CUMYOW, GORDON WON
(DOCUMENTATION)

3131: 1-3

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FD5 MARLATT, DAPHNE — Interviewer

FD6 CUMYOW GORDON WON — Interviewee

FD7 — Restrictions

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FD8 — Birthdate

FD9 — Deceased

FD10 1977 — Taping Date

FD11 1860'S — Per. Start

FD12 1970'S — Per. End

FD13 — Special Date

FD14 — References

ITTER, CAROLE
VANCOUVER BC
FREEMASONS
KUOMINTANG
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FD5 Marlatt, Daphne — Interviewer

FD6 Cumyow, Gordon Won — Interviewee

FD7 — Restrictions

T — Transcribed

FD8 — Birthdate

FD9 — Deceased

FD10 1977 — Taping Date

FD11 1850 — Per. Start

FD12 1970 — Per. End

FD13 — Special Date

FD14 — References

Ittery, Carole
Vancouver BC
Strathcona neighbourhood
Chinese-Canadians
Chinese Freemasons
Cumyow, Won

FD15 — Keywords

BC History
Immigration
ethnic groups
social conditions
economic conditions
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gambling
fraternal organizations
race relations

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WORKSHEET

FDTXT 13131 Accession No. Tape No.

Up to 1,000 characters—abstract or summary.

Tape 1, Side 1

Interviewee born in Vancouver. Father was Won Cumyow--discusion of surname switch, from Won to Cumyow. Grandparents came by sailing boat in 1850's; grandfather ran supply store for goldrush miners in Fort Douglas; later moved to New Westminster. Father was first Chinese born in Canada (possibly); also was first Chinese court interpreter, spoke Chinook as well.

Gambling: now syndicate gambling forbidden; not so in old days. Also Chinese lottery was very popular; later suppressed by Magistrate Oscar Orr who gave jail sentences. Assault cases more frequent in old days: white drunks. Vancouver's Chinatown not as criminally organized as San Francisco's.

Tape 1, Side 2

Pre-franchise ban on Chinese entering certain professions. Medicine didn't discriminate, Chinese doctors early got training in States. Interviewee studied law for 3 years but wasn't allowed to article.

Brief history of relationship between Freemasons and Kuomintang; attempted coup of Freemasons by young Chinese immigrants. Stricter laws & more integrity on police force here prevent Vancouver from being like San Francisco re fighting tongs & gangsterism.

Raids on gambling clubs in old days & techniques for slowing down police: evidence hid in v-joint planking in room; spring locks on doors & lookout; narrow corridor prevented police from battering down door. Number of contemporary social clubs are really gambling clubs.

Opium sold across counter in father's days: vaults used to keep it in.

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Opium sold across counter in father's days: vaults used to keep it in.

Tape 2, Side 1

Hopheads in Steveston canneries: daily routine of smoking, floating walk. Opium users mostly older people; didn't affect their health. Western liquor desirable; Chinese liquo used for medicinal purposes.

Servant girls brought over as daughters; badly mistreated in Victoria where Manchu teachi held sway; Methodist Church started refuge for abused girls. Victoria's Chinese held to old customs longer than Vancouver's.

Value of learning English; going to Chinese school by streetcar. Chinatown in those days dark, shoddy, locale for bad element. Physical description of terrain.

Chinese opera: little scenery, magnificent costumes, codified gestures narrate plot.

Tape 2, Side 2

More on split between Freemasons & Kuomintang: killing in a sawmill. 1907 race riot. 1923 Exclusion Act. Depression: CBA soup kitchens, Chinese helped themselves. Powell Street, relations with Japanese, evacuation of Japanese, Chinese buying up Japanese property. Japanese fishing settlement on Mayne Island.

World War II for Chinese-Canadians: opportunity to gain vote. Nephews joined U.S.

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FD10003 Aural History, Provincial Archives

FD20009 Tape Library

FD3 Accession No. Tape No.

FD4 Primary Subject or Preamble

MARLATT DAPHNE — Interviewer

CUMYOW, GORDON WON — Interviewee

Restrictions

FD8 Birthdate | FD9 Deceased | FD10 1977 Taping Date

FD11 1860's Per. Start | FD12 1970's Per. End | FD13 Special Date

FD14 ITTER, CAROLE — co-interviewer — References

FORT DOUGLAS
fantan
Oscar Orr
Freemasons
Kuomintang
Sun Yat-sen
Sea of sterile Mountains

FD15 Keywords

* please send copy of tapes

Accession No. 313.1.

