

JACK LIM ENG



AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE 爸爸

JACK LIM ENG

AN EXTRAODINARY LIFE



DAD'S STORY

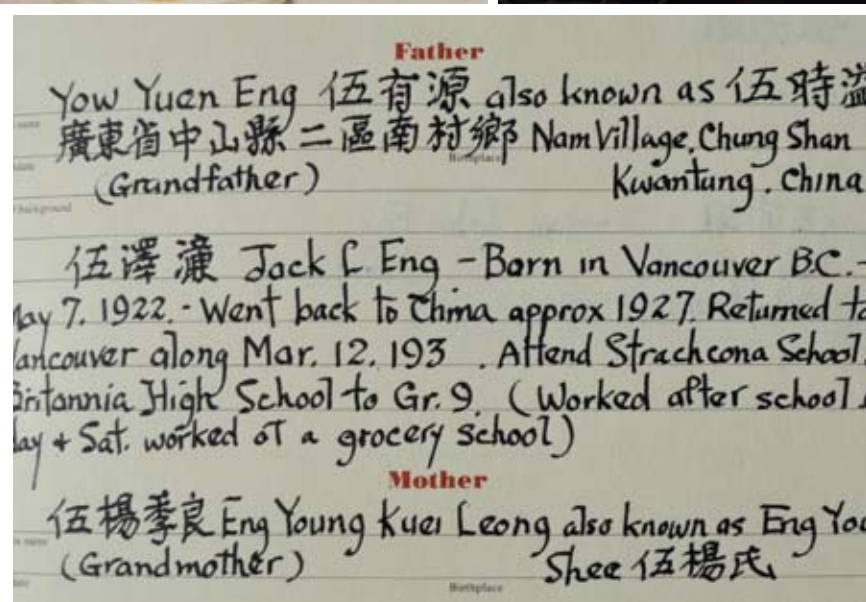
I was born May 7 1922 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

I went back to China in 1927 June with the entire family and was educated at the Chung Shan Middle School in Chung Shan, Sek Kee, where I went to mid-grade 10 in Chinese formal education.

I returned to Vancouver alone when I was 15 years old and stayed with my uncle (my father's brother) for 2 or 3 years. Times were tough during the depression my uncle started a small grocery store near Hastings and Nanaimo for his eldest son, Jack Foon Eng, when he had just completed high school. My uncle's second son Edward went up to grade 10 and then quit school to join his brother in the grocery business. I was still attending school at the time. The grocery business was really tough; often times the whole day's business would comprises as much as \$20 per day but also as low as \$12 a day. Saturday's business was usually better. Although I was attending school, I knew the business well as I used to help my aunt write down the store's take-ins in Chinese every night.

CHINATOWN YEARS

I helped my uncle to change the window displays once a week or once every two week, and I helped him with all sorts





of errands. I chopped wood and brought them in from the outside wood shed for cooking and heating. During the summer we used to buy cords of wood which were piled into the woodshed for winter storage. The wood came in very large pieces and had to be chopped down before we could actually use them.

We all lived in the back living quarters and basement of uncle's dry good store and I helped my uncle to wash the floors of the store and living quarters every week. My uncle treated me very well and I did not have to pay any room or board.

My uncle used to give his three sons (including Jackson, the youngest who was still attending school too) and myself 10¢ a week for spending money and my aunt would take me to Woodward' on 95¢ day where I could purchase a cheap pair of shoes or a pair of pants for 95¢. Normally I wore the hand-me-downs of my uncle's sons.

Sometimes my uncle's friends or relatives of the Eng family clan would give me a dollar or two, now and then. I saved up this money and when I had around \$8 or \$10, I would send some money back to my family at home. My uncle would make up the difference to whatever was lacking so that we could send back ~ \$50 HKD (~ \$15 in today's exchange rate). At this time, my father had already passed away and the money I sent was to my mother so that she could support the family - 2 sisters and one brother who were not married at the time - Adrienne, Susie and Sammy.

I would work in my uncle's grocer store every Saturday without pay. My uncle also operated a small dry good store on the 200 block of Hastings street in Chinatown.

After a year after the grocery store had been started, I was able to secure a part time job through my uncle where I worked at eastern produce at Broadway and commercial drive on Saturdays from 7:30 in the morning to midnight for \$3 a day.

