Background:

Beverly Jean Quan Gor was born in 1952 in Houston, Texas to Kay Ying Quan and Esther Woo and has lived in Houston her entire life. She has four siblings, three of whom live in Houston today. Dr. Gor’s native language is English, although she can understand some Chinese. She also speaks Spanish. She earned a B.S. in Home Economics from the University of Houston, a M.S. in Nutrition and Food Science from Texas Women’s University, and a PhD in Allied Health Education and Administration from both the University of Houston and Baylor College of Medicine. Her first job was as a Diet Clerk in Herman Hospital, which she started at age 23. Since 2001, she has worked as a post doctoral fellow at UT M.D. Anderson. Her work focuses on public health nutrition and childhood obesity. Dr. Gor has been involved with the following organizations in the past: the American Dietetic Association, the Houston Area Dietetic Association, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, the Chinese Professional Club, and many others. She is a past president of the Asian American Health Coalition and former board member of both the Chinese Community Center and Texas Medical Center Woman’s Health Network. She also played a pivotal role in the establishment of the HOPE clinic, which helps to address the unmet health needs of underserved Asian American and other residents of Southwest Houston.

Setting:

The interview centers on the areas of labor and capital to develop a working history around the context of childhood experiences, family life, and daily activities. Much attention is given to her time as a dietician and passion for community involvement.

The interview was conducted in Ms. Gor’s office in the John P. McGovern campus of the Texas Medical Center. The interview runs for a little over an hour. She recounted several stories from her childhood, giving a clear depiction of the relationship of her Asian American family with the rest of a predominantly Hispanic community in which she grew up. She then went on to recount her experience as a dietician as well as the reasons for her involvement with different community projects, including the first ever Asian American health survey in Houston and the HOPE clinic. Her involvement within the community to help overcome language barriers is an instrumental part of the healthcare system which is often overlooked. Also, her unique perspective on the Asian American experience helps us to understand the connection between minorities and access to health care.
AK: Oral History Interview of Dr. Beverly Gor at her office in Houston, Texas on June 7, 2011 conducted by Asiya Kazi for the Houston Asian American Archive at Rice University Woodson Center.

MM: And Maria Maldonado.

AK: Okay, so can you just begin by telling us a little bit about your background, just your childhood?

BG: I was born in Houston, Texas, and born in the east end of Houston in the Magnolia Park area, um so I grew up actually in a very strongly Hispanic neighborhood but um, my mother is um Ester Quan and she um was a very strong Christian woman so from the very beginning we went to church. The church we went to though was Chinese Baptist Church so I met—had a lot of how you say interactions with Chinese people on that arena. Of course my relatives were Chinese. But I have a strong um Mexican influence in my life because of growing up in the east end. In fact, I really have a very fond affection for the Mexican people. My father was a grocer. He uh owned a grocery store right in the ship channel area. And um it's kind of all I knew growing up when I was little was the store and um we lived behind it in fact. Our house was attached to the store. We went to school in all HISD schools. I'm the third of five children. Um, there's an older brother, an older sister, myself, and then two younger brothers.....More? or.....

AK: That's good. Um how was your experience? Did you work in your father grocery store?

BG: Yes, of course. I have to say in a way it was an ideal situation for childcare for my mother because you know we lived behind the store so she could kind of keep an eye of us but then go out to help my father with the business. So that was, in fact, we had this conversation the other day since I just had this grandbaby, you know childcare practices. For that era, that was kind of a good way to do it. She just worked alongside her husband and had the house next, right there, so that you can kind of take care of the house and also help him out with his business. I think we all started working in the store when we were someone around...oh not real young, probably around ten. You know, we would help you know, stock the shelves, you know we could help do that. We could clean up, you know sweep the floors. As we got older and were able to do math well
enough, you know, we would do the cashiering. The girls predominantly, in our family, did the cashiering, and then the boys did some help with butchering, and more of the stocking. So um, my parents were real good about teaching us job skills through the store. And I was having a conversation with my husband the other day, actually about the fact that my parents… I think our parents taught us the value of money because we- we worked in the store. We got an allowance, I remember my first allowance was 25 cents a week. And, I thought that was a lot of money [laughs]. I think even as I finished high school, our allowance went up to like twenty dollars a week. For that day in time, that was a lot of money too. You know if you didn't spend it, you could save and get a little bit of cash to buy things for yourself.

**MM:** So did you understand all the store finances and all that? Did you dad make sure...

**BG:** That's a good question. We helped him a little bit with...um one of the things that you did back in those days is that you extended credit to your customers.

**MM:** Oh okay

**BG:** It was a very simple system. You have their receipt for what they bought and they’d sign it. It would be our job at the end of the week to sort out these little bills that people had. And typically, they would have three or four, come daily, who knows and by the end of the week, they would pay it all off. So, we would actually cash checks for him and people would pay off their grocery bills. We would also help my father with ordering. Um you know grocery supplies right here, which is a big grocery supply business, so back in those days too. This is before everything became real computerized. They would give you a book that you would mark with how many cases you would want of certain things. And so we would kind of help our dad with that. And then when the groceries would come in, we would help him with checking them in. Making sure he had the right amount of bread, and you know cupcakes, and all those things, tortillas, that came into our stores and help him with those things. So financially, those were some of the book keeping things I guess we did but big things he would take care of them himself.

**MM:** Did you um stock the store with both um like, Asian-American type of food or like Hispanic food, or was it just like general supplies?

[00:05:06]

**BG:** I would say it was more Mexican-American

**MM:** Okay

**BG:** Uh-huh, because that was the neighborhood, the clientele, we had. Um, it's interesting that now as I dietician I work a lot of childhood obesity and accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables and I have to say that my dad was very good about always stocking quite a bit of fresh fruits and vegetables. But it was because the clientele demanded it. That neighborhood they ate a lot of onions, and bell peppers, and avocados, and lettuce, tomatoes, potatoes, so our
turnover for fresh produce was very good because again, the clientele wanted it and ate it. So we were always exposed to fresh fruits and vegetables.

**MM:** Good. Shifting gears a little, um did you grandparents immigrate to the United States? Or how far back in your family was it?

**BG:** That's a good question. My maternal grandfather uh came over to the U.S. and settled in Augusta, Georgia. And I really never got to meet him; he died before I was able to meet him. My paternal grandfather actually was the one I knew very well. He lived with us all my life until he passed away um in, 1971. He was kind of like a third parent in our household. It was him and my parents, in fact my mother really didn't have to cook because Grandpa was a cook.

He was trained as a cook and so he would do all the cooking for our household and she would help more in the store. It was kind of interesting because like I said it was nice to have this third person in the household when one of them was busy.

