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Title: Ben Chikaraishi Interview
Narrator: Ben Chikaraishi
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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<Begin Segment 1>

Anna Takada: 00:00:00 So to start, can you just state your full name?

Ben Chikaraishi: 00:00:03 My name is Ben Tsutomu Chikaraishi.

AT: 00:00:07 Okay and where and when were you born?

BC: 00:00:10 I was born in 9- September, the 10th, 1921. In Colusa, California a little, little city of about 2000 people, about 40 miles northwest of Marysville.

AT: 00:00:30 And how long were you- were you and your family there in Colusa?

BC: 00:00:36 Well, my father had two people when was there in, in the 1920s and they started the cleaner businesses just with two people and they started this business and then two years they found out that two people cannot make up the living on cleaners, so they drew straws and two of, two of the three partners went farming and my father was one of them. And then from there we've moved, to- Colusa- wait- from Colusa we went to Live Oak, and then to Marysville, California. And then from Marysville we came to Chicago in 1930.

AT: 00:01:36 Which which town were your first memories in?

BC: 00:01:42 Well, when I- when I was there, well, I was very young. So the as far as my memories is something going to school and such and, and my, my, my, my brother, my sister and myself, we used to walk to the school and these well the [unclear] dusty road and we had to look for snakes going by on the roads and go into a one, one room, country school. There we had one teacher teaching all ages of people that I remember very clearly.

AT: 00:02:24 And which, which town was that in?

BC: 00:02:26 That was in uh a Live Oak, California? Yes. And then Marysville was a, a, a ci, a lil, a bigger city and I stayed there for a while, but then they moved me to Chicago. I was nine years old and I left ah ah ah Marysville and came to Chicago.

Unknown: 00:02:53 Not Chicago?

BC: 00:02:53 Not Chicago, Stockton, Stockton, California.

AT: 00:02:56 Okay.

BC: 00:02:56 Oh boy. I'm skipping a few years!

AT: 00:03:01 And so in those early years in Live Oak were, was there a Japanese American community there?

BC: 00:03:13 No, in there, in those days there were, there was no, no, so, what they call, a small community. Ah, they were just practically farms and my father, like many other people never owned the farm. They leased the farm and, and they lease peaches. And then my father was growing rice for a few years, so there was, there were no, there was no community. Probably the nearest neighbor was maybe about, 5, 10 miles away.

AT: 00:03:48 And as far as your, your family, where were you all religious or did you do any activities outside of school?

BC: 00:03:57 Well, at that at that age I mean, no, the oldest, my brother helped a little bit on the farm but I was too young and my sister was too young. So- So there wasn't any, anything that we did or communicate with doing the community as far as that's concerned. No, not in those years yet, yes.

AT: 00:04:21 And can you tell me the names and the ages of your siblings, where you are in the birth order?

BC: 00:04:31 At that time or now?

AT: 00:04:33 Or just the age difference between you all?

BC: 00:04:34 Oh my, my, my. Well, why go back to all the history as far as my father and mother concerned. There- there were originally six in our family, and the first one passed away in Stockton when he was only 21 years old, from tuberculosis. And then a second one, passed away in Japan and he was 60- 78- no 68- 78? 68 years old. And then the- my other brother was in Lodi, California and he passed away when he was 66, and my sister just passed

away last year and she was 98 years old. And my, myself, I'm 96 now, I'm still living. And my sister, younger sister, passed away when she was 71 in Gardena, California.

AT: 00:05:46 So you are the second to youngest?

BC: 00:05:47 I was, I am the- I was the second youngest of the family, of the six, yes.

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<Begin Segment 2>

AT: 00:05:55 And- so you said you were nine years old when you moved to Stockton?

BC: 00:06:02 Yes.

AT: 00:06:02 And what was the reason for that move?

BC: 00:06:05 I- Well, that was during the Depression years and even, even the farmers had very difficult time making a living. Consequently, we had my father, I mean my mother had a brother that was in Stockton already and he was a barber. And he was able to, to rent- lease a home, I mean an apartment, and asked my father if we'd like to come to Chicago because it probably would be easier for him and the children as they were all growing up now. And that's why we came to Chicago,

AT: 00:06:47 To Stockton?

