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## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Top 5 in Sales at Vancouver Real Estate Board;
- Campaign Chair for Douglas Jung, Canada's first Chinese-Canadian Member of Parliament;
- Founder of Success Realty & Insurance, Vancouver Chinatowns' oldest and largest real estate company;
- Community Leader in Vancouver's Chinatown; and
- Chairman of Chinese Times, North America's oldest language daily

## THE SKINNY

**BORN:**

MAY 7 1922

VANCOUVER → CHUNG SHAN → VANCOUVER

EDNA MAY WONG & CYNTHIA LUM

ANDREA LESLIE (1955) and JORDAN JOHN ENG (1964)

CHELSEA JENNIFER ENG and JAMIESON RHYS ENG

JEANNIE, NORRY, SUSIE, ADRIENNE and SAMMY ENG

STEPHEN ENG, NELSON ENG, BRENDA ENG, KENNY AU, NANCY

TSE, MAY JEAN TSE, GORDON TSE, ALLAN TSE, MICHAEL FONG

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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

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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 weeks, 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 grocery store every Saturday without pay. My uncle also operated a small dry good store on the 200 block of Hastings Street in Chinatown.

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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.

## 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

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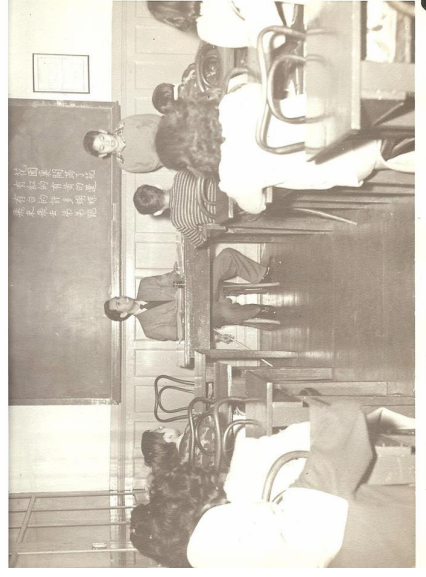
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apprentice translator where I had a minimum of translating at least one column a day. This job at the newspaper paid only \$10 per month but provided me with dinners every day including Sundays.

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.

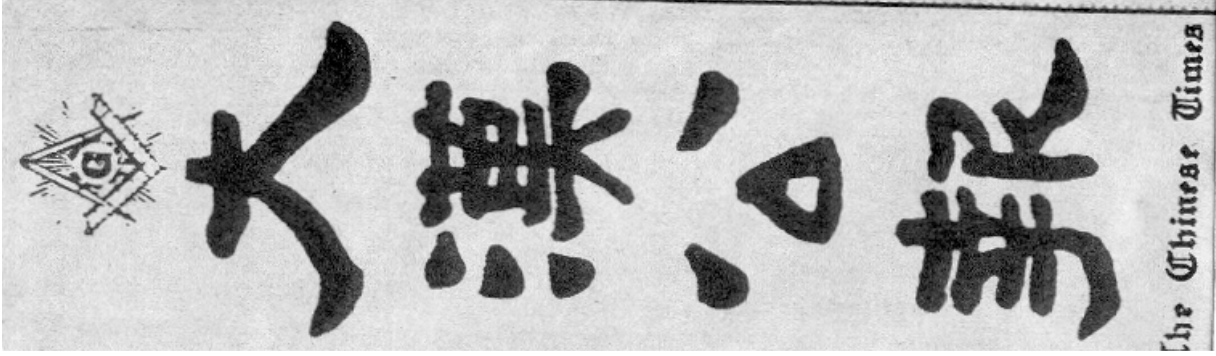
Later Roy Mah, the owner of the Chinese Publicity Bureau heard of me and the good job I was doing at the Chinese Times. He approached me to work as a translator for him and offered me \$1.25 or \$1.50 per hour. From the 15¢ an hour that I previously had worked for in the past, it was difficult to refuse. 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.



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## **The Chinese Times**

Published every days except Sunday and Holidays  
by the Chinese Freemasons in Canada  
Publishers Online

**The Oldest Chinese Daily Newspaper  
in Canada, established since 1907**

**JACK LIM ENG, Chairman**



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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.

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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

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- 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 to 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



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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.

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As for integrity and honesty, I feel honoured and deeply touched that I have been asked my opinion to nominate people for the Order of Canada.

On the political scene, I was very much involved in being the Campaign Manger for Douglas Jung's election as first Chinese member of parliament and very much involved with Diefenbaker's administration and at that time, was the treasurer of the Progressive Conservatives' Vancouver Centre constituency. I have also on numerous 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 the late Prime Minister Diefenbaker and former Member of Parliament Douglas Jung to visit China on the invitation of the Chinese government in the Fall of 1979. It is with regret that trip did not materialize because Mr. Diefenbaker passed away in August 1979 and the trip did not take place as scheduled for October.

I very much regret not having the chance to complete more formal English education. However, I have rationalized that for someone who not only had to work for a living, but also had to send money back to China to support his Mother, brother and sisters, had to go to school to learn English in a country whose culture is different from my own, I think that I have achieved enough to be at peace with myself, although I confirm that I feel more comfortable in the older Chinese generation setting.

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 have earned the respect as such.

We should have a happy family with everything coming our way including our daughter Andrea who not only has been Miss Canada, but also been very successful in business.

*written 1983 by Jack Lim Eng*