off, you know, off not far from there. They tell us that, you know, that Chinatown we saw. And then from there, from South Ferry, then we took the boat to Ellis Island, from the ferry to Ellis Island. And then we stayed at Ellis Island. I remember that they first put us up to our dormitory, up the second floor from what I could remember now, the place of the big hall, the big area. And we stay up there waiting for...you know, for my father to clear me, I guess, to bring me. But I think, at

that time my...the witness (he burps), the witness, that he came, he knew me in China, so he arrange as a witness. But he saw me there, because my father knew him. And I think at that time, they were saying that maybe some information have to come from Washington, something like that. That's why it was a delay, you know, to talk to me then. And from there, we stay...we stay in Ellis Island for those couple of weeks. We just wait. You know, we come out and wait. I remember that about two o'clock, I think, they have somebody that come with a bucket full of milk and with some cookies. They would call us, call all the kids out to give us milk and cookies. I think also...I think four o'clock they also gave us that – a milk break for the kids that come out. Then in that, in that time, all we'd know is this is our dormitory, but we could walk around up in the top for awhile. But we were not allowed to go anywhere. But the woman on the other end of the dormitory, the opposite end, I remember one time that there's a Chinese lady over there. I think she having some sort of trouble, sick or something, but she couldn't make herself understood. And they tried to get one of the men from our area to talk to her. That's about all I remember from that time. And (pause) in that time, I don't remember too much, the area.

CONYERS: What do you....what did you see when you came into the New York harbor?

YOUNG: The New York harbor is in the boat. I think we come in in the little boat, coming into with the little boat, come in...actually came in to the East River with (unintelligible), so I didn't see too much. (Pause)

CONYERS: Okay.

YOUNG: Okay? You know...

CONYERS: Can you describe for me your stay at Ellis Island?

YOUNG: Not, not too much, because we only stay on this dormitory. And I know there

quite a few of the people are there and most of them are quite unhappy, I think because they wanted to get out. And they didn't know when they gonna get out and they didn't know when their relatives or whoever that was gonna come for them. But I think most of them are gone before...I, I was probably the...maybe the last one to leave. I think most of the...like the man that brought us, it only took him just a couple of days. I think he...he had all his papers already and he left. After he left, and then the other two kids that came with me, they also left. I was about the last one that...in our group. Of course, the other people that I didn't know. I just know that we were staying with them.

CONYERS: How long did you stay on Ellis Island for?

YOUNG: Two...I would think about...maybe about two weeks, just about two weeks.

CONYERS: How were you treated there?

YOUNG: I was treated very well, that the kids have, you know, fairly a good time there. The older people didn't care for it, because they were...have to stay in the dorm. They couldn't go anywhere and they didn't know the outcome, whether the people come for them or not.

CONYERS: Do you remember at all what Ellis Island looked like?

YOUNG: Not, not at all because we were just in that area, in the big room.

CONYERS: Could you try and describe the Great Hall?

YOUNG: Well, the Great...I remember the Great Hall. We were up in the balcony. We...at that time, we were not...we were not permitted to go down or we never went down. You know, just up in the balcony, we walk around the balcony. And when my father came for us, I think they brought us down. They have a

interrogation officer. I think we had to come into like an office. They would bring us in to talk. I think they asked one at a time, I think, they just asked a question. And, you know, I think my father was in there when they asked me. Then after it was, everything was okay, and then my father would come and meet me. And also, the witness is also there. I think they...I don't know when they questioned him in another room or not, but we weren't together when they asked. (Long pause) I think, I think that's all I can remember on there.

CONYERS: Do you remember, what did you eat? What did you eat while you were there?

YOUNG: I don't remember exactly what we eat, because I don't remember there is any big dining hall. I think we...if we eat in some place, it be fairly small, not a big place.

CONYERS: What were the workers like?

YOUNG: Ah....

CONYERS: Were they kind and...

YOUNG: We...I don't remember we come in contact with any worker in the island. In that time, this last time that we want to visit the island, we were shown all different places, but we never saw any of those places. See, we were only confined to the big...the dormitory. We haven't seen any of the other area. And there are very few people that we come in contact with. We saw the people downstairs, the big room, a lot of activity going on downstairs.

CONYERS: What stories did you hear about some of the other immigrants there?