Chinese School 學校

Chinese children here learn to read, write, speak and play in their own language at their own special school

Hermia Harris Fraser

It seemed to me hard on Chinese in that they have school after-school their own language, changed my mind by the Chinese City School at 5 West Vancouver.

...a teacher there who told me the Chinese Times... over the two big... newly decorated... also the comfort... and halls and the... pingpong table and... which was declared... on my arrival at... the children ran... drinking water... of an involved... difficult than seem...

The Chinese Community School on Vancouver's Pender Street is only one of its kind in Canada that is free. Chinese characters, upper right, form the word "school."

There are other schools that teach their own language to Chinese children: Man Kuen, Kwong Goo and the Chinese Public School. But the Chinese Community School on Pender is the only one of its kind in Canada that is free to its pupils.

Mr. Eng regrets very much that Chinese children seldom play instruments.

languages. The thing that annoys me," he went on, "is not their noise or their marks, but when they don't do their housework. We are so anxious for them to learn."

But if they don't play heated music, some of them have music in their voices. Donald Eng was dragged before me to prove it. He craned his small mouth and a pulse line poured from him in a simple, unaffected fashion. The others laughed and leered all through the song, but Donald fixed his eyes on the wall above and sang right on, ending on a high, screeching note. I asked

The teacher told me that, to some Chinese nationalities, he was much misunderstood. He mentioned having a lot of Chinese friends that reflect a Latin American influence popular in China now. But to return to our singer Donald. He came from Taihu in Southern China on the 25th of

Teacher shows how to do it.

The other boys. It was not in appearance or clothes so much as his manner—his good manners that made him typical of Old China.

him. I too had dreamy distant expression on his face, as if I had lived in an quiet world. A small boy of ten or even less, I goes now to Sirachanna School and says that he likes Canada and enjoys studying English as Chinese.

kind baseball. The boys he can play across the road from his school, and it's a pretty good game. He has lived six years in Vancouver, coming here from Kelowna. In the Strathcona School, Henry is in Grade 6, but in the Chinese school he is in Book 3, as it takes two years to complete a grade.

Daddy Leung, in her little jacket and with her curly hair and sparkling eyes, was a pleasing sight. This seven-year-old said she loved spelling in English and memorizing Chinese sayings. She was born in Vancouver and is in Grade 4 at Birchmount.

I came upon the pond who never on time and who make me want about more. But Ray, a grumpy one, said his big truth was thinking too many things.

"Oh boy! This is good! We're going to miss a lot of grammar and writing today."

Suzanne's story dealt with a man who wasn't clever at count-

ing, delays. I didn't get the point, but it must be funny. Seventy-five Chinese children can't be wrong.

One youngster and his friend, in a moment of school rage when another boy pushed him and he broke a glass. There was also a lot of laughter about a monkey case, but that too was over my head.

I stayed until six o'clock—classes for the juniors last from four till six—and enjoyed every

I had imagined a room in some dark and dusty garret where the Chinese scholars grew wiser and make from less much wiser and discipline. This idea was completely reversed.

Walking Mr. Kong built up Chinese characters in the black book I was a lot of fun and I discovered "you go somewhere" (I'm smiling). Joke! (points) why

Cover Picture
—Photo by George Fieroni,
San Jose Mercury-News.

Cover Picture

With much concentration, Joe Kay Chung practices drawing Chinese characters while fellow