**AK:** So who moved from Georgia to Houston and do you know why?

**BG:** Uh, actually, okay my paternal, my- my mother's father, he's always stayed in Georgia. Uh and then my mother was born in Georgia but she came to, um, Texas. Uh she came to Texas because, actually my- my grandparents in Georgia, they had um a big household, like eight kids. And then when his wife, which was my grandmother passed away, he remarried and there were other children. So actually my mother was at that age, you know in her late teens, early twenties, so she had a sister who had moved to Texas, so some of them started migrating to Texas. You know, this house is too full, let's go someplace else. So they kinda started...lived in San Antonio. Now my grandfather on my father's side, he actually, when he emigrated from China, actually went to Mexico. It was easier to get into Mexico than it was to get into the U.S. so there were many Chinese actually that immigrated to Cuba, Mexico, or Central and South America. My grandfather actually was there, lived there in Mexico for a while, and then immigrated up through California, and then uh finally settled in Texas. So that's kind of how it all came together in Texas.

**AK:** So did your mother go to San Antonio because she had—did she have a job offering or was a reputation of San Antonia of having a really strong Asian American community or…?

**BG:** You know, the San Antonio Chinese community is older actually than the uh Houston Chinese community and there's some history behind it in that, um, it had to with General Pershing I'm not real clear on my history there, but there was a group of Chinese in Mexico that helped uh General Pershing with some conflict with the uh Mexican army. As a reward, he relocated many of them to San Antonio. And so, some of my relatives were among that group. So yes, there was a settlement of Chinese there. Um my mother, like I said, my mother actually didn't come to Texas for the economic opportunity. It was more for, you know, kind of spreading her wings, and extending the family because there were too many under one roof in Augustus so she came to live with her sister. And I can say it was actually there that my mother and father met and married.
MM: Oh, in San Antonio?

BG: Yeah, in San Antonio.

MM: Oh ok. That's great. Do you remember your father ever talking about any kind of discrimination in Mexico because I know that's part of the reason why the whole Pershing troops and that kind of thing, um helped move the Chinese Americans like out of Mexico.

BG: Actually, I don't remember them saying that they were discriminated in Mexico. But, actually the reason why my parents moved from San Antonio to Houston had to do with discrimination because in, this might have been captured in my mother's oral history, that they were going to live in San Antonio after they were married. And they applied to buy a home but they were denied because the sellers said "we don't sell to Chinese".

[00:10:01]

And so, they um heard Houston was a little bit more open, and willing to take people, who you know it didn't matter what race you were, so they moved to Houston. And so I was the first Houstonian in our family, I was the first one born here.

MM: Oh okay, so your um older siblings were all born in San Antonio then?

BG: Well actually, my oldest brother was born in uh China because after mom and dad married, it's a tradition kind of, you might of heard of this, that you want to go back to your homeland. So my mother and father went back to China because my- his mother had never come over. Yeah, his mother never came over from China. So he wanted to introduce his bride to his mother. She lived there in the village and there, they had my oldest brother. Then, they fled from China because of the communists coming, came back to the U.S. and in San Antonio, they had my sister and then they moved to Houston and then they had me and my two younger siblings.

AK: And about what time frame was this?

BG: Uh, my oldest brother was born in 1948, my sister was born in 1950, I was born in '52.

AK: So your parents moved around like the early 50s?

BG: Yes, yes.

MM: When you were younger, do you remember your parents um having a strong emphasis on your Chinese background in terms like of your traditions and the food you ate in your home and that kind of thing? What traditions did they implement?
BG: We did. It's surprising because in fact, for many of my friends...I don't speak much Chinese. I understand more than I speak. But uh they're surprised that when we were little, we only used chopsticks. Only used chopsticks. And because Grandpa was the cook, almost all our meals were Chinese. Maybe at breakfast we would eat maybe cereal and milk but lunch and dinner typically were more Chinese. Rice, and vegetable, and meat. And very few desserts, but you know it was okay. It was good for us. I ate fruit for dessert maybe. But um so we didn't realize how Chinese-y we were before we kind of compared notes with other people and found out that we were really abiding by a lot of customs. We celebrated Chinese New Year every year, we uh went to this Chinese Baptist Church so even though we were Christian, we- the church still celebrated Chinese New Year. And, what else did we do?....This kind of gets more into being older but in the Chinese custom, when you have a baby, you have what they call a red egg party. It's to celebrate the birth of the baby about a month after the baby's born. And then also, uh some other things that you do after a baby's born, the mother- grandmother prepares certain soups to recover from a pregnancy. And so we did all those things. When I got married too, there's a tea ceremony that you do for your in-laws. And we did all of those things. I think that they're lovely customs. In fact, I had my daughter do a lot of those same things too. I just think it's a very lovely um cultural tradition to hand down.

AK: So even though your parents really pushed these cultural, did they not push the Chinese language [BG laughs] as much or was it more of your own- that you were going to school and English was all that was spoken?

BG: That was definitely part of it. Because we weren't forced a lot of speak Chinese. Our church, like many Chinese churches had a Chinese school. And we went for several years but I am a Chinese School drop out so they had us go for awhile and you would learn little phrases and little songs and you would learn how to write basic things but I don't remember hardly anything from that. I regret it now that I didn't now that I didn't stick with it but um after a while they said okay, you don't have to go anymore. In fact, we tried as a group to learn Mandarin most recently for about a summer, we tried to learn some more but again unless you practice over and over. In fact, my grandfa....my mother always says that my grandfather blamed her, "it's because of you that the kids don't speak Chinese" you know. Um, and both my mother and my father and grandfather would speak Chinese to each other so we would hear it but to us, they wouldn't speak it a lot. And like you said, school reinforced English so and I actually hablo más español que Chino [Translation - I speak more Spanish than Chinese] That's, my second language is actually Spanish.

AK: So do you try to teach you children Chinese?

BG: I only have one daughter, and um, what little I know I try to pass on to her. It's funny, as I've gotten older it resurfaces. I find myself saying things in Chinese. And so I'm glad for that, that it's way back in there, but it's in there.

MM: Did you ever try to teach her any Spanish?
BG: Actually she took Spanish in school. And when I'm with her, sometimes I will speak to her in Spanish so that we can practice, yes.

MM: Did you learn while growing up in your neighborhood or did you learn in school as well?

BG: Actually that's a great question, Maria because again, like you say, depending on your environment. So we heard Spanish all the time because all our clientele were Spanish speaking, we conversed with our customers in Spanish. You know, we gave you know los precios en español, ¿cuanto cuesta? [Translation – You know, we gave the prices in Spanish, how much does it cost?] You know our conversation with—in Spanish was good. And in school, back in HISD, you used to have it as part of curriculum in elementary.

