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(EXCERPT)

I was born here in Portland and I've lived here all my life. The three places that I remember that I lived in was...the first one was about NW 18th and Davis, I think catty-corner from the Catholic cathedral there. So every morning they go dong, dong, dong. Wake us up to go to school Then the second place was down on NW Glisan. That's where the Harvey comedy club is now. The other place...that was on the west side...then we moved over to the east side and we've been at this house for many, many years.

I started school - I went to elementary school at Couch School and I was there all the time until I graduated. Then I went to Lincoln High School. At that time Lincoln was the only west side high school, so when we moved over in the middle of my years to the east side, they let me stay, going over to the west side because I started there. So I always went to Lincoln High School. After that I just started working. As far as the older sisters, Mary and Bea, because our dad died - I was 11 when he died, so we were...the two older ones went to work quite early. In fact, I think Mary was underage when she was working there at the restaurant. I think it was \$5 a day for ten hour days, so it was 50 cents an hour. Bea and Mary were the lottery and all this, but I was the third oldest and as a result I was the one who took care of the younger children.

I was always in charge at home, so I didn't do a lot of lottery stuff. From there, well, I wanted to graduate right away because we had to take care of the younger kids because there were four others. There were seven of us altogether, so there was four behind me so I had to hurry and get out of high school so I could get a job. So I never went to college. The girls never went to college for the obvious reason - we didn't have the money. But the boys all went, because I always figured that the girls can always find an office job someplace but the guys probably will have families and they need their education, so they all went to college.

After that, I graduated and I worked for I think less than a year for the state. Then I went to the Internal Revenue Service. I think I was 19 at the time and I spent my entire career there. I started out as a clerk, then I became a tax auditor, then I was a group manager, then I went to the review staff which reviewed all the technical work in case somebody make a mistake. Then I went to the conference staff which is the level of review, if people object, and from there I went to the appellate division and that's where I retired. So surprising even to myself I think, in terms of I only had a high school education but when I retired I was working with people with degrees, accounting degrees, law degrees, and CPAs - working as adversaries with them, arguing about

taxes. So looking back now, I 'm kind of surprised that I got as high as I did, working with people with all kinds of degrees which I didn't have. So it even surprised me how I ever got there. But anyway, that's the story of my working life.

Growing Up in Chinatown

People want to know, but I mean I just did these things because they just happened to be there. So that's basically what I did. As far as the grade school, I remember Couch School, and we used to play dead ball at recess and lunch time. We never had to choose sides because the Chinese were on one side, and the Japanese were on the other - because we both lived adjacent to each other. So every time after lunch we'd go to our side and we'd play. A lot of the Caucasians never played with us because we'd throw the ball so hard. We'd throw it at each other, the Japanese and Chinese, so they didn't come around and play with us in that game. In the other games they would. I remember once I graduated from grade school I never went back. I don't know why. Today it's not a basic elementary school. It's a special type of school now. I never went back, but I still envision the rooms, where they were, and which teachers were in which rooms. I still remember that.

Then went...I went...we were the last class that had a January class. In those days they had a June and January class. Because my birthday was in March, I ended up in the smaller group. So in my high school class there were only 47 students, whereas in the class I had, that was the June class, had several hundred. So anyway, for whatever reason, that was the last class that had the January classes. So my classes were very small. We never had class reunions, because you know how it is. Once you graduate, the kids move away or their parents move away or something, so we only had 47 students so if some disappear, who knows? We never had class reunions because there was nobody around. Other than that, I had a pretty good time.

As far as recreation is concerned, nobody had any money, you know, the population there. So what we did is we went down to the train station, which is only a block away. In those days there wasn't any air travel per se. It was mostly by bus or train, so Union Station was very busy. Trains would come and go, and people were jam packed in and out. So we'd go down and watch the people and watch the trains, so that's part of our entertainment. Then we lived right next to a parking lot. So during the evenings and weekends there was nobody there. They were just there on the weekdays, so we had that to play in. So the other kinds that live around there too would come.

Maybe because I was the only girl of that age...for the boys are playing, the games they'd play...you know, football...things like that. And since I was about their age, and even though I was a girl, they needed somebody. So that's how I ended up learning how to play football. But we played with a paper sack filled with newspaper, and we'd wrap it up. That was our football. Then when it wore out, we made another one. So that was our football. So that's how I learned how to play football.