Tapes 3

Mr.
Name: Gordon Won Com Yow

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Special comments or conditions: .....

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Signed Gordon Won Com Yow

Date Nov. 9/77

Understood and agreed to:

Daphne Marlatt
Interviewer/Recorder

Nov. 9/77
Date

* please send copy of topic

Accession No. 313.1

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Date

CUMYOW, MR. GORDON WON
(TRANSCRIPT)

3181:F3

Mr. Gordon Won Cumyow.
December 3, 1977.

Accession No. 3131; Tape No. 2; Track No. 2.

Mr. Cumyow: ... twenty-five years in prison.(break in tape)

Ms. Between...

Mr. Cumyow: And after that, they sent them back to China.

Ms. Let me see if I can get this right...

Mr. Cumyow: Deport them.

Ms. ...now. Between the Freemasons and the K.M.T.

Mr. Cumyow: Do what? For...?

Ms. Between the Freemasons...?

Mr. Cumyow: Yes.

Ms. ... and the K.M.T., when they began to disagree with each other.

Mr. Cumyow: What is it... what is it you said, the last letter you said?

Ms. K.M.T. Kuomintang. The Nationalists?

Mr. Cumyow: Kuomintang?

Ms. Yeah.

Mr. Cumyow: No, this was a killing in a... this happened in a mill.

Ms. In a mill?

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah, in a mill. It wasn't right in Chinatown. As far as I remember, that... there was some difference there, politically, and one fellow, he just went beserk over it. He took a gun there, and he... these fellows were... there were no foremens -- you know, top men, Chinese working in the white man's sawmill. And this fellow took on himself to go there and shoot everyone he... that belonged to a certain... Kuomintang, see? And that's what happened there, was...

Ms. I see...

Mr. Cumyow: There wasn't any more... anything more left.

There wasn't anything after that.

Ms. Once it was ?

Mr. Cumyow: There wasn't any... there wasn't a feud, that the Kuomintang says, "I'm going to get even on you fellows -- we'll start shooting you down." There wasn't anything like that, no.

Ms. They didn't do that.

Mr. Cumyow: No. There was no... no.

Ms. Where was this mill?

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. Where was the mill?

Mr. Cumyow: The mill was in Barnett. Yeah, right outside the city. Barnett Road. Yeah. But there was no what do you call it?-- what you call deep-seated enmity, where one faction will fight the other faction, and they were united, you see, but the... occasionally they get... the occasion the individual will take the law in his own hands, but there's nothing... they weren't organized, in other words, like they did in San Francisco. They were organized down there. Oh yeah.They went and organize... the Tongs. The Tongs were fighting the Tongs down there. That's why all the killing was, see? What they call hatchet men. They... if one Tong want to bust the other Tong, send his hatchet men out. They're actually gunmen, you know? Eh? They go an eliminate some of them, see?

Ms. It's hard to fight that.

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. It's hard to fight that.

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah, see, they were organized and that, as I said, United States government straightened that out with them, you see.

Ms. I'd like to go back in Canadian, Vancouver history, back to 1907. Now I don't know if your father or your grandfather happened to be around Vancouver in 1907, but that was the year of the race riot in Vancouver.

Mr. Cumyow: Was it seven or eight?

Ms. No, it was 1907.

Mr. Cumyow: Was it?

Ms. Yeah.

Mr. Cumyow: Oh, yeah.

Ms. When a group of white men came down in Chinatown.

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah, my dad would, yes. My dad knows all ... knew all about it.

Ms. Uh-huh... Did he ever describe it to you or tell you about it?

Mr. Cumyow: No, it's... you read it. It's in that... you know, it's in that book...

Ms. Sea of Sterile Mountains?

Mr. Cumyow: No, The one that a university professor wrote... Sea of...

Ms. ... Sterile Mountains...

Mr. Cumyow: ... Sterile Mountains. Yeah, it's in there. It's in there. It's just what they say. That That too.

