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## Vien, Jeanne Interview

Karen Remington

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# Stockton Immigrant Women Oral History Collection

by Sally Miller

## French Immigrant: Vien, Jeanne

January 19, 1981

Interviewed by Karen Remington

Transcribed by Jordan Sears-Zeve and Robert Siess

**[TAPE 1, Side A]**

**[Begin Tape.]**

KAREN REMINGTON: I used to love playing with things, grew up with it. I don't like hearing my voice. Okay. Well, um, I have like an outline you know, just to start you off maybe. Let's see, the first question is, can you tell me about your early life, before you came to this country.

JEANNE VIEN: Well, my early life, I was born and raised in the North of France, Normandy, and in my late teens I went to Paris. I got a job which I loved very much. I was working for French radio. The RCF was like a... mm... CBS here. But it was not TV at the time, it was just radio. And I come back when I was still girl. I grew up in family of four children. Two brother, one sister. Went to school until I was... I was going until I was 16, and the war came [?], and I had to stop school because it was too scary to go anyplace. And after I went back to school. Take some courses in Paris when I was 17, 18, and a job which I did. And then my 2 brother finish finishes school also, which I think he had only high school. Didn't go to college.

REMINGTON: They didn't?

VIEN: No. My sister had 1 year of college, because she was much older than I. She was very, very good student, and the fran...[?]

REMINGTON: Where you the oldest?

VIEN: No, I was the youngest of the daughter.

Remington: Youngest of the daughter... your brothers younger than you?

VIEN: I have one brother older and one younger, between the two brother. And uh, but they did do very well, had very good job. And my parent was very strict, very very strict. We could not talk at the table, we had... uh, our dinner, lunch and whatever, we were not able to talk except when my father and my mother asked question. My father was the boss and we think our father was like a king. When he was making money, we get food and all, and we had very high respect for family, which I tried to give to my two sons. And uh, what all do you like to know?

REMINGTON: Well, let's see. What... did your mother work?

VIEN: No, my mother never had to work, she had four children and she was looking at my father like the living with the house we didn't have much luxury thing. Like we didn't have, uh, car. We didn't have basic [?] but we always had nice food and table. Nice clothes. Simple clothes, but nice. But she never had to work. She was married when she was 25 years old, she lived with daddy the day before she was [?]. Her parent was where she didn't have to work. She was raised really up class, but she marry my father who didn't have any money at all.

REMINGTON: Oh, when they were married, they didn't have any...?

VIEN: They didn't have any money. If you can see this clock here, he brought that to my mother when he was engaged because he didn't have money to buy her a ring he brought this clock here.

REMINGTON: And they were married in France?

VIEN: They were married in France, yes, in Normandy. It was brought from Normandy and we grew up in Normandy, children grew up, my family is still in Normandy. Except one, my younger brother, he is now in Bordeaux, which is in Southern France. And I told her was, is still all Normandy.

REMINGTON: Do you know if your mother ever really wanted to work, or it was because she was...

VIEN: No, no she didn't... I think she was so busy with 4 children... Do you know, we didn't have what we have here. Because over here we have really easy life. Very easy. And over there, you know, mother, she had to go to garden to [?] at 7 o'clock in the morning [?]. You know, it was taking 2 or 3 hours the way to clean the vegetables to have lunch, which we have all week lunch at home. Not like here, some [?]

REMINGTON: So, you said that you're the only one of your brothers and sister that went all the way through college.

VIEN: Ah, not, my older sister. She didn't [?] two years, we only have two years. [?] But my two brothers and I, we did go to...[?]

REMINGTON: Did you parents, would they have liked to send them, or was it... they found jobs?

VIEN: No, it was not really... we didn't take, uh, to see. Fifty years ago, when more was testing, if you could not be a very, very good student, and don't have any money, you have to make a living, and [?] And my sister had a choice because she could, to go to college, but after a year she decided she would not want to go, and she went to work for a doctor, which she love [?] doctor office. After she was married, she lived at home.