MM: Oh wow, that's great.

BG: Like from third grade to sixth grade that was one of your- your core courses. It was wonderful. I—I learned a lot of basic Spanish then. And then in high school I took it for an elective.

AK: So um growing up in a Hispanic neighborhood, how was it being an Asian? Was there kind of a rapport between the two groups because you're both minorities or did you find that there was some discrimination?

BG: I felt there was a great deal of acceptance actually because of that both being minority and both having the immigrant experience, both having language differences, um but we really got along very well with that community. I tell stories um about how my dad, he's passed away but he- he was just a good business. He extended credit to his customers, they liked him, he liked them. Every Christmas he would give- he would make up these big bags. He would put nuts, fruit, and his store calendar...he would make a yearly calendar, and he would give that to all his regular customers as kind of as a Christmas gift. And they liked him so much too that, you know they would do favors for him, you know if there were repair around the stores they could help him with, he would hire some of the neighborhood Hispanic boys to work as stock boys and uh work in the butcher shop.

In fact, our butcher towards the end was a Hispanic man. Um you know, just really a symbiotic relationship. The story I always tell too, is one, well not once, but a couple of times, Dad forgot to lock the front door of the store. When we would leave in the evening, because we—after a while we didn't live near the store, we had a house by Hobby airport and we would drive up to the store and one of the customers would be standing out there in front of the store and he'd say "Oh, hi Bill, I stood out here waiting because you forgot to lock the front door but I didn't let anybody in, I was waiting for you". And they would just be so good to him, you know [laughs] It was great.
MM: Do you remember um while growing up, did you mostly hang out with people from the Chinese like church or Chinese community or was it a mix of people at your school or...?

BG: It was more with the Chinese kids at church. And I have to say my parents probably encouraged that because they wanted...in most ethnic groups they want you to marry same, you know, and so they did encourage us to have encourage us to have relationships with Chinese guys and girls, yeah, and that was one of the routes to that was through the Church yeah. But we had school friends, and um occasionally we would have some of them over to our house but not often. It was more our church friends that we would have over to the house and vice versa.

AK: Did any of your siblings end up marrying outside of the Chinese..

BG: Actually, um everybody married Chinese, but my youngest brother, his wife is half Caucasian, half Chinese, so yeah....

AK: So, just moving on, to um I guess we can move to high school. Did you still go to high school in the same neighborhood?

BG: Yes, I did. I went to Briscoe...Franklin and Briscoe Elementary, and I went to Edison Middle School and I went to Milby High School. So I'm totally east end girl. And um you know, it was funny. Milby was originally all Hispanic because it's right there in the ship channel area. But there was a shift during that time, in fact in my senior year we had this influx, we had a redistricting kind of thing and um, we had influx of white kids. [laughs] And uh it was very interesting. I felt kind of bad for them. They came from like Sterling and Jones and those schools were originally more uh Caucasian as well so it kind of changed the mix of the school. But um, overall it was still predominantly Hispanic.

AK: Was there a particular reason that the Caucasian kids were...

BG: Zoned in? They just changed the boundaries because it used to be that you had to go the school that you were zoned to.

MM: It's still like that.

BG: Except for like the magnets and the vanguards and all like that...but um, I liked high school.

MM: Did you parents push you to do that or did you just have the interest in debate?
BG: In—in middle school I had a teacher, who I think saw the potential in me because before that I was a very shy person. And did not like to speak in public but she had me do oral, um you know, speeches and practice and she put me as a lead in a play and from that moment on it's kind of like I blossomed [laughs] So when it came time—really, my parents didn't push me, but she did. I have to give credit to that teacher.

MM: I think we are going to move on to college unless you have any other questions

AK: That's fine.

MM: So you attended the University of Houston for your bachelor of science? [BG nods] And why did you choose to go the University of Houston?

BG: Well, there's where my parents came in. I actually got accepted into UT and A&M but and U of H. I wanted to go to Rice, that's where all Asian parents was their kids to go if they're going to stay local because that's such a well..high-esteemed school but I got on the waiting list to Rice, I didn't get in. Anyway, um our parents were very protective of the girls. We had to stay in town. So they would not let me accept my invitations to other schools. And um they let my brothers, all three of my brothers went to UT Austin. But, um, the two girls had to go to U of H. So, that's...it wasn't my first choice but that's where I went.

AK: Did you kind of argued their decision for you or you just kind of went with it?

BG: At that time, I really didn't fight it that much yeah. But now, it's actually one of my regrets in life, I think, that I didn't get to fly and go out on my own.

MM: Did you live on campus at the time or did you commute?

BG: Commuted.

MM: You commuted?

BG: Mhm, so I had no campus life.

AK: Did you have a part time job while in school?

BG: Not until...No, actually no. I did not have a job until I finished college. It was just working in the store.

AK: Did you find that a lot of students did work study programs to help pay for tuition?

BG: Um, I didn't know that many at U of H that did that. Actually my husband did that, but he went to UT Austin yeah. So, I—I didn't know too many that did that.

MM: Do you remember what the tuition was like from the time, just to give an estimate?
BG: Oh gosh, it's so long. You guys don't realize how old I am [laughs]. Um I remember seeing my tuition bills....I— I have to say it would be no more than like $1,000 a semester, something like that. Books and everything. So you know that kind of gives you some context.

AK: Did you parents, um did you feel like they had a hard time financially paying for that tuition or it was just kind of something they had to do so they didn't really complain as much?

BG: That's something they wanted to do for all of us. Their um promise to all of us was that we would help you get through you bachelor's degree. Any other degrees beyond that were up to you, you know. And that's a fair deal. My parents were actually very blessed with the store. The store provided for all of us to do quite well. I remember, since y'all are interested in labor and- and so forth, is that when we graduated from high school, our parents would set up a bank account for all of us, for each of us. They would set up a bank account and they would be a joint signer on it so that what they would do is they would virtually fill your bank and help you so that you have a checking account that you can pay you tuition off of. And virtually that's the only thing that we paid off of it, was our tuition and our books and all like that. Um so I remember Mom taking me to the bank, we opened an account together, and telling me how to fill out a deposit slip and how to you know put money in the bank and vice versa and how to write checks. So Mom was a real good teacher, she really was very, very um helpful to us. Um but it wasn't like hard or anything for them. It was expected, that's what they wanted us to do.

[00:25:02]

And the other thing that they usually did for us, when you finish college, they get you a car. [laughs]. So when you finish college, they get you a car.