Ms. Did your father watch it?

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. Did your father watch it happening?

Mr. Cumyow: I don't know now whether he did or not. Most likely he did. But... when things get rough like that, a smart man would get away from it, see? That's what happened. And of course, the government paid everything, you know. They fixed the whole Chinatown up, brick, fixed all the windows up, and anything that was damaged or anything, was repaired. It didn't cost the Chinese any money at all. The Federal Government fixed it up, see?

Ms. Do you know if Chinatown expected something like this, or whether it was a total surprise?

Mr. Cumyow: Surprise. Oh, absolutely. Oh yeah, no they didn't expect anything like that. Oh gosh. No, nothing

at all. But... of course, the Chine--.../Chinatown I remember, when I went to Chinese school, after six or seven o' clock at night, they board the windows up, because there's too many drunks around, and they break the windows. So what they did was put sheets of boards on it, you know, that screw into place. Yeah./Those days, they did have that, yeah.

Ms. So there would be more white drunks in Chinatown in those days, were there?

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. More...

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah...

Ms. ...white...

Mr. Cumyow:... yeah, yeah...

Ms. ... men who were drunk.

Mr. Cumyow: ...yes... yeah. A lot of drunks around that... they'd break.../if they didn't like the Chinese, they'd go break his window. See? And that's why, after dark, he put wooden shields over it. Wooden plates, you know. (laughs) I still remember that.

Ms. Do you remember, in 1923, when the Exclusion Act came in? That was when the Immigration...

Mr. Cumyow: That's the immigration, yes....

Ms. ... Act was changed.

Mr. Cumyow: Yes, yes. There wasn't much of that. They just changed the act, that's all, and nobody else could come in, that's all.

Ms. Yeah, I think they only...

Mr. Cumyow: It was simple as that. And there wasn't any more to it. See? But that...

Ms. Well what... what... I mean, there must have been men over here who at that time, would be trying to get -- if they had enough money -- trying to get their wives over, or their families over?

Mr. Cumyow: Well, the only people that could get their fam-

ily over were merchants. They had to be merchants. They couldn't ... the ordinary, working person couldn't do it. He had to have a business of his own. And capable of supporting a family. See? Probably owned a building, and he owned a big store. Those are the people/got that their wives and family out. But the ordinary, working man couldn't do it. No.

Ms. You mean, it was...

Mr. Cumyow: But of course, the Exclusion... when they put the Exclusion Act, nobody could come in. The Chinese, he's not allowed to come in, that's all. They stopped it completely, eh?

Ms. What was the feeling about that?

Mr. Cumyow: Well the Chinese couldn't do anything, because they didn't have any votes. They couldn't appeal to anyone. Who could they appeal to?

Ms. Did many of them go back to China, then?

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. Did many to back to China then?

Mr. Cumyow: No. No, no, none... none of them went back. But the... they could still carry on a business peacefully. It was no... (coughs)... was no enmity. No deep-seated enmity. Only the government thought -- at least, the politicians -- thought it would be better for Canada if/they exclude the Oriental people out, see. Trying to make this a white Canada, you see. Yeah. They did feel, at that time.See?

Ms. Especially in this province. They thought...

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah, and especially in this province, yes. This province was the last one to give the Chinese the vote.

Ms. That's right.

Mr. Cumyow: See? Yeah. All the rest... they never bothered about it. "If you want to vote, go and vote." They didn't bother you in the other provinces. Never both-

ered you at all. Yeah. If you wanted to put your name on the voter's list, they'll let you do it. There's no... they didn't question you. 'Cause a few scattered Chinese here and there, you know. But in British Columbia, they were all centred here, in the mines and the railways and, you know, restaurants and things, and they were all in business here, you see. Of course, they were in the East, too, but a few, and far between. That's why there was actually no deep-seated enmity, eh? Yeah, that book, Sterile Mountains, really ... everything they say is true, there. But he didn't elaborate on it at all. He... they were all facts. And I understand he got it from the Victoria newspapers.

Ms. Um-hmm... largely.

Mr. Cumyow: From the files.

Ms. Yes, yes. Jumping ahead a bit, to the thirties...

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. I'd like to talk about the thirties for a minute, the Depression...