BC: 00:06:49 Stockton. Chicago! Boy, I tell ya, I'm jumping a few years.

AT: 00:06:53 And so then how many years were you in Stockton? About?

BC: 00:07:02 Well,

AT: 00:07:02 How much time did you spend there?

BC: 00:07:05 I was nine years old and when I- when the, the came and uh, and uh, we moved from Stockton to Rohwer I was 22 years old.

AT: 00:07:24 And can you tell me a little bit about what your experiences were like in Stockton?

BC: 00:07:31 Stockton was an agricultural town, town, and my father had a hotel. So what these people a lot of people used to work in the farms, there used to be a potato farms, they have celery farms, they had grape orchards and, and they would, they would work during the, during the week and they come Friday's, to the city to, to enjoy themselves. And those are the times that we were busy at the hotel and as far as the hotel is concerned, just like most of the businesses were, were run by families, like the the the Japanese family that worked in the cleaners you know, father, I mean the mother, the children, and the same things as the hotel. We all hotel. We helped at the hotel- During, during the weekends.

AT: 00:08:29 What were some of your duties?

BC: 00:08:32 Pardon?

AT: 00:08:32 What were some of your duties?

BC: 00:08:33 My duties? My duties, my main duty was clean the stairs as they come up. So I had the clean the house- clean the stairs and we- and I used to do some vacuuming in the, in the rooms and, and that way. And, and on Sundays I had a usual choice of working in the hotel or going to church. So naturally I chose to go to church and then since then I've been going to church from-

AT: 00:09:10 And what kind of church was that?

BC: 00:09:11 It was a- Buddhist church. Yes. In that town- Stockton was a small town, a little, a little under 40,000 people. And consequently it was sort of they had one Christian church and one Buddhist church. And, and the Japanese- as far as the Japanese community would- if you called that Japanese community, it wasn't a big community, but- all of us were living more or less in an area of about four blocks. So we knew all each other and it was a sort of a underprivileged area where we had, we had- Japanese and Chinese and, and other ethnic groups like we had- We had them Blacks, we had Mexicans and, and so it was that type of a community. It was sort of- community that-

AT: 00:10:08 And were those demographics also reflected in the schools?

BC: 00:10:15 Well, in Stockton we had one high school, and that was one public high school and, and later on they bought- they, they built a, they built a Catholic school. But- but- as far as the grammar school, yes, we had a school that was- right in the fact-

right in that four block area. We all went to that one school that was up until about I'd say about the fourth or fifth grade. Then we transferred to another school with a little further away and it was more of a mixed group then- And then we went to high school after that.

AT: 00:10:57 And after high school, what did you do?

BC: 00:11:00 After high school? Well, I had a choice of- what kind of profession I would- like to have, to do. And we had a very, a very nice lady that used to be our Japanese School advisor and she had- we wanted me to go to medical school because my record were quite good. But then I knew that I was allergic to blood so I knew that that wasn't my field, and so you want- she wanted me- to go to dentistry. And so I said no, it's the same problem, and said, well- the only other profession that I could go that I have to worry about contact with blood was optometry. So went to the- she, she was able to obtain a scholarship for me. So I went to the College of Pacific which is- I didn't know at that time, but I found out later on it was probably one of the oldest schools in California. And so I stayed there two years. Then I transferred to the University of California School of Optometry in Berkeley and, and that was 1941. So.

AT: 00:12:29 And was that something that was expected of you and your siblings to go to school and pursue a professional career-

BC: 00:12:37 Well, not really because at that time, most of the young people, unfortunately they- especially the boys and the girls, but boys too. They were had to- work on farms. There were so many people that have small farms. These are what they call truck cart farm. They have some people, two acres of- of farm and they make all kinds of vegetables. So they had to work in the farms and so they didn't get the opportunity that- to go to school, but I was able to go to school because- I had brothers and sisters, that were helping there and and so I, I went there two, two years and I transferred to University California.