AK: How did you get from your home to the campus?

BG: Hand me down cars. So like, um there was a family a car and you know....we would car pool a lot. My sister and I are only two years apart so we would share rides to school, you know that’s how we’d so. Eventually, when she'd get her car, I would get the hand me down car.

MM: You got a B.S. is in home economics, correct?

BG: Yeah, I hate to tell people that. [laughs]

MM: What exactly is it, because they don't offer that anymore.

BG: [laughs] Oh, it's so embarrassing. You know, what's funny though is that those very skills that you learn, that we learned in home economics, people are dying to know now. Okay, in home economics, you had stuff like early childhood development, you had textiles, you had nutrition, and food preparation and you had they called consumer sciences. So uh in fact, at U of H now, that's what they call it now, human development and consumer sciences. It was very embarrassing to tell people you were a home economics major because that virtually meant that
you were preparing to become a house wife. You were getting your bachelor's degree so you could run a home. But now like I said, those very skills I learned, people are saying I wish I had learned those things. You learn how to cook, you learn how to manage your bank account, you learn how to manage a home. You learn time management skills. Um so you know, people are paying now to do those things.

**AK:** Why did you decide to major in that?

**BG:** I wanted the nutrition and that's where it was. Yeah, I wanted that focus.

**AK:** There wasn't any other major or department that focused on nutrition?

**BG:** Now, it has come out of home economics and is in like more, attractive areas like human...um kinesiology and you know, education and other places. You know, biochemistry is actually related. We had to take a lot of science, all the nutrition majors did. We had to take chemistry and biology and anatomy and physiology because we were trying to learn about human nutrition. But the other folks didn't have to take those science courses.

**MM:** While at the University of Houston, were you involved in any like Asian America organizations or did you mostly just commute and go back to your house?

**BG:** There was a Chinese student association, I remember going to a couple of their parties, um, but other than that I was you know in the student nutrition, student dietetic association, but that's really it.

**AK:** What was your parent's opinion towards you major?

**BG:** Um they liked it because it was somewhat medically oriented. I'm the closest thing that they have to somebody whose medically oriented because you know, Asian households, they want you to go to Rice or a Ivy League school, they want you to become a doctor or an engineer or an attorney, you know. And um my oldest brother had become an attorney, my sister had become a school teacher. They knew that I was a pretty smart kid, so they said you know, why don't you see if you can do something medical, you know. I actually went for counseling with...at U of H to see what would be my aptitude. They found- I don't know if those tests are that accurate. Because they ask about what courses you've taken in high school and what do you think you're strong in. And they felt like I should go into music or speech um because I had so much debate then I- I had a lot of training in classic piano and so they said you should do. But I said I don't think I could survive as a musician, this don't make enough money and I didn't really like speech. The only thing would have been like speech pathology. So I had several friends that had become dieticians at that time. I didn't think I was smart enough to go to medical school really and my mother was not crazy about nursing, she felt like it was a little bit too dirty. You have to deal with bedpans and so forth so um nutrition was kinda that way I decided to go.

**AK:** And was there—so was this kind of an interest you had for a long time or it kind of just started when you entered college?
BG: I actually got sparked on nutrition when I was in elementary school. I think it was like second or third grade. My teacher gave us the assignment to keep a food diary for a week. And it made me very aware about what I was eating and at that time, I remember, I would tell my mom ‘Mom, you gotta get up and fix eggs and bacon for me because I don't want to put down that I just had cereal, you know, that doesn't sound good’. Like I said, that nutrition area was sparked in me. I thought that was really interesting about how food can impact your health and everything, you know.

[00:30:06]

MM: Um so upon completion of sciences, did you go straight to get your master’s at the um Texas Woman's University? Or did you get a job in between?

BG: I got a job. When I finished as a dietician, you're supposed to apply for dietetic internship and at that time you could only apply for two, I don't know why they limited you to how many. And remember, I couldn't go out of town, okay, so there was at the VA hospital and that one actually in Dallas—that was the closest one. Well, I didn't get either one so another route to registrations as a dietician was to get your master's degree. So I remember sitting in my- one of professor's office saying, crying, ‘I didn't get my internship, what am I going to do?’ And I really think it was a God given moment because he got a phone call at that time. And it was somebody saying do you have somebody who didn't get an internship who would like a job? [laughs] Honestly, this is how it happened. And he says ‘Beverly are you interested in a job?’ And I said ‘Sure!’ So he put me in touch with this lady and I got a job working at a medical center hospital. Uh it used to be called diagnostic center hospital. It's now part of the Methodist system. But um I worked there as an assistant dietician because I couldn't be a full fledged dietician because I didn't have my registration. Um and at night, I started going to Texas Woman's because it was right here in the medical center also. So I would, I started almost immediately because I finished May of '75 for my bachelor's degree and then started in September going to TWU.

MM: And um your master's is in Nutrition and Health Sciences, correct? So that was just a continuation of the nutrition that you had done in you undergrad?

BG: Right

MM: So you went at night? So how did you handle, was it stressful in terms of like the hours that you had to do because of both the job and your actual school?

BG: It was—it was, I was tired but you know, I was young. We didn't have any children. I had married by that time. It was just, kind of, we just did it. I was thankful my husband was so understanding. I would work all day and I think I went to school twice a week, so twice a week until I finished my master’s.

MM: And how did you meet your husband?
BG: He was the roommate of my oldest brother. Um I met him because Edmond came home for a party at our house one year because our oldest brother Gordon said ‘Oh let's have a party at our house’ so I met him there.

MM: Is he older than you then?

BG: He's, um, two and half years older than me, yes.

AK: So the job that you had, um did it help pay the tuition for your master's degree?

BG: Yes....

AK: And then… Go ahead.

BG: No I was thinking, actually, I got an...talk about how old things are now. When I graduate from high school, I did get a small scholarship for school, for undergrad. But you know, so that was just a little bit. But predominantly it was all my parents. But then for my master's degree, I paid for it. Or me and my husband paid for it.

MM: Do you remember how much the tuition was or anything?

BG: Oh, no. Little more than the other one, but not that much. Because they're all state schools too.

AK: So you continue this job until the end of your master's degree?