Remington: So at that time it sort of seems like it was more important to work.

VIEN: Yes. Like me, you see, it was the... I knew I couldn't go to college to because my parents could not afford it because I have two brothers, and I know I have to make a living, so I decide to go to Paris to make my own. And my two brothers did the same thing. They, now my older brother is a foreman, on the coast of [?] making a good living. And my youngest is working for a [?] on research for the aviation missile. You see, they don't let a [lack hold them back?]. Wish I did have more because we did out [?] and did not go to school.

REMINGTON: Did you, were your parents any religion? Were you brought up anything?

VIEN: Oh yeah, we grew up catholic.

REMINGTON: Catholic?

VIEN: We went to Church every Sunday morning, in afternoon, and once a week have to go to [look at the sheems?] Religions school, once a week, and for our first communion it was 15 days with eh priest to study at home and... after our first communion you know, we went [sterling?] to church, because my family want to, but on the next one...

REMINGTON: It was up to you.

VIEN: It was up, and I went to Paris and I went maybe once in a while when I feel like it. but uh, I didn't, really do anymore Sunday like I used to do when I was.

REMINGTON: Your parents brought you up very strictly?

VIEN: Oh yeah, yeah... yeah. But uh. Like I said we still uh, on holiday, Easter, Christmas, we still go over to Church. My mother's dead, my father also, but my brother still go to cemetery on holiday, and uh, put the flower. Oh yeah, we are... we don't really [protestant...?]

REMINGTON: When you left France and came over to the United States, what were your expectations? Were you excited or were you... did you just come over here by yourself?

VIEN: No, yeah, well yes. I came by myself, but I was coming to get married. And I was New York [?] see I was not really a [?] but either way I loved this country. I live four years on the East Coast in Cleveland, Ohio, where my two sons was born. Cleveland, Ohio. And really, I love it. And really.

REMINGTON: What was the year you came over here?

VIEN: 194- the first time I came here was 1958.

REMINGTON: And when you were born?

VIEN: When I was born? 1929. I was 20... oh, 28 I guess.

REMINGTON: How did you meet your husband?

VIEN: I meet my husband in Paris, in the officers club, which I was going with a friend of mine. She was an American. And her husband was stationed in Paris, and we live in the same building, but I was alone and one time she said, come on with me, we take you. They don't have any children, they must have, take me like their daughter. And he went, when he left France, Paris. He was transferred to Soho [?], California. And she want me to come here, said they want me to come with them, but, you know [?] when we were they introduced me to [?] husband, and I was married to, then I came to California because my husband was in California.

REMINGTON: So that was your main reason for moving?

VIEN: Yeah, yeah. Because, you see, in France I could not only marry my husband because I was raised Catholic, and he was a [tree?], and I was afraid my family would not understand because they were so old fashioned, you know? They love my husband very much, they really do, but I was afraid they would not understand that, you know, many thing, and so I [?] say I'm going to America, my excuse say, I say I'm going to America to see if I like it. If I don't I come back and like that. But I knew I would like it, because, I, myself, I have to know where I am. I leave a mini,

mini crisis with my husband, who was stationed all over the world, but some place I didn't care for but I have to say where's my room, for a little while I have to like it. I did the best I can with the... Like over here. I came, my husband passed away, and I was alone here, and I was should I go back to France? Say no, oh, okay, I stay here.

REMINGTON: So you really like it. Did you expect... I mean, when you came over, where there things you didn't expect, or you were expecting and you didn't find?

VIEN: No, not really. Everything I was expecting, I think I found it here.

REMINGTON: Like, what kinds of things did you expect to?

VIEN: Well, to have nice living. I have more than I used to have in France. And I guess I was lucky enough to have a... I was married to a good man. Which gave me a what really we need. And I was, I was like a protégé. I didn't feel like I was really an old because I knew it was, you know, take it, take it per me. And I knew I was the, what I want, I really have. Everything I wish I have, I have.

REMINGTON: When you moved over here, did you find yourself with other French people?