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah.

Ms. How did that affect Chinatown?

Mr. Cumyow: Depression? Yes, it affected Chinatown. It did.

Ms. Can you...

Mr. Cumyow: But the Chinese got organized amongst themselves. They said, "Those who have money, will put it up to help the poor fellows who didn't have any money." And the Chinese Benevolent Association, which is spokesman for Chinatown, they opened kitchens, with the money supplied by their own people, to feed their own people. But most of them didn't have families here, anyhow. At least, a few of them did, you know, but most of them didn't. Most of them were single men. Eh? And the merchants, they always got by, because they were in business. So long as

the Chinese will patronize them, because that's all they sell to. They sell to the Chinese. The Chinese, I mean, the Chinese merchant himself, eh?

Ms. Right.

Mr. Cumyow: But he helped the Chinese. The workmen, who were hungry. They didn't call upon the white people at all.

Ms. Where were the soup kitchens?

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. Do you remember where the soup kitchens were?

Mr. Cumyow: No, I don't.It would be in Chinatown somewhere. You know, any empty store would do the job, and someone would do the cooking, and... Oh, the Chinese helped themselves, and in that instan--... in that case, they helped one another. Yeah, they did.

Ms. Mr. Cumyow, I'm interested in knowing about some of the beginnings of Vancouver Chinatown, and I wonder if you know the date that your grandfather moved from New Westminster to Vancouver. That may help us to...

Mr. Cumyow: No, I don't know. No. No, I....

Ms. Was it before or after your father's birth?

Mr. Cumyow: ... I didn't go into that at all. I...

Ms. Uh-huh. Do you know if it was before your father was born, or afterward?

Mr. Cumyow: No, he moved. He was born at Fort Douglas, and after that, when the gold mines petered out, you see--at least, the placer mining, anyhow... that's all the Chinese did, was placer mining. They didn't do any heavy construction work. It was just dig, dig, dig, that's all. See? And after that, they moved out of Douglas. Moved into New Westminster, and later started out... started the city of Vancouver. But of course, Victoria was already established then, you see. As far as I know about it, anyway.

Ms. But the year he moved from New Westminster to Vancouver you're not sure of, or...?

Mr. Cumyow: No, no. I don't know, but that's what they did, because Vancouver began to start growing then, why people left New Westminster. See? New Westminster had a big Chinatown, before. Oh, yeah. Big Chinatown. Yeah.

Ms. What was the relationship between Chinatown and the Japanese settlement on Powell Street?

Mr. Cumyow: We got along all right. Oh yeah, they're... no trouble.

Ms. Was there any...

Mr. Cumyow: Friction?

Ms. No, I was wondering in terms of trade. Did Japanese come up to here to shop at all, or did Chinese ever go down to Powell Street to shop?

Mr. Cumyow: Yes. Oh, yes. They traded between one another and, you know, in a small way. Yeah. Oh, yes. Oh, we... we wanted a certain Japanese thing, we'd go down Japtown and buy it. Of course, the Japanese, they like Chinese food better, you see, than their own food.

Ms. Really?

Mr. Cumyow: And that's why they used to patronize all the Chinese restaurants. As a matter of fact, Chinatown move into Powell Street and open several big cafes down there.

Ms. Recently, you mean?

Mr. Cumyow: The Chinese. Cook the Chinese food, to cater to the Japanese.

Ms. When was this?

Mr. Cumyow: Oh, they carried on right up to the Second War, when they drove all the Japanese away. Oh yeah, they kept that up continuously. But after that, when they came back, the Chinese didn't establish any more restaurants on Powell Street. They established it here and

the Japanese, they'd come and patronize them. Right now, they're... lunch time they'll all fill up with Japanese engineers, you know. Yeah, they're smart people, the Japanese. You can see./ They're all well-dressed, you know. You'd know they were engineers, those fellows. Just like this Swoan Company, you know. I don't know if you heard of it. S-w-o-a-n. Big company, you see. They ran that Holden building there. And they took over the B.C. Electric Building, and they took over the one next door to that, was the Chinese Freemason. See, they... Chinese Freemason sold that building.

Ms. Did they?

Mr. Cumyow: And the city wouldn't let them tear it down. They said it's a.../it's what do you call it?