YOUNG: Some of the other immigrants, a lot of them, I remember, a lot of them were very...while they have a lot of time on their hand, they would carve wood benches they sit on. Besides the bunk bed, a lot of them carve poetries and things like that in them. Some of them that read, you know, some of them, they have their books they would read. And then I don't know whether they had newspaper or not. I don't remember. As us kids, we didn't read newspaper. So they, I guess they had nothing to do. (Long pause) See, the Ellis Island itself there, we never, we never saw.

CONYERS: Who'd...what were the workers there wearing, the officials on the island?

YOUNG: I don't recall whether they worker or other people, because at that time everybody looks the same to me.

(END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1)

(BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1)

CONYERS: How long did it take before you got your legal problem fixed up?

YOUNG: I think about two weeks. I remember a quite a lot of other people, they left; I was still there. I think the man that...that return, the man, he was the...one of the first got off. He left maybe within either one or two days, so we were the only one left. And then the other...the children that was with me, and they left maybe about either four or five days or so. And I was...seem to me that I was the last one in that group that was still around.

CONYERS: What were you waiting for?

YOUNG: I think we had to wait for something from Washington, either the witness or my papers or something like that, or my father's paper or something like that, that we didn't get, didn't get to New York area.

CONYERS: How often did you see your father during that two-week period?

YOUNG: None. No, we don't, we never saw my father. I think it's...even the interrogation, we were asked questions separately. I think after everything was okay before my father saw me. Then my witness, I think they come at the same time. I think they ask the three of us separately.

CONYERS: What kind of questions did they ask you?

YOUNG: They ask all family questions, you know, who my father, how old he is and things like that. And how many brother did I have, brother and sisters I have, things like that. And also...and the witness where I, when I met him, and things like that. We saw him about a year before I came, so most of his questions I think asked when...what school did I go to, and things like that. And also asked how my house was situated, which way is it faced, what neighbor on the right and the left and the front and the back, and things like that.

CONYERS: Why did they ask you these questions?

YOUNG: To find out whether I was the same as my father, I guess. They asked my father to describe his different family, I think.

CONYERS: So it's to make sure you...that it was really...

YOUNG: That I was the right one, yeah.

CONYERS: Yeah.

YOUNG: Because since I never seen my father here, you know. In China, I saw him there, but, you know, went over here, you know, would be the right one.

CONYERS: When did you see your father for the first time in America?

YOUNG: After the interrogation, after they said I was the one, so then they let me see him.

CONYERS: Where did you meet him? Were you on Ellis Island still?

YOUNG: Right after the...I think the interrogation. Maybe it took...I don't know whether the same morning or not, I think the morning that we have the interrogation. I

think it was probably the same day. I think in the afternoon, then everything, they said, was okay, then I meet him then.

CONYERS: How did you feel when you first saw him?

YOUNG: I feel good (he laughs), you know, that I was okay.

CONYERS: Did you recognize him right away?

YOUNG: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, and he also recognize me. I think we had some pic...before I came, they ask for my picture. So I send him the picture to make the paper. So I recognized him and he recognized me.

CONYERS: What did you do after you met your father?

YOUNG: After I met my father, so we come back, I think also with the witness. I don't remember whether we went to Chinatown or not. It could be we went to Chinatown. I know we must have go someplace to eat, because my father had, he has a laundry in Newark. But I think when he came over, he usually have a place in Chinatown that he stays. So we must have, you know, stopped in Chinatown and have something to eat and to get whatever business he had to take care of. Then he...after that, then he took me back to his laundry. He had the laundry in Newark.

CONYERS: Do you remember leaving Ellis Island, getting on the ferry or...?

YOUNG: Yeah, then I remember the three of us.

CONYERS: The witness, your father, and yourself?

YOUNG: Yeah, the witness and my father, then we came off the island and then, and then he took me to, you know, wherever.

CONYERS: What do you remember about Manhattan when you first went to Manhattan?

YOUNG: Not too much, just Chinatown, I think. But the area...see there is one store that I remember that they do business with the other store, which is also import/export business, that we went there. I think between the two, I think they had all the communications with those. The area, the one in Market Street, is the one that we usually go to. And that's the one that my father buys his groceries and that do all different kind of business there.

CONYERS: Did you know any English when you came?

YOUNG: No (he laughs), I didn't know any English at all.

CONYERS: How did you manage to get by without the English at first?

YOUNG: I didn't have to use any English, because wherever I go, I had somebody that knew.

CONYERS: Your father or someone?