VIEN: In Sacramento? Well, yes. I was looking, when I came here, my husband passed away, when I came in about of year when we came here. And like I, I study physical therapy. I gave my, what I knew, but I gave my care to [?] and darling, I was really very big on there when I was going to school. And I meet a lady who's from here, she was very involved, it's like the man who shy type, she has too many organization a year later I feel I meet a very exciting man with people who want to meet out in the [?]. And from there I'm very involved in other things.

REMINGTON: Where did you learn to speak English.

VIEN: Well that's my problem. My English. I will say street English, because I never been to...

REMINGTON: It's very good!

VIEN: I never been to school. Just the English, because school and I, we not really ah... And I haven't thought anything to do with school, but I never really want to. And uh, I pick up English...

REMINGTON: Fro living here?

VIEN: Yeah, when I came back in '58, I didn't want [else from the farm?] because I didn't know what I was saying. I didn't know, and my husband have to call me up two time the phone, and the third time it would be me.

REMINGTON: Did you find any little problems, in trying to live here without knowing the language before you became accustomed to it.

VIEN: Well, uh, yes. It was really a problem, because you see when my husband pass away 10 years ago, my English is not the good. It's not good here, now, but it was worse. And I have to ask Mark, my youngest son, he was 11 years old, to help me a lot a lot of paperwork I have. He was a big help to me, and it was, speaking, you know, but when you start have to start to write in a letter for a, business letters, something, which I guess, my oldest son, become mature much earlier because I push him to help me and which, it was a big embarrassment for me that those people [these white people?], that's really a shame. They should have school learning.

REMINGTON: How old is Mark?

VIEN: Mark was 22 last month. I don't know if you know, it's a university in New Hampshire. He's going to school in New Hampshire. On the paper here, he send me, there's the picture. Well, he's going to school, but he's going three days a week [?].

REMINGTON: He looks a look like Lauren.

VIEN: Yeah, they look alike. But he's more mature than Lauren. Lauren is still more childlike. [?] you did too much for him! To me, you didn't do too much. [?] But I always figured Lauren was so small, you know, we did more for Lauren. We should, because now he expect more for me. Mother do that, mother do that, mother do that.

REMINGTON: Did you ever work besides your working with RCF?

VIEN: Over here, in the United States? No. I never have a job over here. I never have a job period in the United States. Never. When I first year I came, on arrival, I have my two children right away. Which keep me busy. After we went back to Europe and we came back ten or eleven years ago. I want to be home for my children. I just want to be with them here. I was lucky enough I didn't have to have a job. My job was to attend to two small children. Because if I was away and something happened on the street, it would probably be not too good. I could see the whole come in. And we should never have any problem at all. Two nice young men [?].

REMINGTON: When you came over, were a lot of the friends that you made – were they all working? I mean, how did you feel about women working and equal rights? Did you feel that the woman's place was in the home, or had that gone from your mind, or you just live here because that's how you felt?

VIEN: Well, I am against working mother when they have children. Oh yes, I am. Because I think we should be – if you want children, your job, you should be with them. You don't delegate somebody else to raise your children. They already away for school. And you know, they grow

up so fast. If you have children, I know. I'm so glad I stay with my children, because now they gone. And at least I have to enjoy them, and I knew when they had to go to college, they would probably go away. The other one is 3,000 mile away from me. The one is ready to go I don't know where. But at least I have them with me. And I know one thing. They are pushing I stay with them. I don't have to go find a job or go away. Myself, I think a lot of the problems of this country are because women leave the children alone. I have a friend, her husband have good salary, but they have to work. Because they want to have more than what her husband can afford. They have a nice home, but they have to have a swimming pool. They have to have two, three car. But to me, the children should come before the swimming pool, before the car, before anything. And I know my parents could have more, but they were thinking about us. And my mother stay home. My mother could have a job too, but she figured out, her job – I think the best job a woman can have is to raise children. Because this [?] your job. It's not your job at all.