Ms. Historic?

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. Historic?

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah. Historical significance to Chinatown, so what they had to do was tear the whole inside of it out and put steel structure inside of it, to keep the walls together. They made it into a beautiful office building. Well, no... who's going to ~~run~~ rent it? So Swoan come along and said, "We'll take the whole building." They were lucky they have Swoan to take over, because they were in trouble. They spent about at least a half a million dollars on it, and you can't get any revenue out of it. The Chinese syndicate was going to go bust, until Swoan comes along and says, "We'll take the whole thing."

Ms. Do you remember seeing the Japanese evacuated?

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. Do you remember seeing the Japanese evacuated? During the war?

Mr. Cumyow: Well I just remember that they were evacuated, that's all. You know, just what they tell you in

the books, how they gathered all their boats up?

Ms. Yeah.

Mr. Cumyow: Brought them up the river. Yeah.

Ms. Uh-huh. Were there many fishing boats down here that were Japanese?

Mr. Cumyow: There were very few. They had no place to park around here at all, you see. What they'd do, is they'd leave the boats down in Steveston, take a street-car up. See?

Ms. I see. Yeah.

Mr. Cumyow: Or take.../or leave it down the other part of the Fraser River. See? No they didn't park their boats up in Vancouver here, at all. Very few, unless they came in for some... some... they needed some fixing. Engineering, you know, you know, machinery on the boats, eh? No,there weren't any Japanese in Burrard Inlet at all. Hardly any at all. They were in the fishing grounds. They don't hang around here.

Ms. What happened to Powell Street, once it was evacuated?

Mr. Cumyow: The Chinese took it over. The Chinese picked up all their property for nothing. The government just gave it away. A lot of Chinese got rich over it. You know, buildings that were worth twice the value, the government sold them for half. Anything to get rid of it. Of course, when the war was over,/and everything started booming, the Chinese who bought property down there became millionaires, see? That's what happened. The Chinese benefit by it, see?

Ms. Has this caused any bad feelings af--... since the war?

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. Has this caused any bad feelings since the war, with returning Japanese?

Mr. Cumyow: No, no. No, no. No, no. No, it was the

government's fault. You can't blame them for it. The fellow bought it. They put a price, and they bought it. Oh no, he didn't steal it. Oh no. Did I tell you last time you were here, about Active Pass?

Ms. No.

Mr. Cumyow: And Mayne Island?

Ms. No.

Mr. Cumyow: Where they... the Japanese practically had that island, for fishing purposes. And they had their shacks and their farms and everything there, you know. And their mooring... they had mooring... good places to moor their boats, you know, and they had fishing floats, I mean, where they could lay their nets and everything. And oh, God, they had a beautiful... I used to go through there to Victoria, and I always had to admire. I said, "God, they must live a charmed life." You know, all the fishing they wanted, and all the land they wanted, if they want it, they cleared it and grew vegetables. They were independent. But when the war started, they just kicked the whole bunch of them out of there, you see. Took the boats and all. And that's where the white man came in and picked that land up for nothing. That's why the Japanese came... when they came back, I says, "They'll want to get it back." It was sold. I think the government did compensate them, to some extent.

Ms. Yeah, but never completely.

Mr. Cumyow: No, nothing what it should be, you know, but... I say, it's just one of those things. (In) Inactive An act of war, anything? anything could happen, you know. Eh?

Ms. The war was very important for the Chinese people.

Mr. Cumyow: Pardon?

Ms. The war was very important for the Chinese people, because many Chinese joined up and served.

Mr. Cumyow: No. The whole thing... See, you're talking about Canada...

Ms. Yes.

Mr. Cumyow: Canada wouldn't let the Chinese join.

Ms. Wouldn't...?

Mr. Cumyow: No. They said, "You fellows haven't got the vote. We're not asking you to go and fight."

Ms. Oh, I thought... I thought towards the end of the war, they started conscripting Chinese?

Mr. Cumyow: No, they didn't.

Ms. They didn't?

Mr. Cumyow: Until towards the end. They said, "Everybody who joins up, we'll automatically give them the vote." And then, you... it was just like conscription. You had to join up.

Ms. Yes.