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<Begin Segment 3>

AT: 00:13:24 And so you were at UC Berkeley in 1941. Can you, can you tell me about your, your recollections of the day Pearl Harbor was attacked-

BC: 00:13:40 P- pardon?

AT: 00:13:40 The day that Pearl Harbor was attacked. What, what were your recollections of that day? When you were at University of California?

BC: 00:13:51 When I went to school?

AT: 00:13:53 Because you were in school when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

BC: 00:13:57 Yes. You mean when the war started?

AT: 00:13:59 Mhm

BC: 00:13:59 Oh yes. That- I, I- definitely. It was so clear. I- I had at that day- it was a Sunday and I had come home from church, it was 1 o'clock, and I was- and at that time there were no televisions or anything, so I turned the radio on and start the clothes- changed my clothes to everyday clothes and then all I heard was that, that Pearl Harbor is being bombed, bombed and you hear the sirens. You can hear the bombs. You can hear the- all the noise of warfare, and it kept saying that a P- P- Pearl Harbor, Pearl Harbor is being bombed and I just couldn't believe it I just- because, I thought was another radio program, because at that time there was a very well known producer named Arch Oboler and he used to- he used to produce a radio programs that were really out of the ordinary and so I thought it was one of those. But they kept saying, this is a- a dial, I mean, a live report from and they were saying that the Missouri- the, the, the ship, Missouri, was being- drowned. And then all of a sudden I realized it was, it was true, the war was going and, and so I just stood there for a few minutes and, and- what we going to do, what's going to happen? But, you know, so I-

AT: 00:15:40 At that point, did you have- were you with friends or anyone that you knew? Like at that time that you went to the new school?

BC: 00:15:53 Well, yes, we, we- when I was going to school we- we lived at a Japanese boarding house, so there were about eight of us in the house. And some of them- because of the war- start of the war, they decided to go home right away. And my sister, meanwhile, called me and told me, "Please try- try to stay in school as long as I could." Because I was only a one- going to be- it was about three months away from my graduation, for my degree. And so I was able to see there- stay there until exactly three weeks before I graduated. Then they order from 9066 came and so my

sister called me, "Please come right away because we're going to have to have to go to one of the assembly centers and so I went home right away. So I only had one year- one month before graduation. And I stayed there, yeah.

- AT: 00:17:04 Do you remember, like how- some of your thoughts and and feelings at the time?
- BC: 00:17:14 It was just- just a matter of wondering what's going to happen. Didn't know- what was going to happen to us because as the enemy I had no idea that we would be- asked to leave- into any kind of concentration camps or anything like that. But we wondered about the safety of our being as far as the town is concerned, as far as the- But- there wasn't too much- I just think that- what couldn't happen.
- AT: 00:17:54 Did any- besides- like in the immediate days and weeks following Pearl Harbor, did anything change in your daily life?
- BC: 00:18:06 Well, yes. We got the day after Pearl Har- Pearl Harbor, two- FBI agents, came to our house- and told our, told my father that please pack, pack a small suitcase or whatever you want because you are going to be incarcerated. And that was 9 o'clock in the morning, say about 7 o'clock in the morning. And then my sister told them, gee, let him have have coffee and they waited by the door and then after that they took- they didn't say a word as far as taking- why, why he was being taken prisoner, as far as concerned. And they put'em into the county jail together with several people in the city. And for awhile I couldn't understand most of the, the- tea- Japanese school teachers or the administers, a couple of the business administers- people that were active in community, were all approached and, and, and taken the same day. And- from I can understand, that they had a list of about 3200 people that were to be immediately, after the war, taken into- So, so from, from there, they stayed in the county, county jail for sev- two days. And then they went to San Francisco and then they were sent to a, uh, Missoula, Montana, then then they were moved to Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and then then finally to Louisburg where they- where he spent about three and a half years in the concentration camp. And these were the regular concentration camps. They were not the W- WRAs concentration camp, but they were, they were set up by the Jus- Justice Department, so they were very, so they were into these concentration camps with German prisoners and Italian prisoners.