REMINGTON: You were probably really close with your family then, right?

VIEN: Oh yeah. Very close.

REMINGTON: And do you think because of that, it's getting, you know, people aren't as close as they used to be? Since parents are leaving, so they don't have as much time with their children. Do you think that causes...

VIEN: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I think the American family, they come back because their mother is gone. The children come home or something, they live on the street. They don't have a family tight. I could see even my youngest son now. He's coming to Sacramento. He pick up your brother a couple days ago. He didn't call me. He was in Sacramento. He could have called me. Now yesterday, he came here. I said, "You could have called me. Ten cents is nothing. Davis is a long distance. I don't mind too much." But then I said, "Lauren, you know, I am alone here. At least you could call me when you come in the city." He said, "Well, I didn't have the time." He knew he was guilty. But at least I told him his duty. And he will be 20 next month, two month from now, but I am no scared to tell him his duty is taking care of your mother. Because I told him, "You and your brother come first. All of my life, you come first. And I think you should think about me. I am alone here. Everything you call, I try to do everything I can. But at least you should call." I said, "I could be dead!" You know? But he say, "I have my own problem." But at least I still tell him he should call. Because I just want be close to my children, and I want my two sons to be close also. And Mark is a very sensitive young man, and I have to tell Lauren, "Call your brother." Every weekend, if he come here, I say, "Call your brother." Yeah, because they're only two brother here. They don't have any family except my family in Europe. And they should be close together. If one need help, I expect the other one will help. Once you're family, I taught him [?], because I wanted to be close to my family. Cousin or family, we still have a



good time. And to me family is very important. I think family in America, young people, they too loose. Away from home. See, you 18, you have to go to college away from home. In France, you go to college, but you still close to home. If you're lucky to have a college or university near your home, you have to go here. You will not go 3,000 mile away. But over here, you cannot go to university who's five mile away from your residence.

REMINGTON: Back in France, like on Christmas and stuff, did your whole family get together? Like all your relatives?

VIEN: Oh yeah. Mmhmm. Yeah. They still does. I talk to my brother in Bordeaux last week. We call that [treveyou?]. New Year's party, or eat, drink, and oh yeah.

REMINGTON: And Christmases...

VIEN: And Christmas, yeah.

REMINGTON: Were the Christmases much different from here?

VIEN: No. I would say it's the same. We have turkey also. And lot of wine. When I was a little girl, we'd eat after the Mass. Midnight Mass. We went to the church and we have dinner. Supper. Supper after midnight. Because we have to listen, and singer was singing Ave Maria from Notre Dame, Paris, the church. Cathedral. Paris. It was broadcast all over France. We have to listen that before we have to sit at the table. My father want that, and we have to take it.

REMINGTON: Can you think of any differences between your life when you came here and that of your grown children now? What customs or the foods they eat or their chores?

VIEN: The food. We have different diet over there, because we eat at 12 o'clock, 7 o'clock. And we have a nice lunch. We prepare here is the sandwich there. And I don't have that when I was a little girl. I was coming from school. I had a nice setting on table, and everybody's waiting for my father, because my father always came home for lunch. But over here, it was so very difficult for me to put something – going back to my children, to have school, lunch. Because they don't have nothing warm to eat. Only sandwich. And I used to give them some soup I was making, because I just want my children to have something warm at the lunch time. And it was very difficult for me to just give them a piece of bread, an apple, and peanut butter. Which I could not stand. [It was still ?.] But my husband said, "Well, it's like that." And after a while, I use that like everybody, because of course, their mother don't give that. I'm the only one who have warm soup or warm stew or... I know they feel they was, you know. But like I say, my two children work hard, because I was alone. And they really have start work early, because this has take us another time. You know, when you have a new room, you have so much to do. And this neighborhood was not built at all. We was the only house, when this one was built. We work.