Mr. Cumyow: See, if you were a certain age, eh? You had to go take a physical. But that was it. They gave them the vote.

Ms. Uh-huh. That's right.

Mr. Cumyow: But those who didn't join up, didn't get it. Until, you know, until after the war, you see.

Ms. Yeah. Yeah. Were there any ...before conscription, there weren't any volunteers? Chinese volunteers?

Mr. Cumyow: No, they wouldn't take them. No, they wouldn't take them. No, the... the navy wouldn't take either them... take them, either. Nor the army. No. I told you, my two nephews went to the United States. One joined the navy and the other joined the army.

Ms. Because they couldn't join here?

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah. They tried to join here. And, after three months, they became American citizens. You apply, you see. They became American citizens. Oh, they did everything for them.

N.B. His memories of the situation for Chinese-Canadians during W.W. II are contradictory to other statements - see Harry Con transcript, also see Chap. X of Sea of Storms about Dr. Leung Hon.

Ms. What did they do for them?

Mr. Cumyow: Give them a new set of teeth./ The kids didn't have a decent tooth in their mouth. The United States Government gave them all sets of uppers and lowers. Those days... even those days, they cost five or six hundred dollars. Yeah. Yeah, they... and they learned a trade, too, the same time. You know, in between... before they actually went into action. They studied the same time, too. And after the war was finished, see, my two nephews/, they were just lucky enough, by the time they got in there, the war was practically over. And then they says, "You study anything you want. We'll pay for it. And we'll pay you so much a month." So, my... one of them took aeronautical engineering, see? And the other one took up... he took up radar. And, you know, and...the other... the business that goes with it, you know? That's why after the war, those... got swell jobs, both of them.

Ms. Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Cumyow: Oh, yeah.

Ms. Those are very technological professions.

Mr. Cumyow: Yes. Oh, they'd get the jobs. They're waiting for them, see? One is working in the San Francisco Airport, eh? The other one's working with Republic Aviation, in New York. Oh, he's been with them a long time. Made lots of money.

Ms. Yes.

Mr. Cumyow: Oh, gosh, those guys. Those guys are rich!And they're technical men, you see. Yeah.

Ms. Did the Canadian Government do the same thing for its Chinese servicemen at the end of the war?

Mr. Cumyow: Not the way the Americans did. No. See, the Americans will pay you to go and learn. Pay you all the time you learn. Pay you tuition and everything. See? No, the Canadians didn't give a... They never got any deal, or anywhere near like the Americans would give their

own people who went to war, you see? But they did give them a deal of some kind. I remember there was... but, it was small, when you compare with what the Americans gave them, you see.

Ms. Mr. Cumyow, you must have seen a lot of changes since the war, with all the new immigrants coming in?

Mr. Cumyow: Oh, yes, yes.

Ms. Could you tell us what kinds of changes you've seen?

Mr. Cumyow: Well, for one thing, they all got educated. See, they came in here, maybe they're ten years old or nine, you know? Father would get his family over here, maybe have five children. Give them a damn good education. Put them through university. Become doctors and dentists and engineers. Well, us fellows didn't have that chance, eh? But the generation that came in within the last fifteen to twenty years, they took advantage of that. Went through high school. But of course, a lot of them didn't. But those whose father had some money, put them through college. That's why there's so many Chinese professional men around. They're not native-born. They're from China, who came in with the last twenty-odd years, when the immigration was open to them. That's after the war. It would be nineteen... oh, it would be through by 1946, '47, '48, when it would be through. Yeah. Between '50 and '77. That's twenty-seven years. Well, any kid could go through school in eight, nine years. See? That's why there's so many professional men, now. Eh? Whole Chinatown full of them.

Ms. Most...

Mr. Cumyow: I've just told you... told the Notarial Society, "You fellows -- what are you trying to do?" I said, "You charge us five hundred or six hundred dollars

a year, to keep the seal in force." I said, "Do you know how many lawyers around me? Chinese lawyers? Seventeen of them. Do you know how many Notary Publics?" I say, "Six of them. And you charge us five, six hundred dollars a year, and make us take a two hundred and fifty thousand dollar bond, which costs us two hundred and fifty dollars a year, and make us pay a contingency fund of a hundred dollars a year, for their treasury, and the City come along and say, 'Well, you pay a hundred and twenty-five dollar licence, as a Notary Public.' " And then, there's other things, too, that add up to, you know.