YOUNG: Well, my father brought me back to the laundry and then he enrolled me to school. I remember (he laughs) that I was just eleven years old when he enrolled me to school. I was in second grade, I think. In the second grade in school, my...of course, my other thing that I was higher, like math and things like that, you know. I was much higher, but I have to learn the second grade English.

CONYERS: So how old were the people you were going to school with?

YOUNG: Well, they were little kids. I think they were second grade kids. I remember that (he laughs) the seat was so small for me, I had to squeeze in.

CONYERS: (She laughs)

YOUNG: And I also remember what I read, The Little Red Hen (he laughs).

CONYERS: (She laughs).

YOUNG: That's the only thing I remember about The Little Red Hen. Then I...from that school there, and I learned most of my English there. But my other math and things like that I took in higher, because I knew, you know, more math and the other schooling.

CONYERS: What other experiences do you remember as a newcomer to the United States?

YOUNG: Well, that room was...that school day when I was trying to learn English in a regular school, but on a Sunday, I went to a Sunday school, where they have a Chinese Sunday school. There they would teach you English, you know, with a teacher who, more or less, teach you a lot of English and also teach you the Bible stories and things like that. And I went there for quite a long time. In fact, I went to more than one Sunday school, because different Sun...different church have different classes, where they teach the Chinese immigrant the English. I remember one church that we went earlier. I think it was twelve o'clock, then finish, I think, about one-thirty or two [o'clock]. Then the other one, which start at two o'clock, and I went there. I went there to continue on some of the English, to learn English, yeah. So I, more or less, go to different places try to learn English.

CONYERS: Was your, was your name ever changed or altered from the way it was in China?

YOUNG: Yeah, when I first came, my name was Ng Sue Tow. That was my regular Chinese time, but they spell N-G there for Ng. But now most of the people that say they couldn't spell it. So they put a E in front of it, E-N-G, Eng Sue Tow. And at school, I also have to...that's my legal name when I came in. At the Sunday school that I remember, the Bapti...the Baptist Memori...the Baptist Memorial Church, yeah, the Baptist Church, I was baptized there. When I was baptized there, they gave me an English name, Joseph. So I used Joseph Eng as my...like a baptismal name. Then from then on, I still used the other name, but I also used my English name. See, I never did, you know, have it legally changed because in the baptismal, I guessed I could use that as my baptismal name. So I used both of them throughout my...

CONYERS: On all your legal records?

YOUNG: ...all my legal records. Yeah, I used Joseph Eng Young. The Eng is my surname. Actually the Ng that is Chinese, the Ng is a surname. The Eng Young is my Chinese name. The Ng Sue Tow is my legal name when I come in.

CONYERS: Did you ever have any problems with the two names, people getting confused or...?

YOUNG: At first when I was in school, I have a lot of trouble with my Chinese name. So they would call me either Sue Tow or Eng.

CONYERS: Were most of the children in that school Chinese?

YOUNG: No, American school.

CONYERS: Did you have any problems with the other children making fun of you or discrimination or anything like that?

YOUNG: Yeah, well, especially the name. Sue Tow is like a girl's name, I think. That's why I didn't (he laughs), I didn't care for it. So at the school, I still used that name, but other than that I used my, my...

CONYERS: ...baptismal...

YOUNG: ...my baptismal name. That's Joseph. They call me Joe.

CONYERS: Did you work once you got into the United States?

YOUNG: Well, I was too, I was too, you know, too young to work, so I go to school, a Chinese school. You know, the Chinese and English.

(Pause)

CONYERS: How many other relatives...? (Bang) Oops.

YOUNG: This one finished.

CONYERS: Okay. (Bang)

ALICE: You could say that you didn't work really as people going out to work, but since you were work...living with your father, you worked in the laundry. You helped with the laundry, then you helped in the restaurant, right?

YOUNG: Yeah.

ALICE: I mean...

YOUNG: But the restaurant wasn't operated by...

ALICE: The women in those days...would you like some cookies or crackers and cheese or date nut bread or cream cheese....

CONYERS: No, thank you.

ALICE: ...or chicken or something,...

CONYERS: No, thank you. Nothing..

ALICE: ...a little just to tide you over? But what I mean is, you didn't like stop and go to work, but you were going to school and then working, helping with the laundry and stuff like that. Until...

YOUNG: You want me to skip some time...?

ALICE: ...you went away to college, right?