AT: 00:20:27 But as far as where he was actually going, you learned all of that after the fact, right? At the time, you all didn't- They didn't say where your father was going?

BC: 00:20:40 We have no idea. They won't say a word. And it was one year, one month before we knew where he was. Whatever letters we sent they were all- well, and whatever the letters that they sent- they, they, they crossed out, all of those important locations and dates and everything. So we have no idea. And finally we found out where they were.

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<Begin Segment 4>

AT: 00:21:16 And- so can you tell me a little bit more about when the evacuation orders went out for, for you and your, your family? Where, what were the instructions and where- what was the process like?

BC: 00:21:35 Well, I guess- we got the same instructions by that Order of 9066 that we had one week to, to take care of your business and everything, try to sell all- as much as you can, although the government would have facilities where was- for a- keeping your- belongings, but nobody believed what the, the government would do because we have no idea. And so most people during that one week they had to sell whatever they could and it would, and, and, and in most cases, people waited until the last day or so, and they bought things like sewing machines, automobiles and- and, and things that you cannot carry. We had orders of what you could bring to the, what they call the assembly centers at that time. And, and, as far as we were concerned, we had a hotel and it was a lease hotel, so we didn't own the building, and we- our property was the furnishings, all the furnishings in the hotel and and we were trying to sell it, but then we found a friend that said, they came over and said, I'll take over the lease for you. And he said, "You pay us so much per month," you know. So then we were happy that, that he would be taken care of and resolved. We thought- we thought he was a friend of ours, so to speak that with quotations, we found out. We got, we were in Rohwer? He sent us money for about six months and then all of a sudden it stopped and, and you find out that he would not bring, send any money at all. And there was nothing we could do as far as the government is concerned because they have no facilities or organizations to help you. And so that was that for us. And when the war started, ended, my brother went to- back to the

hotel to, to see what's the situation was, it was everything was in ruins because they hadn't replaced anything. And so, so, so we just lost everything we had.

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<Begin Segment 5>

AT: 00:24:15 And so you, you went back to Stockton with your family and then from UC Berkeley?

BC: 00:24:23 No, no, I didn't go back to Stockton at all. In fact, my brother was the only one because he had a small orchard and somebody have us taking care of the orchard. And so he went back to the orchard. My father and my two si- si- sisters stayed in Ro-Rohwer until 1945. And then they came to Chicago where I, I, I, I left camp. In fact, I went to Rohwer and it was 19 of August of 1942 and, and then I stayed there and as far as myself was concerned- like most of the people in any of the concentration camps, they, they went to work and I was lucky enough that I was able to work, to work in the hospital. And at that time we had, Rohwer, we had a little over 8,000 inmates there. And, and there was just one optometrist and since only I had three three-three more months of graduation they allowed me to work with the, with the optometrist. And so I was able to receive the salary, monthly salary of, of a \$16 a month and and the wage, wages that people worked, I mean, for- were, were for the people that were the lowest bracket, which where the wood cutters, the kitchen help, the kitchen people and, and such. They only got 16 dollar, 16 dollars a month. She got 16 dollars and then those people in the, the chefs and the truck drivers and the people that worked in these stores and such, they were, they were getting 16 dollar, 16 da- 16 dollars a month. And, and, no 12 dollars. And we were the professionals. We got the highest scale of \$60 a month. So I, I worked there with the optometrist to take care of 16,000 people that many of them wanted a, a need, need lenses. So, so we were very busy at that time. And then after- and in- and I, I thought that perhaps I should finish my education and so I started to make negotiations for a release to go. So I, I had- I wrote to school, the school accepted me, but then I wouldn't get my clearance from the WRA, the War Relocation Authority, they wouldn't give you clearance. And because- I was wondering why because I, I would get it all my- other people that had asked for clearance to go to school, they got within three weeks to a month. Mine took about three months. And finally I found out that, well, this was after I went to Chicago that one of my