BG: Um, actually I changed. I only worked as a hospital dietician for about, a little over a year. Um, I didn't like hospital dietetics. I thought it was very um [pause]. At that time, the dietician was perceived as the lady who brought the food trays and who you complained to about the food. So it wasn't a very, I hate to say it, a very sophisticated....you're just really the lady who they complain to about, I don't like this food, get me another tray, like that. I felt very unchallenged by it. And um, I had had during my undergraduate, they had a program called day with a dietician. I got to spend some time with a public health dietician who worked for the City of Houston Health Department. And so I found out that there was a position available working with the public health department again and I applied for it and I got a position there. So I switched, uh I think it was like, I can't remember what year, '76 I guess yeah. Oh God, y'all weren't even born. [laughs] Starting working for the city health department in public health. And I found it a lot more challenging and more gratifying that working in a hospital dietetics.

[00:35:08]

MM: What did you do there?

BG: I worked with um, my first clinic was called Casa de Amigos and it was in the northeast side of town, and I did one on one counseling with mothers and their children regarding nutrition,
like how to improve their diet. I did it with pregnant woman, you know talking to them about
what's the best nutrition for your babies. I did classes. Uh during that time, this program, you
might of heard of it, it's called WIC came into being. WIC stands for Woman, Infants and
Children. It's a USDA special supplemental program for um woman, infants and children. We
gave food vouchers for milk, cheese, eggs, fruit juice, cereal, to supplement their um nutrition for
pregnant woman, to improve their outcomes for pregnancy. It was a known- known thing at that
time if you really helped the woman to have good nutrition during pregnancies, you would
improve their outcomes, you know makes sense. And it reduces low birth weight babies,
premature babies. So we, you know, the USDA decided to adopt that program, I think it came
out of Canada. I was one of the first dieticians to ever work with WIC. And it was very, very
good yeah.

AK: So then you went on to complete your doctorate.

BG: Okay, let’s see how did that come about? Um worked for city …city…or …actually after a
while my city position got paid for by the state so even though I was working for the city health
department I was, you know, a state funded position, its…its…kind of complicated, but anyway,
uh worked until ’83 when I had my—my baby and took off a year, um during that year, I didn’t
work, but my husband said “you know what would be a good thing for you to do and it would
was becoming an emerging trend…is for dieticians to have their own private practice. And so I
developed a business card and a portfolio and what was nice is a lot of the doctors who I had met
when I was working in public health were trainees as well. They were uh pediatric residents and
I formed relationships with a lot of them because uh I actually got quite good in pediatric
nutrition at the time. And so I would do in services with them about how to feed babies and
what’s the things to tell people and how to supplement diets and how to deal with low birth rate
preemies and so forth. So um like I said, I became good friends with a lot of them, so now
they’re out in private practices out in the community and I decided I would focus my uh private
practice on prenatal and pediatric nutrition since that was my area of expertise and went to visit a
lot of them, gave my cards out and had a pretty good practice um with them referring people to
me. Um I saw a lot of gestational diabetics, um overweight children.

Um and so what I did is like I say, after Rachel was born, is I took off a year, but in ’84 I
launched my own practice as a dietician uh had her taken care by grandmothers and friends and
eventually she went uh to uh Mother’s Day out, so that went on for a while and then ’87, uh I
was asked, would I be interested in a position at University of Houston and uh so I took it. It was
a part time teaching position um, when I applied for the position, they said Beverly “we really
want you to get a doctorate degree if you’re going to stay on with us. So again, somewhat out of
convenience, I entered the doctoral program at U of H. So I would teach during the day and got
to school at night. So, here we are again doing that. And finished my doctoral degree in six and a
half years. So…

MM: How was- it’s a doctorate in education and allied health- in education and administration,
correct?

BG: Yes, exactly.
MM: Um, so what exactly did that entail?

BG: Um-eh and that’s a good question Maria because there weren’t a lot of options for people who wanted to really advance in nutrition and teach and have a terminal degree, you know. There was a biochemistry degree that was over here at UT Graduate School of Biomedical sciences, there was also the doctorate of Public Health at the School of public health, so a lot of my friends who were dieticians who wanted to get the terminal degree, that’s the routes that they went. So I say, somewhat out of convenience, I decided just to go to U of H and that was the only thing that was somewhat relevant and so, I made it as relevant as possible for me. I- I uh had some elective courses that I could take in my curriculum. I took uh I think one course at Texas Woman’s in nutrition, I took nine hours at the school of public health in nutrition, epidemiology, and so forth. And everything else though was in adult education at U of H.

[00:40:05]

MM: Okay. So that way you could continue your teaching?

BG: Yeah

MM: Oh okay

BG: So that was kind of what- my curriculum was kind of like that.

MM: hm. And when did you finish that doctorate?

BG: ’94.

MM: Oh, okay, so it took you a few years.

BG: Yeah.

MM: Because you’re going at night, so…

BG: Mhm. Yeah. And then when it came to picking my dissertation topic…

MM: Oh!

BG: Uh, that’s kind of where, again I tailored it to what I wanted to do and my- my- my uh dissertation committee- they understood it. They said Beverly, we really don’t have what you want, so what do you want to do? And so my dissertation topic was on Chinese Americans and their risk for cardiovascular disease. And so I uh there wasn’t much literature on that topic at the time, uh so I really got to do some pioneering you know work on that area. And I uh for my dissertation committee I had to pull in somebody form school of public health actually to give some nutrition stuff cause there wasn’t really anybody at U of H who could provide that for me.
MM: So, what exactly did your dissertation like cover? It just talked about like Asian Americans and their risk for cardiovascular disease or

BG: Well-

MM: (inaudible)...nutrition?

BG: Okay and context wise my father had just suffered a heart attack and so I was thinking you know, everybody else seems to think the Chinese diet is healthy. What happened? You know and uh now, my father was a smoker early on in life, but he quit long time ago and um but a lot of people at his age, like sixties, were starting to—in the Chinese community—were developing cardiovascular disease and having to go see Denton Cooley and getting bypass surgery and the whole thing and I go, you know, what is going on? So my hypothesis had to do with—what is the fat—saturated fat cholesterol intake of overseas born Chinese versus American-born Chinese? And is there a relationship between how long-the acculturation factor and the risk for cardiovascular disease. So anyway, my outcome variable were uh okay. So what I did is develop a survey instrument that talked about some of your demographic factors variables and then I developed a- what they call a food frequency questionnaire.

MM: Oh okay.