But the summer, we went to Europe. Every summer after school was over, we went to Europe for a treat. And for two and a half month, we travel all over Europe. But they work hard. They help me a lot. We take a lot of decision. They want a bicycle, they want there because the neighbor have a bicycle. I say, "You want a bicycle, we don't go to Europe. What choice we want? That's the money I save to go to Europe. You want a bicycle? You want to do that or do that?" And finally we were thinking that trekking Europe was better than have a bicycle. But I was still doing what I think was best for them.

REMINGTON: Would they see your parents when they were in Europe?

VIEN: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

REMINGTON: Was that the first time they met them?

VIEN: The first time they met, it was three years after I was in the States. Took them to France because my father was a very sick man, and I just want to see my two children. And I took a trip with them both. But a year later, my husband was transferred in France, and we stay four years in France, which they have opportunity to see the boy grow up. I send them to a French school. Kindergarten French school. Which was good stuff for them.

REMINGTON: Did they like that?

VIEN: Yeah. They did. You know, the French school – even the kindergarten, they treat children much older than over here. You see, a kindergarten over here, you treat your children over here like baby to long. You baby your children too long here.

REMINGTON: They start younger over there.

VIEN: And over there, they're kindergarten, but they don't treat their children like baby anymore. They're just young children. Like I remember Lauren came and they said, "Mother, I have to shake the lady's hand." Because it was his teacher. I say, "Yes, you have to. You say, 'Bonjour mademoiselle. Au revoir mademoiselle. Merci mademoiselle.'" We always have to put mademoiselle or monsieur. Here you don't. You always stand up when your teacher come in class.

REMINGTON: So it seems like there's a lot more respect in almost everything.

VIEN: Oh yeah! And when we came back in the State, we came back and we came to California...

REMINGTON: What year was that?

VIEN: It was 1962. Yeah. Well, no. '63 and he was transferred '64. And we come back '69. And when they went to American school in San Bernadino, they used to say, "Yes sir, no sir" like that. They used to get up from the chair. And all the children was look at them like they was something funny. And Mark say, "Mother, we don't want it, because they laugh at us." I say, "Alright."

REMINGTON: So the things they picked up over there they lost right away.

VIEN: Even when the teacher was coming, they say, "We don't get up here." It was a shock for me, because I tried to teach them do good. It's like the telephone here. It was terrible. When I way away, I call them, and they say, "Hello?" And I have to say, "It's your Mom."

REMINGTON: How else would they say hello?

VIEN: No, I teach them to say, "Hello, this is Mark speaking. Lauren speaking." Which Mark still do it. When I call him in New Hampshire, he say, "This is Mark speaking." Right now, Lauren is in Davis. If I call him, he say, "Hello." I say, "Lauren, why I told you – you remember I tell you to say, 'Hello, this is Lauren speaking.'" "Oh," he say, "nobody's doing it!" But Mark won't. Still love old tradition. He love France, Mark. He was over there last year with us. He went two years ago. He went travel by himself all over. He like the old tradition. So I think he like to be on the East Coast because it's more traditional. California, it just...

REMINGTON: Totally.

VIEN: Which, I love it here, because like I say, people they was always nice to me. I love American people. They have different way to live, but it's because I grew up in different environment. And I always love America.

REMINGTON: Was there any other traditions that you saw besides "yes sir" and "no sir" that you saw in your children when they went over there and had to come back?

VIEN: Oh yes. It's like when you meet people on the street, and they more cold here. In France, you stop, you shake hand, and you say, "How are you?" Here, you say, "Hi."

REMINGTON: Yeah, as you're passing.

VIEN: Mark say, "Mother, in California, people they more loose." I don't mean because you don't want to be nice to your neighbor, but I don't know. And when I was in Paris by myself, I always have to say, "Hello." Get up from the sidewalk when I see some people coming to me much older. But over here, they just push you. But the one thing I like here, when you go to supermarket, the people they so nice. "How are you, thank you, come in again." In France, no. They take your money, they give you your grocery, forget it.

REMINGTON: Oh yeah?

VIEN: Oh yeah. These people, they're much pleasant in the department store, grocery store. Oh yeah. They're always ready to help you. But in French, you don't find that.