friends said they were going to go to deep archives that that Washington, DC to get their records. So that, that for 10 dollars they can get your record- a copy of your record. So I gave them 10 dollars. Then I found out why I was retained so long because, because of my father was put in the concentration. And and my father was a very humble man. He- he never, never, never was associated with any organization-Japanese organization in the city, not a teacher or anything, was a hotel manager. And, and most of the years that he was there, he had to take care of mother, her husband, wi- wife, because she had high blood pressure and she was bedridden for the last seven years. And- and I found out that the reason I was retained and all the people, most of us, some of us in the city where we're over in Kendo, Kendo is fencing, Japanese fencing. And that's more like in Japan, they call it a sport. Well, what happened is that, that, the organ- the kendo organization came around to various houses that, that kendos- like Kendo teach- students were. And they, they asked for donations for- to make a book. It wasn't really not a big book--sort of booklet--and in the booklets, the last page there was a picture of Toyama Mitsuru. He was- he was- the head of what they call Dra- Black Dragon Society in Japan. And he was- designated one of the six enemies of the United States. So every name, a person name in that book was all, all the fathers were put into concentration camps right away.

AT: 00:29:53 And as far as you and your, your siblings, were you all at Rohwer together?

BC: 00:30:00 Yes, we were all evacuated to- we went to- in April, April 16th, we were told to get your belongings- which was- all you can carry in, in two ha- two hands on your suitcase. As far myself- myself is concerned- I wore two stockings, two pants, two shirts, two of everything, and to carry, to carry two su- suitcases and we- went two blocks where the trucks were waiting for us and loaded all our belongings that we brought in- were put into a bus and brought into the- county fairgrounds. And that county fairgrounds was, was our our home for- from, from April to- to August. And we were put into a ho-horse stall, and all these, all these assembly centers were setup, well, the order came in April that the Japanese are going to be evacuated, and we were put into, I mean, the order came in and what was it? February 9066. And then we were sent to these camps and in, in April. So they only had two weeks, two months to clean the stalls and these were, we were all hall stalls, ah horse stalls, and what they did was just cans, cans of water paint, and they put straw on the floor and they hardly cleaned the place. So the moment you went into one of these stalls it was just smell of horses that

when you and they had four beds, cots, cots, side by side, that was our home for-- from May, April to August.

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<Begin Segment 6>

AT: 00:32:18 What, what- a lot of folks that we've been speaking to for this project were much younger when they were in camp

BC: 00:32:28 What was that?

AT: 00:32:28 A lot of folks that we've been speaking to were much younger, during, during the war.

BC: 00:32:32 Oh yes, yes, probably so. Yes.

AT: 00:32:34 And I'm curious because many of them weren't fully aware of what was happening, but as a young adult, I- surely, you know, you were more aware

BC: 00:32:48 Yes.

AT: 00:32:48 And I'm just wondering what- what some of your- what were some of the things going on through your head through this whole process and?

BC: 00:33:00 You know, I was, what, 22 years old and, and, and sort of adventurous. And- so to me it was- I met new friends and uh, I really didn't feel too bitter at that time. And uh, and so I went about it was whatever they asked us to do and you know I just just. But later on I began to understand what happened and, and how all the fact that gee, all of a sudden we were, we, we were abused as far as I'm concerned. We were second grade student, I mean ah people. And um, and that we were deprived of our, about what the Constitution says that the life, liberty and happiness without, without due process and then being you know we wondered why all of this had taken place. But most like Japanese, they, they, they, they thought that, well, you know, like you say everybody, every Japanese knew a word called Shikataganai, which means that it's something that happens and that's just, no matter what you do is not going to do. So we made the best of the best of everything. And um, and also the people that say what Gaman, which was perseverance. So we went through all those years and without protests and things like that, but, and then about 40 years ago, 40 years,

nothing happened. But then, when you had these five Congress with men in Congress, they were able to convince a fair level of Congressmen of the problems that we had been through and that we had all our Redress and everything. And so, so all paid off as far as the Japanese are concerned. I think, you know. So as far as we're concerned, my wife and my family and most of our Nisei's, still feel that United States is the very best place and being we are Japanese, no, we hired Japanese descent but we're Americans and we accept what happened and uh, made the best of it. Then.