BG: And so, they answered a series of questions to find out um what was their intake of certain fat containing foods and so uh virtually we were looking at how long you’ve been in the US, were you overseas born or American born and your intake of certain nutrients and so, what I found was kind of counter to the literature. You would think that people who had been here longer would consume more fat- saturated fat and cholesterol. That was what was thought. But actually, we found that the people who had been here shorter were consuming more cholesterol and um but what we – uh you know- the conclusions that we drew was that if you had been here a long time, you had been hearing all these things about- oh and I guess- basic thing: there was not- the only statistically significant difference was on cholesterol intake. Everything else was pretty similar. Um- if you’d been here a long time, you’d kind of been told, don’t eat so much fat, don’t eat so much cholesterol—don’t—you know. And so that’s why you’d moderated your intake. The people who’d just immigrated were often consuming a lot of those things because they felt like, you know, in China, in Hong Kong they didn’t have a lot of those meats and so forth- they were more expensive, they weren’t as accessible. But you come to the US, and suddenly they’re affordable, accessible, and you consume a lot of them. So if you take cross sectionals, you know and food frequency questionnaire, you ask them, they do tend to eat a lot of those things.

AK: What about just Chinese food in general? Did you find that there’s um specific ingredients that are kind of that are specific to Chinese food and not American food?

BG: Um, the typical Chinese diet in China is probably more- um lower in meat, uh high carbohydrate, more fruits and vegetables. It —but, as people come to America, they tend to eat
more meat, and they’re more sedentary. So, I think those are the factors that actually put them more at risk for heart disease. And huh-uh, there’s a lot of sodium in our diet too.

**AK**: So after your PhD, did you move on to get another job?

**BG**: Um what happened? Um I got my PhD in ’94, worked at U of H until ’96 was it? ’96? Um, I can’t remember, it’s all a blur now. I think it was ’96, but I did have some issues with um — I don’t know if I put this in my interview notes that I submitted.

Um my leaving university of Houston was not under the best of circumstances. There was an individual there that I believed discriminated against me. And um it made it very difficult uh uh to stay on. Uh University of Houston I told you was in the process of developing a dietetic internship. So I was teaching in the nutrition curriculum. And developing this dietetic internship and um anyway uh there were other faculty that were there too at U of H who were trying to develop this internship and I was unsuccessful with actually getting it started but then somebody else got it started—she um felt discrimination from this individual as well also. She asked me to give testimony regarding her discrimination and then she left. And then this individual who discriminated against her continued to be um unprofessional with me as well. And so I actually filed a lawsuit against University of Houston on basis of retaliation. Because when I applied to be director of the internship for university of Houston um, I was not selected. And in fact a white male with less teaching experience—in fact we were supposed to have at least three years of teaching experience or something like that and he didn’t even meet that requirement - um I had my doctoral degree. He did not have a doctoral degree. He had his master’s degree. He was selected over me. And so I uh actually went to the office of affirmative action to file complaints against this individual- not only- it wasn’t just that. It was some um sexual harassment comments that he made towards me. And so I documented all that with office of affirmative action at U of H and finally the last straw was when I was not selected and I felt like it was retaliatory uh action against me uh and went to the EEOC and went the whole route, you know, went to court. I lost my lawsuit against them um and um but the people that discriminated against me or that I had alleged discriminated against me uh – that individual was asked to retire early and so he took a retirement package. The person that was the chair of the department was demoted and uh so there was a whole big shakeup after that.

**MM**: So did you feel like the administration was- um they did have concern for your complaint? They were responsive?

**BG**: Yes

**MM**: That’s good.

**BG**: I felt that they were uh yeah, I think they realized that they were and I just didn’t have enough evidence to um win that case.
AK: And was this just one person that you felt was discriminating against you or did you feel that other people in your department were kind of rallying around him?

BG: Um, one person in particular, but I felt like my chair, she knew what was going on. But she didn’t stick up for me.

AK: And did other people in your department stick up for you, or um-

BG: You know, it was very uh touchy situation because my attorney would say “well can you get some letters from students about things that they’ve observed. Students were afraid because he would retaliate against them as well. And so I got a few students who were brave enough to give me letters but they would almost have to do it as they were exiting, graduating, cause they knew that they could be retaliated against as well. And, um it was a very sticky situation- there was one individual who I asked to write a letter, or you know, testify on my behalf and she- she uh this person, this male, he was Caucasian —this person who I worked with a lot said well he’s never been like that with me. This um Caucasian female and so she said, I can’t be on your side Beverly. So it was a tough situation, it was a very tough situation. One of the most painful periods of my life, but one in which I feel like I grew uh personally, you know, develop some personal strengths.

MM: And so in 2000, you began your job at MD Anderson, correct?


MM: 2001, okay, and that was after this lawsuit and everything was all taken care of?

BG: Well, the lawsuit finished in 200-well actually, no I came to U of H- I finished at U of H in ’96, went back to private practice for a while, then got recruited by Anderson in 2001. The lawsuit was still going on, all my depositions were still going on and uh it wasn’t finalized until 2002, so there was some time I had to take off from Anderson you know to sit in court for about a week. But they were very understanding about it.

[00:50:17]

MM: That’s good. So, um you’re on a fellowship, correct, at here?

BG: I’m called a postdoctoral fellow.

MM: That’s the word—that’s the phrase I was looking for.

BG: Yeah, I was originally hired here to be the Asian- Asian community relations person for the center on research for minority health so it was a staff position and uh not a faculty trainee position, but in 2007 my boss Dr. Jones said ‘you know Beverly I think you would be really be
uh you have potential to be faculty’, so he asked me would I assume a post-doctoral fellow position and I did and I have not been able to attain faculty yet.

**MM:** And um this position, do you think uh—was it partly because of your work with the Hope clinic that they recruited you or why do you think they recruited you?

**BG:** Um when I was first recruited I was...cofounder of a group called Asian Health Coalition. Health Coalition preceded Hope. Um but Asian American Health Coalition’s vision was that we needed a health center in Houston for the Asian community and so um yes, I think I was recruited because of my work with Asian American Health Coalition.

**AK:** What did you feel were the -kind of the most important- or the largest problems regarding health care during that time?

**BG:** Um they were not seeking primary—the Asian American community because of language and culture barriers were not seeking preventive health care services. Uh they didn’t know about public health clinics, were afraid to go to them because spoke their language and didn’t know about cancer screening, didn’t know about- you know- just to go to the doctor for checkups. Their idea was only go to the doctor when you’re sick.

**MM:** Was that um difficult for you because of um your language barrier as well because you didn’t know very much Chinese? Like how did you relate with these people?

**BG:** Um yes and no um I really feel like it like it’s uh—I feel very privileged to be able to be a voice for people who don’t speak English well. Because of my work with the Asian American Health coalition I had developed some relationships with communities that uh don’t speak English well. Uh I had a lot of friends who were bilingual who formed bridges for me. In so, uh in fact, one of the things that was really nice was during my doctoral degree we had to do a uh what they call a residency. Pretty much your own field work in what you want to do and so what I did during that time is um did nutrition-education classes for Asian senior citizens. Cause there was this congregate meal program, and they needed, while they’re there sitting and eating, they like to get education and so I had them translate for me in you know Vietnamese or Chinese about you know different topics and they loved it, they really enjoyed it, and so I developed relationships with people that way too.