REMINGTON: Why do you think that is? They like their jobs, or?

VIEN: Well, I think it's the management of the store. You know, run a business, if you're nice to people, they come back. But in France, they don't really care. Their view is they take your money, no thank you. Like I went to supermarket last year, and over here they give you a bag. Paper bag to put your grocery in. In France, you don't. You know, I forget to take a bag with me, and I'm stuck with all the grocery here. I say, "What I do?" And she look at me, the girl. I was with Mark and Lauren. No, Lauren was not with me. And Mark speak in English, and all she think it was not French, you know? She say probably, "Oh, these American whoever they are." And I started talking French to her. I said, "Okay, we buy." "Buy?" "Give me a bag." And she gave me a plastic bag she took under the counter. She put the bag over the counter, and I have to put the grocery myself. Bet you I was very easy. I take my grocery very slowly. Mark was pushing me to hurry up. I pay my grocery and I want to take the time to put them in bag. This is where the French people change very much for the last – I don't know. I was in France last year. Two years ago I was there. And they look like they frustrated also. They just, no happy people, and they work long hour, and I guess they don't care. They just here to have to have a job, but they do not enjoy what they're doing. They miserable. I have a friend who just came back last month. She was there for Christmas. And she say, "I don't want to go back to France!" Her mother's in Paris, and she say, "I don't want to go back. The French people, they so miserable now!" I say, "Because you went to winter time. It was cold. Maybe they miserable." She say, "Oh, I went there, there, and the cab didn't want to take me because I was not going far enough." Taxi cab, you know. She was very disappointed this time. And she's always going to France usually. Very wealthy lady from Sacramento. Her mother and she go many time. And she said, "This time there's something different."

REMINGTON: Have you ever felt discriminated against in any way here? Did you ever feel that? Being French or being a woman, just because of that?

VIEN: No. Not really. Because you see, I never really went to places which I will think I'd be discriminated. I never look for a job. And I was never any avert only some place where I will...

REMINGTON: Where you'd find that.

VIEN: No. Yeah.

REMINGTON: What kind of job did your husband have?

VIEN: Oh, he was graduate from the University of San Francisco with a Master of Education. And he have his BA in Accounting. He finally finish with the Air Force. He was Air Force officer. But he always work there with the accounting. His last job was an auditor. He was an auditor general for the Air Force. Which he had a good job.

REMINGTON: So when you came over here, you didn't tell your parents you were getting married?

VIEN: No. Well, they knew I was getting married, but they never believed I would come here to get married.

REMINGTON: They thought you would marry over there.

VIEN: Yeah. Because my father will say. We have a big house with the big stair. And he want his two daughter get marry, have a picture taken when we're coming down the stair. Well, my sister have that. Was happy. But me, I didn't care for this. Because to me, it was not really important wedding ceremony. I just want to get married fast and have finished. I told my father, "Get me the money we spent for a ceremony. I will need it more." So I decide, I talk to my fiancée, I say, "I think the best thing to say, 'I will go visit United States first, decide if I want to really live over here.'" Which it was with him. He say, "That's okay, I think it's the best like that." Like I say, I have a New York March 17. The 19<sup>th</sup>. In two days. And when I call my parent, I said I was married. And it was hard. Because they was scared for me to leave country, you know. 20 years ago, you didn't have like you do now. And to have a daughter who was going so far away from home. And normally, my family was all traditional. It was not really too nice for me to leave home.

REMINGTON: Did you have a church wedding?

VIEN: No. When we arrived in Cleveland, I was married in the church. Because my husband was military, and we didn't have to wait for the formality. We have to stay maybe five or six days residence in New York. It was New York City. I was not married in New York, because we didn't plan to stay four days in New York. But we have to stay four days to have our license. But lucky he was already residence to Cleveland, Ohio. Like he was in military, we didn't have any problem. I arrived 8 o'clock in the morning in Cleveland, and 11 o'clock I was married. Just have blood test.