Ms. It gets expensive.

Mr. Cumyow: How the heck are you going to make your money back? You spend six hundred dollars on the seal, how are you going to make it back.

Ms. Mr.....

Mr. Cumyow: I was just telling him... talking to him, the other day. I say, "It's not as easy as you think it is." See, that's why a lot of older people are giving their seals up, you know. Costs them too much money to keep it in force. Eh?

Ms. As a Notary Public, you cater to a class of people who can't afford lawyers' fees, is that right?

Mr. Cumyow: No, no. No, no. No, it's a... you see, the government demands certain things got to be under a sworn statement. A lot of things. Even a... even if you make a claim to the I.C.B.C., you said somebody hit and run, smashed my car. Fellow before, he just signed his name and that was all. And the government would pay it. Now the government says, "No. You got that... that's got to be sealed before a Notary Public." You see, you know, where...how... how we come in on it, you see. We used to charge one dollar. Notarial Society says, "You've got to charge five, now." I say, "It

isn't worth five, and you know it isn't." But for me, a Chinese brings a blank document in, and I've got to explain it to him, in Chinese, and help him to fill it out, why, I can hit him up for ten dollars, and I get it, you see? But if a white man comes in, it's already filled out for you, how are you going to charge him five dollars? All you have to do is put the seal on it, and sign your name. 'Cause the white man, knowing this, they fill it out themselves. But that's why there's a difference, eh? I'll tell you. I got in trouble with the society last week. A woman come in. It was part of an estate. Her brother had died, and the official administrator--he had a small estate, you know, and after paying funeral expenses, only a few dollars left. Well she brought in this sworn statement, issued by the official administrator. I said, "Is that all they're going to give you? Fifty-six dollars?" "That's all that's left," she says. "He's my brother. How much are you going to charge me?" "Oh, well... How about three dollars?" "All right. Sure." But the trouble is, when I charge her three dollars, she went back to this Notary, who she went, the first place, who wanted seven dollars and a half. And naturally, he squealed on me. He told the Notarial Society. And that's what I did. I told them the facts. "Well how much can you charge? There's only fifty-six dollars in there." I said, "How much could I charge?" They say, "Well, Cumyow, I think you did the right thing." Well, I had no choice, I mean. If it was six or seven thousand dollars, well, I might look at it differently, see? But that's neither here nor there, you know.

Ms. Well, the trouble is, when you have a fixed rule that doesn't ... when you have a fixed rule,

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah...

Ms. ...it doesn't take into consideration ex-

ceptional cases, like that one.

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah, that's it. Yeah.

Ms. That's a problem.

Mr. Cumyow: Yeah. That's right. This book here says, "Schedule of minimum fees. Five dollars for a Notary." I think there's too... I don't think it's worth it. Eh? But, they've got to make their money back somewheres. I've got to make my money back. After I've put up four or five hundred every year, eh?

Ms. Mr. Cumyow, what year did you start as Court Interpreter?

Mr. Cumyow: I started after my dad left. Which is... I... God, a way back, now. Somewheres around the forties, anyhow. Yeah.

Ms. Do you still do that work?

Mr. Cumyow: No, I don't do it anymore. There's not enough money in it. See? That's why I quit it. But I am still Official Court Interpreter. I was appointed by the Board of Police Commissioners. They haven't rescinded it yet. (laughter)

Ms. Yes. (laughs) To get back a minute, to the new immigrants who have come in in the last twenty years,

Mr. Cumyow: Yes.

Ms. ... would you say most of them come from Hong Kong?

Mr. Cumyow: Yes. Most of them did come from Hong Kong, because they couldn't get out of Interior China. At least, since the Communists took over. I think the Communists took over, about nineteen... it's after the war. The Japanese came in in 1940, in China... Hong Kong, anyhow ... they stuck around till about '45 or '46, until they were defeated by the Americans, see? Now, at that time, the Chinese scattered all over China. They went in as far as they could, into the Interior. You know, almost hit the

Himalayan Mountains, to get out, to keep away from the Japanese.

End of Track 2.