YOUNG: Yeah.

ALICE: Well, I wrote down. I didn't want to interfere, but people get over here...that you asked him whether people got confused with the two names. But actually ever since he was baptized and became so-called Americanized, since he had the name Joseph, he went along with Joseph Eng. See, the Chinese have this, when you're born, you have a certain name, like Ng Sue Tow. And then lots of times when they get older, they have...they go to school...they have a different given name that they choose themselves. So then he had this other name, Young. So instead of Ng Sue Tow, he used Ng Sue Young and then he dropped the middle and he'd just say Ng Young. Only he spelled the surname different, with the E, so it...people would call it Eng instead of Ng. You know what I mean, to pronounce it? And then when he got baptized, he just used Joseph Eng Young, so when he went to night school, right, when he went away to college and graduated. So ever since...

YOUNG: Yeah.

ALICE: ...he went, anything of substance...

YOUNG: Any of...all the school I went...

ALICE: ...like his college degree or his certificate for different things. And ever since then, he's been using Joseph Eng Young. And we've used it in our marriage and the children use it. And the only time he used the other name was for voting, when he needed a proof of citizenship, that he needed for voting. But since we moved to New Hyde Park, we've even changed it. We just asked that we want to vote under Young, and they ask you what other name you formerly voted under, because lots of other immigrants are doing that. Then we said we voted under Ng Sue Tow, and I said I voted under Alice Ng, because that was his surname in New Jersey for 39 years. You know what I mean? So now we have our voting certificate with Joseph Eng Young and Alice Eng Young, and there is really no question asked because lots of people changed their name...

CONYERS: Yeah.

ALICE: ...whether they go do it in court or they just assumed different names. But we always like for voting purpose or when they need proof of citizenship, we would use his...the name he came under, whereas in daily life, everybody knows us as Joseph Eng. And all our kids went to school and college and whatever and...with Eng Young, Eng Young. Yeah, 'cause they always write Eng because that's really the family name, you know? Because I know of lots of other Chinese families who have become Americanized, have...the father's name was like Wong this and that, or Chin this and that. And then instead of Wong, of having the last name as Wong, they have the father's Chinese given name (she laughs) as the last name, because the Chinese believe that you're born with your family name. So that is why all

the...all the names were given with the family name first and the given name last.
So now in this country, we...

YOUNG: We just turn them around.

ALICE: ...reverse it, but then everybody, like my son...Eng Young, instead of switching it to Ronald Eng or Judith Eng, like my daughter was known as Linda Eng Young. And I have a son up in Massachusetts, Ronald Eng Young and my daughter Judith Eng Young, instead of just Eng, you know, so... That's how it's been, so we just been using Eng Young, because when I met him that's what I knew him as (she laughs) - Joe Young.

CONYERS: (She laughs)

YOUNG: That's only in grade school, at that time, that I still use...

ALICE: Yeah.

YOUNG: Because I was baptized about twelve years old, twelve...twelve, thirteen?

ALICE: It was not long after you came from China.

YOUNG: It was about thirteen, thirteen or fourteen.

ALICE: Because that's where he learned his English in the churches. I think in order to Christianize the people, they were just giving them things that they needed.

YOUNG: Yeah, well...

ALICE: So he went to two Sunday schools every Sunday, just so that he'd learn English.

YOUNG: Learn English.

ALICE: So he got baptized, you know, not long after he came. And he started Ameri...all the fellows with the last name N-G started changing it to E-N-G because they couldn't pronounce the N-G, you know. And then they gave themselves American names.

YOUNG: Oh, but N-G, I think, is only on immigration there that, you know, they could change.

ALICE: Well, there are still families with the N-G.

YOUNG: Yeah. That's how they would lose it, yeah.

ALICE: Yeah, well some people just leave it alone, others will try to be fashionable and copy their friends, so they'd just change it, so. Like I know my friend's daughter, her name is Debbie, D, Deb...Debbie and now she pronoun...spells it D-E-B-I, instead of D-E-B-B-I-E.

CONYERS: Yeah, to be fashionable.

ALICE: Yeah, like, you know, people changing...

CONYERS: Yeah.

ALICE: ...it, you know.

CONYERS: Yeah, a lot of people do that.

ALICE: Yeah. And they don't go to court to change it.

CONYERS: Or Jayne, J-A-Y-N-E.

ALICE: Yeah, so...