REMINGTON: Was the boat ride over enjoyable?

VIEN: Pardon?

REMINGTON: Did you take a boat or did you fly?

VIEN: Oh, I took the boat. I was very lucky. I came on the Queen Elizabeth ship. Which was a beautiful trek for me, because the ship was just a beautiful thing. And my husband said to me, "When you come, I just don't want you fly, because I just want you see New York when you arrive. It's a scene you will never forget." He was right. And I say, "Well, if you want me to take the ship." At the time I came, it was in March. The Queen Elizabeth was leaving Cherbourg, which it was only 50 mile away from my home town. I took the first boat, which it was the Queen Elizabeth. I arrive in New York five days later. Which I have five beautiful days. And you meet so many different people. And New York, it was just something else when you see New York away. You come close, it was really a scene I'll never forget. New York City, I've been after. New York City. I will not say I like it. I don't, because I'm always so fast, you know. I don't really know the city. But I know one thing. My children and I, we always travel here. I just want them one time take the boat, because it's something beautiful.

REMINGTON: What did your father do for a living?

VIEN: He was in construction. Building. Mostly building. Which he made a good living.

REMINGTON: So he paid for your boat trip out here to the States?

VIEN: No. It's me who pay, because I have a good job. Good job. I pay my trip, but my husband give me the husband also. At the time, he was not my husband, but he have a check when I came in New York. He have a check which it was the same amount what I pay for my ticket. I say, "Well, you keep it until..." I don't know what happened the money, I guess. It went on someplace else. But he really paid. Well, I pay because I was over there. But he wouldn't let me pay.

REMINGTON: So you did work when you were in France?

VIEN: Oh yes. Oh yes.

REMINGTON: What did you do in France?

VIEN: I was working in an office for the French radio. Television. French television. But at the time, we had television, but I didn't deal at all with television.

REMINGTON: Did you enjoy that?

VIEN: Yes.

REMINGTON: Did you find it hard to get a job there at all?

VIEN: Well... No. Because my cousin, who have a very good job and was very high up in the high society in Paris. Through her, I have this job. They was looking for young lady, and I came. Probably I would never have a job, but through my cousin. She know the lady.

REMINGTON: So was it hard if you were a woman to find a job there?

VIEN: Yeah, the job probably, because they really need somebody who knew more than I did. Because I just came like training, you know. But like I say, I was coming from [woo-woo?], you know, and so I get the job. Well, that depend. It was difficult for woman to find a job, but she can show something she know, I no think. Like I say, I've been here for 20 years and I never look for a job. I don't know really. But all my friend I have in Paris and outside Paris, they all have a job. Finished because they don't work anymore, but like I say, all the time I go down there. Married people, woman, didn't have a job. But now also now, most of the women in France, they start to [?]. We have the supermarket and the other thing from here. My two sister, they don't work when they get married. So they stay home. My youngest sister Laurel, she had two daughter. The ones going to high school, but she's home. Well, the oldest one, she's in a private school, and she come home once a week. But she's home. My brother make a living, but she say, "I'm young, I wanna stay home." Many people say, "Now that they gone, why don't you look for a job?" But I like to stay home. I [?] a lot of thing over here, so I already stay home. I just don't think it's right for me. I don't have to work to take some job, which somebody need the job. Because you see over here, so many woman take the men job, which men to me should be the one who go work, and the wife stay home. Now if you're the ladies, stay home. [?] she's going to work, she take the job somebody need. I think that's why we have so many unemployment here.

REMINGTON: Did you know a lot of people, or did your parents know a lot of people that came over here? I mean, you lived in a fairly good part of France? Very wealthy, middle class?

VIEN: No wealthy, but comfortable. Bourgeoisie, if you understand the word. We didn't have too much, but we were not poor, we were not rich. You see, I was like what I am here.

REMINGTON: Did your parents have a lot of friends that came over here?