**AK:** So Hope Clinic still exists today?

**BG:** Oh yeah, it’s going really well. I’m thankful for that. In 2002, Hope Clinic was born and it was started out as just a four hour a month uh venture. All volunteered docs. We charged five dollars a visit to people. And um it has really grown and now it’s a 40 hour a week, fully operational clinic with a staff of about 20 people and uh four thousand square feet of uh unit space out in Chinatown.

**AK:** And you’re still involved it?
BG: I was the first uh first board chair and uh- I’m *ex officio* to the board now. I go to all the board meetings and can participate, but cannot vote.

AK: And do you have any ultimate goals for...

BG: For the clinic?

AK: For the clinic.

BG: I would love for it to be in its own space- it’s now in a rented space. If we own our own property, we can qualify for a community development block grants and other funding, so that’s a good thing. Um we’re uh really bursting at the seams as it is now, so we need more space. So I would love it to be in its own building. Uh the other thing that I would like that my- before I die, I’d like to see happen, is I would love to see us develop an Asian long term care facility as an offshoot of this. Because we have a big senior community.

[00:55:02]

Um there’s a reluctance in the Asian community to have your loved one go into a long term care facility because of the lack of cultural competence in those facilities. Uh we would provide an Asian menu, Asian oriented physical activity, recreational activities, and I’d love to have that happen.

MM: Also, I know that you had a lot of response with Hurricane Katrina—what was your experience with that with the Hope Clinic?

BG: That was beautiful. I was glad that we could provide some services. There were over 15,000 Vietnamese that fled form the gulf area during Hurricane Katrina and we saw at least 3000 of them through the Hope Clinic. Uh we provided uh- I call it emergent care you know. Really just interview people: what is your major complaint? We help people through a lot of medical crises and get medication again and even like counseling uh and we didn’t do it alone. We had many other organizations that worked along with us. Asian American Family Services, uh Boat People SOS, other groups that we referred people to and worked alongside.

Because actually what we did is we set up shop of the Hope Clinic in Boat People SOS’s office. Um they’re in Hong Kong City mall—they were at the time. And so we did the medical, someone needed social services, we handed them off to them. So it was a great partnership really, and then eventually we moved out of there building and had people who needed continued medical services- you need to come to the clinic yeah.

AK: So you’re also involved in um—I read on your sheet that you submitted- a lot of community and business organizations, can you just briefly describe what you would feel, I guess, are your greatest accomplishments through these organizations.
BG: Well, I think the greatest accomplishments are through the Asian American health coalition and the Hope Clinic. Um, I was on something called the Texas Medical Center Woman’s Health Network uh I think I just brought to awareness some of the needs of minority women and by just bringing in different speakers and just bringing awareness of their unique needs uh. I was on the Houston Wellness association board for a while and again, uh again bringing awareness about the minority community and how maybe the mainstream things—ideas that we have about health care may not be relevant to that community and how we need to develop programs that are more culturally relevant. Um where else? I was on the board of the Chinese community center but at that time, it was really nice, they asked me to be on the board because the Hope Clinic was housed at the Chinese community center and they really liked us being there and they said why don’t you be on our board for a while and I was. There I think my- my uh I tried to make them a little more think about health, think about other communities, not just Chinese community, so I’m uh a trouble maker. You ask me to be on the board of something- I will say—I will make you uncomfortable because I will try to make you, you know, reach beyond what you’re doing now.

MM: So what other communities did you emphasize, was it other Asian American communities, or the Hispanic communities, or all of them?

BG: Uh and African-American too, I think it’s important that we be inclusive. Uh I think there’s strength if we work together uh with other minority communities. I mean, each one has their own unique needs, but there’s a lot of commonality too. And uh immigrant issues, refugee issues, cultural language issues, all of those. So I think there are some common threads but there are ways we can work together while recognizing our uniqueness.

MM: How do you think the Hope Clinic addresses these like unique issues versus other hospitals and that kind of thing?

BG: Well, our staff is very uh culturally…uh we- how many languages do we speak at Hope Clinic—I think its eight. Yeah, we have staff who speak- we’re doing Arabic, we’re doing uh Burmese you know, and our medical director Dr. Andrews is just ideal. He’s kind of a peace corps type doc.

Really, he’s a Caucasian guy but so, so open to learning new languages, to seeing life form other peoples’ perspective uh he’s just wonderful. Like one of the things that I like to tell about him- he realizes that a lot of Asian people smoke. And he would like them not so smoke. But they’re not into nicotine patch per say or Chantix or stuff like that.

So he has devised his own tobacco cessation program. And I really want to see if we can do a clinical trial on it. Because he says “‘his is what I tell them to do Beverly.’ Because he learned it when he used to do, like I said, almost Peace Corps type of work. He used to tell a story about tobacco—he says you get a pea sized piece of tobacco and you put it between their big toe and second toe and the absorption of the tobacco is such that they can decrease it, decrease it,
decrease it and eventually get off of tobacco uh uh uh dependence, okay? Now the way he does it here in the states because he says putting it between your toes is a little bit messy here in the U.S. But he says “I get that pea sized piece of tobacco and I put it on their chest and I put a band aid on it. And I say gradually you reduce the amount of- and you can smoke a little bit, but you know, you can decrease that, so he says it has worked and people have been able to quit, so uh you know she – uh, they control it and um I think the psychological control that they over it may play a role in their uh withdrawal and uh its fascinating I think, yeah.

AK: You said there’s a lot of Asian Americans who smoke. Do you think there’s a particular reason for such a high prevalence of smoking?

BG: In Asia, particularly among males, it’s a cultural norm, to use tobacco. Now uh in the South Asian community, it may not be cigarettes per say, but its other forms of tobacco use um but um it’s just kind of a method of relaxation. It’s just a very culturally acceptable practice in—in Asia.

AK: And you said for men- a lot of men smoke. For women, is it less encouraged?

BG: Yes, but our concern with that community then is their exposure to second hand smoke because if the man is smoking a lot in the home, the children and the wife are exposed to that. And indeed, we—we do see lung cancer among people who are non-smokers. Uh I have a friend now uh lady—Chinese lady, never smoked, but has lung cancer.

AK: So moving to a little- to a different subject. Your husband. Is he also a – you’re a third generation?

BG: I consider myself one and a half-

AK: One and a half.