CONYERS: It's because it's too complicated.

ALICE: Anyway I didn't want to interfere, but if you want to stop and eat something, if you're hungry.

CONYERS: Oh, no, that's okay. (Pause) Some thought I had in my head, I can't remember it now. Oh, about working, you worked with your dad?

YOUNG: Yeah...ladies and gentlemen, continue and okay.

ALICE: He's never went away to school. He has had sort of a very broken education, because he was in grade school just a few years and he dropped out and didn't graduate. And then he went through a series of like working in a restaurant and taking math and science courses. And then he went to this Newark Technical School in Newark for eight years part-time to take high school subjects.

YOUNG: Yeah, well, I (unintelligible).

ALICE: Equivalency, right? And then he spent four years taking college credits. And then he saved enough money and then he went away and lived in college for like four quarters in Indiana and got his Bachelors, came back and he went to airplane mechanics school and stuff like that. He just worked his way from mechanic to an engineer and sent four kids to college. So (she laughs), I think that's pretty good for a little kid who came over to this country by himself.

CONYERS: Yeah, really.

ALICE: I mean, like...

CONYERS: That's quite an accomplishment.

ALICE: I, I...you know, I can't believe that he could even remember, because he's been here sixty-one years. I can't remember that much, you know.

YOUNG: I can remember some words.

ALICE: And I'm sixty-six. I can't remember much, you know?

YOUNG: Some I can remember. I still don't remember exactly where we eat over there.

ALICE: At Ellis Island, where you eat?

YOUNG: In Ellis Island.

ALICE: Because when we went to visit and they said that's where they ate, he didn't think he ate there.

YOUNG: That's the big area.

CONYERS: There's a different area.

YOUNG: There's a different area. There's a different area.

CONYERS: Also that they had.

YOUNG: I think on this side, on the big hall there on one side, must have had another kitchen.

CONYERS: Or, yeah, they could have done that also.

YOUNG: Yeah, because we didn't go to the big area at all.

CONYERS: Did you ever help your father work in the laundromat in Newark?

YOUNG: Yeah, in the laundry, not laundromat.

CONYERS: Oh, I see.

YOUNG: At that time they...(pause). Yeah, I help my father in the laundry. And when I first started, when I was small, and I have to use a box under to raise me high enough to iron handkerchiefs and things like that. And I helping him until I was about fifteen, sixteen years old, then I start to go to help in a restaurant. The laundry at that time, he could take care of it without my help, so I started to go out to the restaurant. The restaurant also need help in that time and I was still too young to work out in the dining room, so I help in the kitchen. And I do, you know, all sorts of...do everything else except wash the dishes. We peel potatoes, you know, celeries, and things like that. Then I worked there for two years or so, and I was old enough that I could work out on the...wait on table. Where at that time, I was still young, I didn't have a station to work. I worked with the other waiter. The other waiter was busy, so they gave me some table to wait on, and that's how I, you know, do to make some money and, you know, make tips and things like that. Then I worked in the restaurant for about two years, then I was old enough to take the regular job and I worked maybe a few months as a regular job. But then I figured at that time I wanted to finish the grade school, but I didn't have enough time to go to high school. So I was working on the weekend and then I'd go to...well, at the beginning, when I was working on the restaurant, I tried to study the English. And I wanted to get some trade school in, so I learned a trade because I didn't have enough schooling to go to high school. So I made up a lot of the English. When I was working, I was studying by myself. And then

I work the weekend. I would have a regular waiter's job and the weekday, I would go to school. And at one point, I had enough money to start trade school, and I learned to be an automobile mechanic, that you could do something with your hand. And I took that, and also, besides that, I took some English. And I went to...they call it Stewart Automobile School in New York City in that time. I went there and I think the cost was only about fourteen [dollars] a month. Then when I finished the course, my manual thing, I did it very well. But when it come to electricity that I need to read, then I have trouble reading, because my English wasn't that good. So I finish that, then I still continue. I need more English, so I went to another school they called Chamberlain School, which is more private school in Brooklyn just to learn English. And I went there for about a year. And after that, in the meantime, I work in the weekend. I have a steady job in the weekend in a restaurant, and during the weekdays sometimes I do substitute as a waiter. Then after that then I have enough English and on the other subject, I could continue as high school. So I went back to Newark and went to Newark Technical School. Used to be called Newark Technical School and afterward they call it Newark College of Engineering. There I go to school nighttime, in night school, then I work during the day and went night school. It took me about four years of that and I have enough of credit to give me a college credit. So I...after that I finish all my high school subject from the Newark Technical School and then went to Newark College of Engineering. I went there for about two years, but still night school and the college credit. Then from there on, I save enough money. See, if I continue in night school, it would take me another six years before I graduate as an Engineering course. So at that time I saved enough money working through the weekend, that I could go to another school, but I could go to the day time, spend full time to finish in another two years. So when they come to that time, it was right between 1933, '32 - '33. When I just have enough money to go out to school, I selected...(pause)...let's see, Tri-State College, out in Indiana. See, they have a two, a two-year course to finish. I have enough credit so if I go two years days, I would finish my degree. But before I went there, that's the time that Mr. Roosevelt closed (he laughs) that one bank.