VIEN: No. No. Except I will think my mother's cousin came in America, I think 18-something. And my grandmother said to me, "Well, I have nephew, he went to America, " but we never heard from him. He left, but I don't know if he came to America. We never heard. Because I remember when my mother say, "Well, maybe when you over there, you look for this name." But I never did, because I didn't have enough... We didn't know when he left, many things. It was my mother's cousin. But other one, no. My parents, now they pass away, but my brother, they know a lot of people. Friend that come to America. Like I have a very good friend in Paris whose sister marry an M.D., an American M.D., doctor. And they live in Northern Los Angeles,

up north, not too far from Los Angeles. They went to the East Coast two years ago, which I was invited to go visit them. But oh yeah, I know other people from France who come here. Which I had a lot of French people here in Sacramento. Which we had a little group, once or twice a month we try to see each other. We speak French. And we have, like we call a French tea. Last month I have 20 lady here for French tea. I bake some French goodie, you know. And we talk. Always have somebody who just came back from France, you know. Always bring some new, latest news. I have a very good friend, which I met here. He was an Air Force officer, French. And when last summer I went visit him, his wife, two children, and it was very nice. They should come back. He was stationed in [?]. He was taking some courses in [?]. And he love America. And his wife came and was so happy here. And everybody was so nice to me when I went to France, because they say you was so nice. "America was so nice to us," you know. Here, we try. But you know, United State is still the best place to be.

REMINGTON: Pardon me?

VIEN: United State is still the best place to be. Oh yeah. You know, I visit a lot of country, but even with all our problem we have here, it's still the best. Because over there, I don't know. I didn't go to China. I don't know, but I don't think it's nicer.

REMINGTON: When you came over, were the clothes different?

VIEN: Oh yeah. That's my problem with the clothes. I would say I have a problem on clothes, myself. Because I like nice clothes. Mostly I like nice material. To me, if you have nice material, it will look nice. But over here, when I came here, you have so many [?] clothes, which to me is a lot of money for nothing. Because it just fall apart, it doesn't stay. So I like to have a nice suit. Maybe I will wear my suit for three or four years. But if it's a good material, it will stay always nice. But you buy a suit in polyester, two months later, it just fall apart. That's why I have a problem on my clothes, because I still like to have a good clothes. Good material. Over here, now, this town, they understand that. The store, we have more good material clothes.

REMINGTON: When you came here were the clothes more flashy or colorful than what you were used to, or were they about the same?

VIEN: Yeah, well say the color here. I was very surprised to see the lady, old ladies, dress with the pink coat. Or yellow coat. And everything with so bright. Because in Europe, not only in France, but most of European lady, when you about I would say 40, you dress yourself in dark clothes. But here, I remember seeing my mother-in-law here, she have a pink coat. I could never forget. I still see the thing. [My? Her?] mother was still living, but the mother was 85 or 86 years old. She have a beige coat, a little hat, which I think was cute. But we don't see the old lady like that dress in the dark clothes. But I see the country is more of the sunshine. You know, here I think people is more happy, because they dress with light colors. And even my youngest



son don't want me to dress in black. I have a black dress. He says, "Mother, why do you wear that?" I guess it's because the climate, I would say. But myself, I still don't like very bright color. I don't know, because I grow up more on dark shade of French color. But I am normally in bright clothes.

REMINGTON: Did your mother make your clothes, or did you buy them?

VIEN: My mother make our clothes. My sister, she loved to sew. She did it when she was young, because she never have a job until she marry. She was 25 years old. And the only thing she did, it was sewing. She never wash dishes before she was married. And she was 25 years old. She have a good life. But she sew. She liked to embroider. We have a lot of beautiful clothes embroidered my name, Jeanine. It was beautiful homemade. Yesterday I was doing some cleaning and I saw a little dress I wear from when I was baptized.

REMINGTON: Oh, really?

VIEN: Yeah, I have it. Yeah. And I have a little [babe?] with my name. I will show you that. [walking away from microphone] And my mother made it.

**[End of Tape]**

**[Side B contents muffled. Label reads "second side did not record."]**