BG: Uh my mother was here and then my dad immigrated, so I’m not quite two-second, but I’m one and a half. My husband- both his parents immigrated from China, but he is totally fluent in uh English. Uh He’s American born Chinese. So um I guess he’s really first generation.

AK: And does he speak Chinese?

BG: More than I do, yes. He speaks uh Toishan, which is kind of the more village talk Cantonese.

MM: Can you spell that?

BG: T o i s h a n. That’s usually how they say it. A-n. Toishan.

MM: And um, after you um had your child, did you try to instill a lot Chinese cultural values and like tradition and that kind of thing in her childhood?
BG: Pretty much what I did—what my parents did for me. So we did uh Chinese New Year, we all went to Baptist church, you know and um celebrated uh those things—the red egg parties and everything you know. So she knows about those customs and in fact, when she had her baby, like I said, I did the red egg party for her. I did—we made the cultural soups for her and…

AK: And do you feel like—do you have any kind of difficulties balancing your career with your family life?

BG: Um…

AK: I know your daughter’s grown, but—

BG: Yeah, back then, I— because I was only able to have that one child, I did have difficulties with getting pregnant uh I pretty much said I would not let my family uh be second. Until she got old enough to go away to school. In fact I never worked forty hours a week until she went away to college. So she was always my priority. Um I—you know, I tried work uh so that I would work from nine until three. And so then I’d be home in the afternoon. So I was very blessed. I, you know, either it was school she was at. She’d be in preschool or you know when I needed a babysitter it would be family you know so I was okay.

MM: So your extended family was really supportive of like all your decisions?

BG: Very much so.

MM: Did they live with you or just nearby?

[01:05:00]

BG: Nearby. my sister and I lived you know walking distance from each other when our children were growing up so we would babysit for each other a lot

MM: Was it an Asian American community or Hispanic community or?

BG: No, it was pretty much Caucasian, you know mixed community. Uh our-when my daughter was growing up, we lived in a neighborhood called Glenshire which is now west airport and 59. Almost to Stafford you know, so like I said my sister lived about three blocks away so we would just—we would share babysitting a lot. And then my mom, uh, once Rachel was born, her son—she had three sons actually. Uh Mom and dad had retired from the grocery store. So they’d actually come over and help us babysit too. They’d kind of keep the kids if we needed them.

AK: Um, do you feel like your relationship with your siblings is culturally influenced a lot, in terms of—you know, you said three of your siblings are still living in Houston, so is that encouraged to have close ties with them?
BG: Yes, very much so. And then, my mother has kind of established—every Tuesday night, she
would cook dinner for all of us. So that’s a nice thing because you know, you worked all day.
Hey, sure I’m coming over you know. So we fellowship a lot at Tuesday night at her house, and
just get together. We do the holidays together. Uh you know what was the last time? Memorial
day? We all went out for barbecue together. So father’s day, mother’s day, we spend together.

AK: Um Father’s Day and Mother’s Day of course are not specifically Chinese

BG: Right!

AK: …Celebrations, but do you feel like there’s certain Chinese traditions that are —I know the
ones that you mentioned- but more that are tied to family?

BG: Um, well, we’re really blended in terms of being westernized and Chinese, you can see, you
know. Um we do celebrate all of those holidays. We usually get together for our birthdays. Um
so yeah, the main thing that we do together we’ll do American new year, but then we’ll do
Chinese New Year and then we’ll do the American holidays, you know Fourth of July, mother’s
day, father’s day. Um what other? Christmas, Thanksgiving, um yeah [chuckles]. But like you
know, I don’t know if this is—I guess it’s not—not necessarily Asian like for father’s day, which
is coming up, we’ll all go out to the cemetery to remember my father together. So that’s pretty
much everybody, right? It’s not necessarily Asian.

MM: I don’t think there’s as much a tie maybe, as there is with Asian community with their like
heritage and ancestors and that sort of thing, but I mean yeah you definitely do still honor it.

BG: Yeah, like I said, am I doing that because of western or Asian, I don’t know.

MM: I think it’s a mix, yeah.

AK: And have you ever went back to china? I mean I know you weren’t born there or anything,
but do you still have family there?

BG: We went one time. We went in ’96 and had a lovely, lovely time. Me, my husband, and my
daughter, we went back with my father. It was a group of us. Almost all of us went, all my
siblings went except for one. Uh we got to visit where my dad was brought up and where my
oldest brother was born. It was wonderful —really one of the really landmark events in my life.
We’re ready to go again actually. We want to go again. I’d love to take my daughter and son in
law back, but the baby’s kind of young you know —so we might wait is little while you know
and go again.

MM: Do you just have the one grandchild?

BG: Yes, uh-huh. One daughter and one grandchild, yeah uh huh.

MM: Okay, um, is there any other questions?
AK: I—well, I actually do have one question. You mentioned that your um—the Hispanic neighborhood that you lived in was very close to the Ship Channel. Uh—what kind of influence did you feel that had in your neighborhood?

BG: You mean by the Ship Channel?

AK: The proximity to the Ship Channel. If any?

BG: Um business wise, it was good. Uh you know back in the day, many, the small grocery stores would uh cater to what they called the longshoremen- I don’t know if you know that term. The people who would work in the—ok—ship channel of Houston is a big economic driver for the city of Houston. We’re a port city, so you get these big ships that come on shore there and you have these, what you call the longshoremen who would unload the ships.

MM: Ok.

BG: So there’s uh not only the crew of the ship, but these would be the guys that work at the port. They would help to load and unload the ships. So those were a lot of the people that patronize your store. And then there were some stores- not us as much—but sometimes you would get people who would come from the Ship Channel, you know they would come off board it, come to your store, patronize your store, buy a lot of stuff and even give you like a list—ike we need all of this you know bulk stuff to reload the ship, you know.

[01:10:12]

And like I said, not my store so much, but some of my other Chinese friends, they would get these huge orders to stalk the ships. So that was actually a very good economic um boom for the Chinese grocers that lived and worked near the Ship Channel area. Now on the downside I have to say, now I’m finding that because of where we lived, actually was close to the refineries as well and many people developed cancer too as a result of some of the exposure to um the petrochemical industry, so that’s—uh I have to say, we lived along the ship channel by the refineries and you know, when it smelled back in the morning, you never thought about, you never thought about it, but you were being exposed to all these sulfur gases [laughs]. Now you kind of go ‘uh-oh’ [chuckles].

MM: Okay, is there anything else that you wanted to include, or anything?

BG: No, I hope I didn’t bore y’all totally!

MM: No, it’s been very interesting!

BG: Yeah-

MM: We covered a lot though.