CONYERS: Oh, no.

YOUNG: I...that's the time that they closed the bank, but I needed the money to go out. But it is luckily that I just went there enough time to took all my money out and put the money into a postal savings, which I could draw out anywhere. So at that time I took my money and went out to Tri-State College. And I would finish my engineering degree there. So over there, they have four term during the year. They have no summer school, but you go through four terms, so I'd be able to go to day school full-time through the summer. And I finished my degree there as a mechanical engineering.

CONYERS: Wow. That's nice.

YOUNG: After I finished that, then when I come back, that's in 1934. I finished in 1934. When I come back to Newark at that time, I still couldn't get a job. So, since I didn't get a job, so I thought maybe I'd take another something more technical, so I get enough experience to get a job. So I went to...at that time I have enough credit on my mechanical and also I have quite a few subjects on aeronautical engineering. So with that, I went to Casey Jones School for Aeronautics in Newark. There they have a concentrated course on Aeronautical Engineering. But I took the mechanics course, which allows me to get a license, licensed mechanic, and I have airplane and engine mechanic's license. After that, that's a fourteen-month course, after my engineering degree. Then I, after Casey Jones, I have enough that I could work in aircraft, but...

END SIDE B, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2

YOUNG: In 1936, I still didn't get a job, but after I finished, I still went back there to get me more experience. Luckily at that time, this one company that came over from the West, he was interested in building some machine shop on a truck, a mobile machine shop. And he had an idea that, at that time, a lot of people would need a place where you could repair airplanes. I was interested in airplanes after I finished from Casey Jones. He heard that some student graduated from Casey Jones. He wanted somebody to work with him to build this mobile machine shop. His name is Kraus. His company called Kraus Laboratory. So he needed somebody, a student, so he interview some Chinese people, because he want to get...he had an idea that in China at that time maybe would need some airplane that he could supply this mobile machine shop to repair airplane. So I was interview and he liked my credentials, so he hired me. So I worked with him for about two years as a mechanic and also do engineering work. He does the designing and I would do the work. And that...we took about two years' time to build this machine shop to repair airplane. We called it "mobile airport." And that takes us into just right before the World War II in 1940. In 1939 we were still building the machine. And what it was during the war, we had a lot of order from the Government. We build this machine shop for the U.S. Government and also the ordnance for the Government. And also, in rada...we build radar mounts for the Navy. That was with Raytheon. Raytheon is...they build the radar and we build the mechanical mounts for them. And all through the year that I worked with Kraus, we start off with about six people. Then during the war, after the war year, we have about seven hundred people working, during the war. And (clears throat), I work for a mechanic all through the different time, different period. I was an engineer. I worked...at that time, I was only there by myself. After... during the war, we hired a lot of people up, and still looking for them. And during...in 1941, I think it was, we awarded the Navy E. You know, we produce enough war equipment to...so we very efficient. They called it the Navy E. So during all that time that I work with the war effort. After that, 1946, 1945, the war was over. And the company lasted until 1946. Of course, during all that time, he was doing the work more or less just for the Army and the Navy. That's