Lunar New Year in Chinatown

Then as far as Chinese New Year's, even in those days you weren't allowed to have firecrackers, but somehow the Chinese population always ended up with packets of them. No kids would break them apart, so they are individual instead of packages. Otherwise, they'd let you hang it from a two-story building down and they'd light it and it would go all the way up. The lion dance would go to each store and that's what they did. For civilians, we couldn't do that, but we took it apart and we played with firecrackers and lit it up with a punk. Then when the policeman came around, "The cops are coming!" And we're right next door to the parking lot so we just run into the house. Don't have time to pick up the firecrackers. They'd come up and pick them up. I always think to myself, they must take it home and burn it at their house, because what would they do with it if they took it to the station? So I always figured, I bet they took it home and burned it.

I played there, played kick-the-can, hide and seek. Then because there was no playground there, all businesses around there, when we play hide and seek we run around the block and all the storefronts. The owners never bothered us because the Chinese kids, we never stole anything, we never broke anything. We just stop in the doorway, peek around, run around, run to another doorway. So you know, they see us there, they never bother us and we never bother them. Although I remember one pharmacist there, he always had two sticks and he'd dip them in cinnamon and he'd let the kids do it, so a lot of Chinese kids run around with a toothpick on their mouth, because they're sucking on the cinnamon on the toothpick. So that's what we were doing. But he gave us that, so we had that.

Then we had to walk several blocks to the Park Blocks. At that time - I haven't been there for years, but at that time I think there were three blocks. One was entirely for kids, and only kids could go in there. In one corner there was a sandbox. Then they had swings and teeter totters and things like that. Then the other two were for adults, you know. They could go sit on the benches that were there and everything. The park manager would come out. He 'd lock it up, but he'd bring it out and bring out the ping pong table and the paddles. And then we would play with that. Then when the day was over he'd lock them up again. But we would walk up there. It was several blocks. So between that and the parking lot next to the house, that was where we played, and in and around the streets. The cops never bother us because we'd run all around Chinatown in those six to twelve blocks and we never stole anything. We never did anything. So they see us running around but they never do anything to us. So that was basically our childhood. I could say that even - none of us had money - we found ways to entertain ourselves.

Chinese School

As far as Chinese school, of course we went to American school and then came back, ate dinner, then went to Chinese school in the evening. Everybody went, because if you don't go, you don't have anyone to play with because everybody's down at Chinese school. So you go

down there. So then on Saturday mornings we'd have Chinese class too, from I think 9 to noon, something like that. So anyway, we went to Chinese school and then we went to Sunday school. There was the Chinese Presbyterian Church which was down in Chinatown there, that's the one we went to. We didn't join or anything but I think our mom sent us there to get us out of her hair, and it gives us something to do. But I remember when we were kids there was two teachers, two sisters, and their name was Phillip - Jeannette Phillip and Sarah Phillip. So the older one we called Miss Phillip and the younger one we called Miss Sarah. Then when you talked too much, they'd take these - what is the tape that you use to wrap things around? They'd put it across your face like that. Then being kids, you know, we'd poke a hole right through there so that we could mumble or something!

Then the Chinese school, we went there too. I don't know why, since we went to Sunday school there. I guess my mother just said we'll go to Chinese school there because the pastor was also bilingual, whereas most of the kids went to Jun Wah, the CCBA Chinese school there. My dad was born here and he was one of the founding fathers of the CACA, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. He was also a member...a long time of CCBA Jun Wah, because in the old photos on the wall there, my dad was in one of the pictures there with all the older founding fathers and everything. So he was active there. Then because he was born here he was bilingual so he did a lot of interpreting. Maybe it's in the genes, because that's what I ended up doing too. So he did a lot of that and he used to take Mary up with him to Seattle all the time because she was the first-born, so he'd take her up there and so he'd interpret for the people, the immigrants arriving in Seattle, because that's where we came in...in Seattle. So he'd go up there and interpret for a lot of the people there. So that's basically my childhood, I guess you would call it, interesting or not!