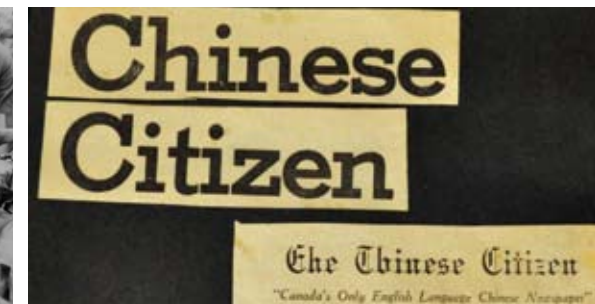
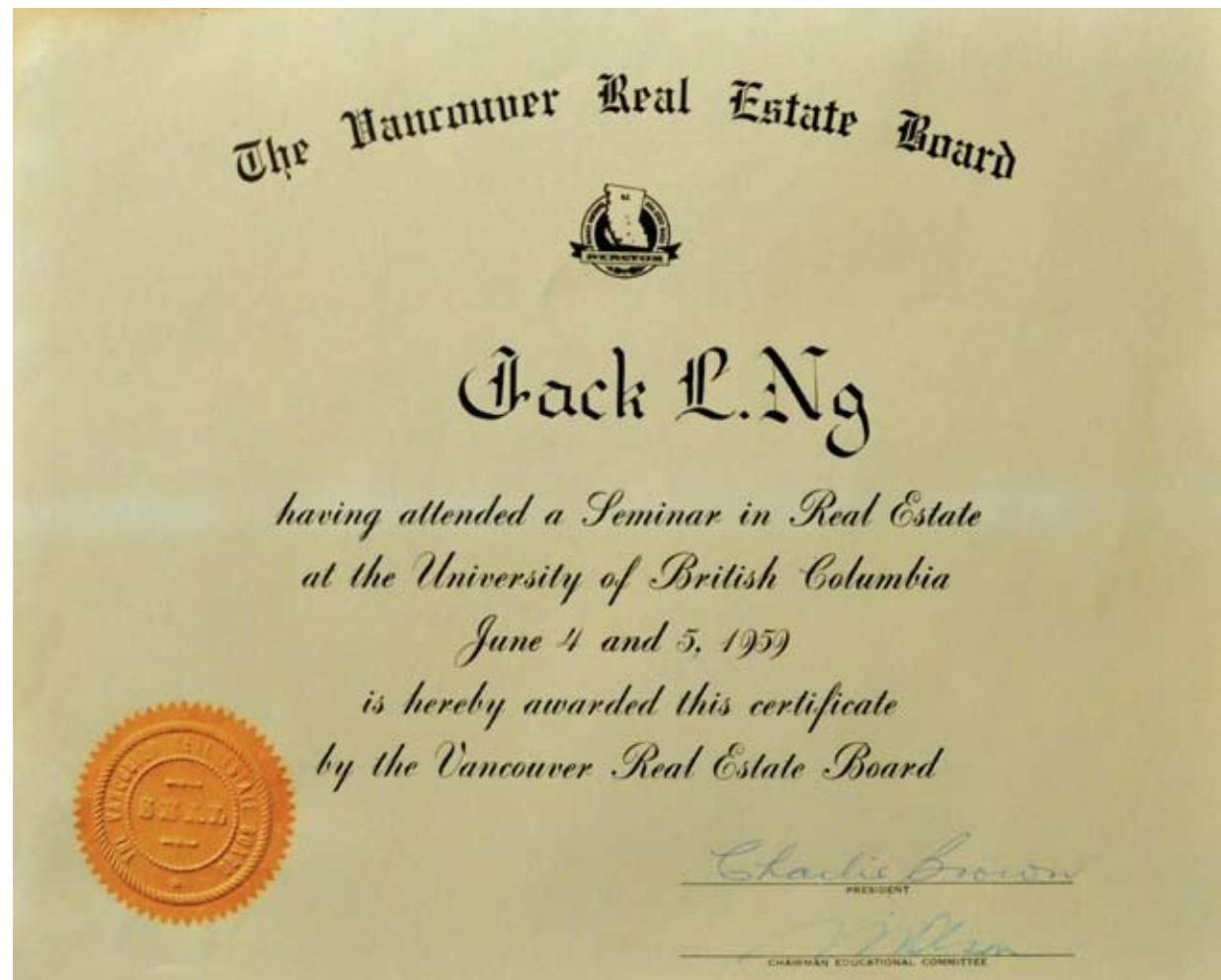
SUMMER JOBS

In 1939 during summer vacation, I went up the coast to work in a fish cannery where I received 15¢ an hour. During the whole summer I earned less than \$40.

In the summer of 1940 I went up the coast again to work at the fish cannery for the same pay. The foreman, Louie Jang was very good to me and taught me the cannery operation. At the end of the summer, he sent my time sheet along with a letter of reference to his boss, Charlie Suey in Vancouver. When I got back to Vancouver to pick up my cheque, I was offered a job as deputy foreman and bookkeeper in Vancouver and the pay was \$40 per month. (same as allowance from uncle!) I was overwhelmed with such an opportunity and accepted and temporarily quit school. At age 17 or 18, there were over a hundred people working under me. After the herring season had ended the cannery was closed and I went back to school again.

The following summer I went to work for eastern produce again which was a larger grocery operation than my uncle's. My uncle offered me a share in his sons' grocery business but I declined because





I felt his offer was far too generous. I took the grocery job at eastern produce instead of going back to the cannery again so that I would not have to leave town. But the job was still not easy and I worked 6 days a week from 7:30 in the morning till 9:00 pm on weekdays and midnight on Saturday's.