more interesting then, and after the war he was trying to get a peacetime industry. So he built a lot of welding equipment, things like that, for commercial use, which it didn't, at that time, it didn't work out. So the company more or less stopped, you know. He was still running it a little bit, but he lay off mostly everybody. I was laid off then. And after that, I was out of that 1946. 1947, I was working odds and ends job as engineering. I was working for job shops for a while. Then we had, right after the war, a lot of Chinese students. Those students from China came over here during the war. They couldn't go back, so they worked in industry. And a group of the Chinese students, they get together and bought some, bought themselves one of those old factory that produced during the war. So they bought the factory and reconditioned some of the machinery and sell a lot of machinery to South America, to Korea, to China, to Taiwan at that time. And they had an idea that they eventually...they want to produce something for China. So they organized a company called China Motor. It just a Chinese student. They organize themselves and then they have a lot of shareholders from the Chinese group. They bought a factory in Linden, New Jersey, that used to be a wartime industry. We bought that. Over there, at that time, they were looking for some Chinese engineers, so I was out of work so I applied. And I was hired there to produce not the motor yet, but in the refrigeration unit. Coca Cola, in that time, they were...right after the war, they built a lot of machinery to produce the Coca-Cola, with a refrigeration unit to make it cold. We have a unit like that and we got the order for half a million units. So we got, you know, quite a lot of money then. So we produced that for them for about two years. But in 19...(pause)...39, I think it was, the business wasn't good. So we more or less didn't make it, because at that time the metals industry that gave out that contract, we have a lot of trouble with the unit. So they have a lot of recall, so they said well, we couldn't make it, so you could have all your equipment, you know. Instead of paying us the cash, they pay us...they give us all the equipment. But, at that time, we didn't have enough cash to carry us on, so we more or less close up and I lost my job again (he laughs).

CONYERS: Oh, no.

YOUNG: Then I, after that, then I went to work for Bendix, Bendix Eclipse in Teterboro. That's another aircraft...

CONYERS: Oh, I see.

YOUNG: ...manufacturer. I worked there for about two years, but since I travel so long, I...at that time I didn't drive, so I usually have a ride or go out. If I didn't have that ride, it would take me an hour and a half to get out there. So I change my job from there. I work there about two years and I change my job to Newark. That's called Kon Mong [ph] Zipper Factory. They make zippers for pants and things like that. Then I work for them for about another two years as a design engineer and at Bendix, I also design engineer. And after that from, from Kon Mong, then I change the job. They were on strike. Then when I...when they were on strike, I went out and looked for a temporary job, waiting for the strike to go back. Then I got a job with U.S. Tools, U.S. Tools in East Orange. It's a machine tool manufacturer. So when when Kon Mong hired again, so I didn't go back. So I stay with the U.S. Tool for about nine years, a machine tool manufacturer. And after that, then I went to work for Rototran, a company in Newark. This factory makes a seal, a sealing machine for sealing packages for plastic packers where they seal it, the sealing package. I work for them for about another two years, then from there, then I went back to Kon Mong again. They were hiring engineers, so I wanted to get back to them. And they offered me a pretty good job as a project engineer. So after I got the job, I didn't want to move, move out of the place. That's why I stayed in the area, because I didn't drive. So I wanted to stay in the area, but at that time they were thinking of moving. Kon Mong was, you know, thinking of moving to the outskirts. So now, after I got the job for...I worked there for about two months, they talking about changing. So I didn't want to change, so I thinking of moving again myself. I didn't want to stay with them, so I got the job with Westinghouse in Bloomfield, which I could travel to very

easily, about twenty minutes or so. So I went with them for about nine years. I stayed with them as Bloomfield (unintelligible).

CONYERS: Westinghouse?

YOUNG: Westinghouse. That was a Lamp Division in Westinghouse. I eventually retire from Westinghouse. I was sixty-five. It's a mandatory retirement. So I retired from, you know, from them over there. And after my retirement, I hang around for about a year, for about fifteen months. Then not enough work for me to do, so I went and looked for another part-time job. And I got another part-time job right around the corner from me.

CONYERS: Uh-huh. That's right.

YOUNG: This is a construction company. He was a general contractor, electrical general contractor. So with my background, I could do a lot of his work, so I went with them. They have some odd work for me to do, so I took a job from them. So I could vary my time. I could work three days or two days, whatever I want to. So I stayed with them for about three years. Then after that, then we moved. Then, you know, we had to move...

CONYERS: To here?

YOUNG: over here, to here. That place getting a little bit too...

CONYERS: Too rough?

YOUNG: Too rough, so my daughter is going to buy a house over here, so she said, "Well, we could buy a house big enough to, you know, for you to come." So we came here about three years ago. So we're here about three years now. Now I'm very retired after all that (he laughs). My wife, she was working all that time, up to the

time that she had to quit, you know, to come here. She worked in a school as a school clerk. Okay, that will take care of up to this time.

