

Hand laundry

Yesterday I came across a story in the New York times about the Sun hand laundry going out of business in Manhattan it was a very interesting article because it talked about how his family left China back in the 30s and 40s and ended up in the US. The plan was guys would come over and work and send money back to the rest of the family, and later the family would join them, or the guys would return to China. The article went into the whole thing about Chinese in the US and all the situations that they went through. A couple of things I did not know. I knew many of them came to work on the railroads back in the day and I knew that there were special laws put into place to keep them from immigrating to the US and knew I sort of saw the interplay between the reconstruction era for black people and how things got really tough after reconstruction for black people they got really tough for Chinese people as well coming to the US.

What really struck me about the story is several things well for me I was born in 1948 and a lot happened in the world in the late 40s you know the situation with Hong Kong I mean Taiwan in China and people leaving China and the fact that Israel as a nation was formed like around 48 or 49 so it's just a lot of turmoil going on in the world during that time period and as now a 72 year old, I just think back to when I was a kid. I am going to go into my hand laundry "connection". When I was a kid our next-door neighbor her name was Beulah Moore our last name is more but no relation. She did domestic work and on the side she also took in laundry as it was called and I remember as a kid about the only time I really saw white folks (other than the Race Day Traffic, TV, or in a store) was them coming by to drop off and pick up their laundry. I can remember I used to wonder what was in those packages. On really hot days, she would be on her porch ironing. She had a cork stopper that she put in a Pepsi bottle and that is how she sprinkled out water and her starch solution. I recall that as a kid that it was always puzzling to me to see the new fancy cars pull up and the people run in and run out of Miss Moore's house. Much Later, I found out that many of those people she had been working for them for years so some of the people who were adults she had babysat them as small children.

When I grew up, I was a very thin person, very, very thin and shirts would never fit me. So, I can remember somebody saying if you cannot find a shirt to fit, have one made. Have some made an easier said than done that was a pretty pricey deal in the early 70s so I remember one time I actually got some shirts made because most places you had to buy at least three get him at three at a time so I did that and when I actually bought my custom made shirts they just felt wonderful you know sleeves long enough and the neck fit just right; Hallelujah! That is when I started taking my shirts to the cleaners (and after a mishap in the basement home laundry). The longer I think of it, when I first started getting shirts done it was \$.75 [omg no cent sign on the keyboard] I think the last time I got a shirt done it was like \$4 or something. One of the things that undid the Sun hand laundry in Manhattan was casual business attire trend that began around 2000. There was less of a need to have shirts laundered have white shirts even and so that's about the time when I stopped having shirts laundered but in a way that that was so that was always a good feeling for me to start the day with a nice clean shirt and know at the end of the day just kick back and relax omg not worry about washing and ironing shirts. The story about the Sun Laundry in New York gave a good account of an immigrant family in the Laundry business. The story covers the whole family, it spoke about how there was a time when men and were forced to work in what they called feminine jobs because they would not allow them to have male jobs. I've never heard

of that until two days ago when I read this article, as justification for why so many of men got into the laundry business. Interesting to realize Chinese laundries were common across America. In this story they gave a lot of detail about what it was like running a hand laundry in the big city; all the people you know and the things that they did you know like before they were you know FedEx drop off points where you could have things delivered you know in big cities people would have things delivered to laundry to pick up later after they get off work and you know it was just sort of like a sense of community so it was a pretty good story of that and then they did a lot of background on detailing what it was like for Chinese Americans in the US near 20th century and you know how it all ends up in 2020 with Covid where people don't go to work and you know a lot of people that were good customers for years and years and years they don't even take a shower now that the pandemic is going on so that's the end of an era so you know that that sort of struck me because I can remember saying as a kid I want to have clean shirts that that were nicely folded and as my wife can attest to I do not iron much I never did iron until I retired and had plenty of time.

My Great grandmother [Ann Cole](#) was a laundress, [she carried baskets on her head](#).

So that is just one of my Covid stories and sort of blend that in with how things are working now and that is the end of that