Incidentally Louie Jang, the foreman at the fish cannery is still alive and purchased a home from me some 10 or 15 years ago and he still purchases his insurance from me.

I shared a room with a roommate at the United Church where I paid ~\$5 or \$7.50 per month. I continued to go to school during the daytime and found a job teaching Chinese from 4-6 pm each day. Later through the recommendation of the Chinese school principal, I got another part time job at the Chinese Times newspaper as apprentice translator where I had a minimum of translating at least one column a day. This job at the newspaper paid only \$10 per month but provided me with dinners every day including Sundays.

With two part-time jobs and going to school during the day times, I found that

there really enough to keep me busy and not enough time to sleep or to study.

Later Roy Mah, the owner of the Chinese Publicity Bureau heard of me and the good job I was doing at the Chinese Times. He approached me to work as a translator for him and offered me \$1.25 or \$1.50 per hour. From the 15¢ an hour that I previously had worked for in the past, it was difficult to refuse. So I left school and went to work at the Chinese Publicity Bureau from 9am to 4 pm daily and continued teaching Chinese school plus working at the Chinese Times. At the same time, I was promoted to the North American News Editor at the Chinese Times and later moved on to become International News Editor and eventually Managing Director and Chairman.

I left school mainly because my mother and her family - my brother and sisters in China needed financial support and partly because the offer from the Chinese publicity bureau was good. I very much regret not having finished school as I think that my life might have been different. As it was, I only had a little over three years of English education and that is why my English is very limited.



I kept up the 3 jobs even after I was married. For some years I even took another, as an interpreter at the international airport for Canadian Pacific Airlines. When there were immigrants coming in from Hong Kong, I was called in to help interpret for immigrations and customs. This was usually 2 or 3 times a week. I also got a similar job for my wife at Canadian Pacific Airlines after I worked there too. I found that this really helped me in real estate and the insurance business in future years when my wife and I started our own business as many of these people remembered my helping them at immigration and customs and came to me for their business.

Later I left teaching at the Chinese school when I was promoted to manager of the Chinese Publicity Bureau.

My wife went into real estate while she was pregnant with our daughter Andrea because I was already holding a number of jobs already and I was not ready to quit them until I learned more about the market.

I started in real estate sales with Sunrise Realty near Main & Hastings in Chinatown ~ 1958 / 1959. The first house I sold was to Fred Mah's father-in-law on Renfrew street. I know Fred Mah through the Chinese Freemasons and he is still and insurance client for over 20 years.

After I entered real estate I still kept the job as interpreter for Canadian Pacific Airlines at the airport, for years even after we started Success



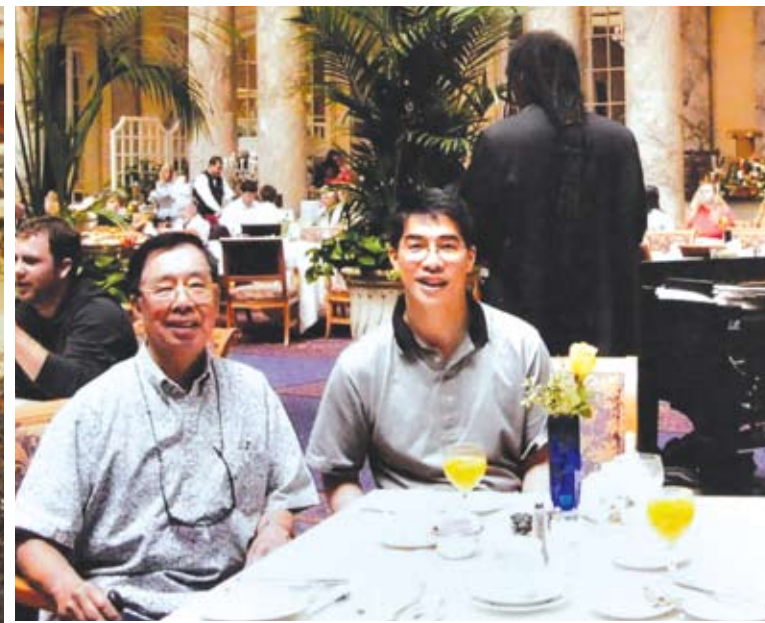
Realty. I thought it an appropriate connection to the new comers from the Far East and every one could become a future prospect for us. I kept the job as interpreter until I became too busy with real estate.