CONYERS: Your jobs. How many children do you have?

YOUNG: Oh, I have four children. I got two boys and two girls. My older boy, he's...he's now...(pause)...in 1940...(pause)...he was born in 1941. He's...he's...he's forty-three years old now. He's forty-three.

CONYERS: Yeah.

YOUNG: And he's got two children, like a one boy and one girl. And I have my older daughter; she was two years younger. And my...this other daughter that I live with, she was two years younger than her. She was born in 1945. And I have another son. He was born in 1948.

CONYERS: That's (unintelligible).

YOUNG: Yeah. Yeah, my older son, he's graduated from MIT. He's got the...a Master from there. And he's something with aeronautic...aeronautics and astronautics (he laughs). Funny combination, but now he works with a company that does a lot of computer work. He's a systems engineer. He worked for a small company. He, right after college, right after he got his Master, he went with this company, all this time, a very small company. But he does a lot of odd jobs with other company. He does a lot of government jobs, too, at the time. My older daughter, she's in occupational therapy. When she finished Tufts University, she worked with...trained for about twelve years, then she changed. She now is working in computers. She works for (unintelligible) as...with computer. Now she changed her job just last month. Now she works for MIT.

CONYERS: Wow. That's great.

YOUNG: She works MIT as...

CONYERS: What's she doing there?

YOUNG: She also works in the office. She do computer work on the computers to take care of the MIT employees' pension, on the pension crew.

CONYERS: Wow.

YOUNG: She just got this job. She seems to like it there. In the bank, she was alright, but she worked for about four years, four and a half years. And my...this third one, this younger daughter that I live with, she had...she went to the University of Pennsylvania. She took Sociology course and she also took a course in...she minored in Oriental Studies.

CONYERS: Oh, wow.

YOUNG: Yeah. And when she finished, she came home and she worked for some employment agency, but employment counselor. She worked in New Jersey for a while, then she came over, worked in Brooklyn. And then she was finally a supervisor (he burps) at...with the employment counselor. I think she was sent over to work in the Harlem area for quite a few years. She was supervisor there and...

CONYERS: Where is that?

YOUNG: Huh?

CONYERS: Where is that, you said? Highland?

YOUNG: No, in Harlem. In Harlem.

CONYERS: Oh, in Harlem.

YOUNG: In the Harlem area.

CONYERS: I see, yeah.

YOUNG: She was supervisor there. I guess, you know, she worked until she had her first baby.

CONYERS: Oh, yeah, I see.

YOUNG: She work until the last minute. I think she quit the night before the baby came.

CONYERS: Yeah, oh, my goodness.

YOUNG: Yeah. Now the baby is nine years old now. And the second daughter is four, four and a half. She have two daughters.

CONYERS: It's better than a two-year-old.

YOUNG: Yeah (he laughs). And my...another youngest son is a...he is bi-, let's see bio-technical supply.

CONYERS: Oh, yeah. You were just saying.

YOUNG: Yeah. I don't remember exactly what...he first worked for Bell Lab in New Jersey. He...first he went to Brown, and he didn't like it, so he came back. And he took courses in RCA, all those technical courses. And then he got...after he finished RCA electronics school, he went with Bell Lab and he worked there for a

while. Then they sent him to school and after they work them for a while, then they send to school. And he wants to continue his engineering degree, so he left there and went to Whitman Polytechnic at that time to get his degree. So he got his degree there. Then he got a job with...let's see, the New York Hospital, the New York Hospital to repair all their electronics equipment there. Then a...he worked there for maybe three or four years. Then he changed to a Veterans' Hospital. Now he is bio...biological engineering degree. I think he got an engineering degree. He is a supervisor there now, but he still have that job there now. (Pause) I think that's about all for the children.

CONYERS: How do you feel about your experiences as an immigrant?

YOUNG: I feel very, very good. Country treat me very well because, you know, in my livelihood, I try to do what I can to help, you know, to do what I can for the country. And now this is my country, you know. I'm a citizen and have all my children here. See, my father went back to China. He died and my mother died there, so I don't have any family back there in China now. So all my family is here, and my wife is born here, so all my family is here.

CONYERS: Well, thank you very much...

YOUNG: Yeah. Okay.

CONYERS: ...for doing this program.

YOUNG: Yeah, thank you.

(End Interview)