

The following oral history is a fascinating account of the Chinese coming across the Pacific Ocean and settling on the west coast of the United States. In the following interview, Peter Hing, age 72, relates the story of his Grandfather sailing from China and beginning his family in America. He came over on his own free will. After many experiences; living in San Fransisco, logging, mining and farming, he finally settled in Portland's Chinatown and became a merchant. Mr. Hing then goes on to talk of the life his Grandfather, himself, and other Chinese lived in Oregon and the Willamette Valley. Mr. Hing covers the entire history of the Chinese population on the West Coast, beginning with their journeys across the Ocean, settling in Portland, grubbing land on the farms surrounding the city, growing and picking hops, and the Chinese traditions and culture in general.

Chinese cleared much of the farmland (grubbing stumps as it is called) in Washington County. before the turn of the century. Very little is known about these groups of laborers other than the fact they did the backbreaking work that other Causcasion settlers were disinclined to do themselves. It is the hope that this interview will put a human face on this particular ethnic group in order to understand their traditions, customs, ~~and~~ lifestyles, and their role in the history of this area.

The oral historian, after hearing different stories from some of the "old-time" farmers about the Chinese clearing their land, became interested in contacting a descendent of one of these land-clearers and to hear the story from the Chinese viewpoint. Lana Danaher, present head of the Portland Neighborhood History Project, directed me to Mary Leong of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Portland for information and the name of a possible oral history candidate. She immediately thought of her cousin, Peter Hing. Being one of the few people who remember such things, Mr. Hing made for an excellent narrator.

Therefore, anyone interested in the early history of Washington County and how the Tualatin Valley, in part, was cleared to create the "garden of Portland" is encouraged to listen to this tape and read the accompanying transcript. It not only provides information, but also color, ~~xx~~ personality, and humaness to this oft neglected historical topic.