After world war II, I brought my mother, four sister and one brother and all their families to Vancouver from China. That last one to come was my eldest sister and her grown daughter, Mae. She arrived in 1979 when my wife, Andrea, Jordy and I went to Hong Kong on a family vacation and I went in [to China] to see my eldest sister alone and spoke to the Chinese authorities to apply and sponsor her immigration to Canada. This trip was in 1977 and it took roughly two years to process her application before she came in 1979.

TRAVEL

As a family unit, my wife, Andrea, Jordy and myself went to the United States many times on vacation. But it was from 1966 on that we started to travel around internationally. The following are the vacations I recall that we took as a family:

- 1966 October to December: to Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong and Hawaii. It was on this trip that we went to pick up Jordan whom we had just adopted from Fanling Orphanage in New Territories of Hong Kong
- 1967 summer: to Okanagan - Penticton and Kelowna.
- 1969 July to August: to Europe including London, Amsterdam, Dusseldorf, Munich, Innsbruck, Monaco, Geneva, Rome, Venice, Milan, Rome, Paris
- 1970 June to July to California
- 1970 Christmas to Honolulu Hawaii
- 1971 December to January 16: to Los Angeles, Mexico city, Taxco, Acapulco
- 1973 to Europe including England, Netherlands, West Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia (with Ivan and Margot Paravan), Italy, France, Switzerland, Belgium
- 1974 summer to New York, Washington DC and Chicago
- 1974 Christmas to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas (with Lum Lai family) and Palm Spring (it was on this trip that we bought the Palo Alto property on Ramona)



- 1975 summer to Honolulu Hawaii (Andrea did not come cause she had fashion show commitment at the PNE)
- 1975 Christmas to San Francisco (to join Fong family - Andrea met John!!!)
- 1976 summer to South America including Los Angeles, Lima, Cuzco, Machu Pichi, Peru, Sao Paolo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Buenos Aires, Argentina, (with Koo's & Mrs. Kong, Eric's Mom) New York, San Francisco.
- 1976 October to San Francisco and Los Angeles
- 1976 Christmas to Seattle for John (he did not have green card to leave US during his last years at UC Berkeley)
- 1977 June to July to Hong Kong. I went alone on side trip to Canton to sponsor and apply for my sister to come to Canada
- 1977 August: I went alone to San Francisco to represent the Eng family clan of Canada at the North American convention
- 1977 November: Edna May accompanied Andrea to the Miss Canada pageant
- 1977 Christmas to Honolulu
- 1978 June - July: to Mexico City and Acapulco to support Andrea at the Miss Universe Pageant. Later on, in San Francisco the family was honoured because of Andrea's achievements with plaques and memorabilia from the U.S. Eng's and Wong's family clan associations





COMMUNITY LEADER IN VANCOUVER'S CHINATOWN

I have been active in the Chinese community and the Canadian political scene. I think that my experience and expertise in public relations work is reflected in the many community activities that I participate in, and to a greater degree, the extent of my business success. As testimony to my public relations activities, I have held executive titles of chairman or president of a variety of organizations including Chinese Freemasons, Dart Coon Club, Eng Family Clan organization. I have on numerous occasions delivered eulogies at many funerals in the Community, as Master of Ceremonies at many weddings and celebrations etc. In business, I was awarded three times the trophies from the Greater Vancouver Real Estate Board as Top Five Selling Salesmen.

On the political scene, I was very much involved in being the Campaign Manager for Douglas Jung's election as first Chinese member of parliament and very much involved with Prime Minister's Diefenbaker's administration and

at the time, was the treasurer of the Progressive Conservatives' Vancouver Centre constituency. I have also on numbers occasions been manager of Chinese Publicity for the provincial Social Credit activities and many of the civic elections. As for prestige, besides holding many high positions in different organizations, I had the honour to accompany many dignitaries and represent Canada abroad. The Prime Minister then even invited me to join him on his visit to China and the Chinese government was kind on so many occasions and invited me on official delegations to China.

Business-wise I am content. As I have become older, I have come to enjoy the prestige and position that I have worked so hard to build over the years and have enjoyed the business and financial reward that have to be earned. I enjoy the status of being a leader in the community and the respect I have earned as such.

Written by JLE in 1983