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<Begin Segment 7>

AT: 00:35:46 So I think now is it a good time to start talking about, um, what happened after you left camp?

BC: 00:35:55 After I left camp?

AT: 00:35:58 Mhm.

BC: 00:35:58 Well I, I finally got my clearance to go to school and at that time, the only people that were able to obtain clearance were people that were accepted at universities or working in the fields for, for temporary jobs. And, so it was July the 3rd. I took my suitcase and walked through the main, main highway, which was about a half mile away. And I waited for the bus. The bus came. I went on the bus and then as the first time that are aware of the prejudice that the Blacks had, the in there where they lived in the South there because I, I paid by my fair and then I didn't know what to do. I looked up and all the Black people were back in the back. All the white people in the front. And I said to myself, gee, what am I supposed to do? But then I thought that gee, we were, we were, we were underprivileged and we had discrimination just like the Blacks and all that stuff. So I said, I sit in the back. So I went to the back and I sat down in it and the drivers just, she just sits, he just stopped the bus and he says, Hey, you said you can't stay back, sit in the front. So I didn't know what to do. I mean, let me go to the window front. So fine. I sat right in the middle. That was the first time I had that experience like that. Then I find out from the first time that the Blacks people discrimination so, so great that they couldn't even get in the bus or drink from water fountains or anything though.

AT: 00:37:56 And where did that, where was that bus going?

BC:

00:37:58

Oh, my bus? That bus went through to Rohwer, which was a city of about 6,000 near...about 20 miles from our Rohwer concentration camps. And um, I, I, I boarded the train there and I went to, St, St Louis where I had a friend and I stayed overnight in St Louis. Then I went to train that took me to Chicago and landed up in Dearborn Station, which is not there now, but it was one of the main stations in Chicago. And then when I got out I was really, all I could do was just stare and wait because here I was from a small city and there were all these high buildings in the hustle and the bustle and the street cars going back and forth. And, after awhile I, well we both thought well, it's almost evening. So I, I, uh, my friend went who came with, came to meet me at the station, took me to the YMCA Hotel, which is on the 400 South and Wabash. I spent my first night in Chicago and, and the next morning, first thing in the morning I went to the War Relocation Authority office because I was told to do that. And then I registered there and told them I'm in Chicago. And then while I was there I asked them, where do you think I could find some accommodations? So, so the idea of the war Relocation Authority was to desegregate the Japanese or assimilate them as much as they can, so they told me to go this area, this area that way. And my friend who was aware of the situation, he says, he says, no, you don't even think about going to a place because they're too expensive and you can't afford and probably won't be even be accepted in that area. So. So he asked me, where do you think he want us to look for a house or not a house, but a room in a house. And at that time I guess the uh, the first settlement in Chicago was at around 42nd, I'm sorry, Ellis and Oakenwald from 42nd street to about 46th or 7th street. And there they had all the hotels, hotels, they had apartments and barber shops and restaurants and everything. And he asked me if I go over there because you could be sure to find some place to stay. But so I asked him where he lives. He said he lives on the 1600 block. And so I said, well maybe I'll go where you are, near where you are. So we went, and this is the area from 6000 South, one block South of University of Chicago. And there were, well it was just, it's just an area where just homes, there are no homes, I mean no stores or no restaurants or anything but just living apartments. And so we went up to three streets, streets about Kimbark and Woodlawn and, well just...So, I went up and down the street and, and every apartment building that had a sign that said, said sleeping room...I knocked on the door and then they looked at you and he says, well, I'm sorry, but I just rented that. And then this kept going on for about four or five places. And then, and then the last place I went there, I ask, gee he told me that he told me that same thing. That it was resented, it was just rented. Well, I told them, I got enough ner, nerve by that time

and said, "Why don't you just take the sign off?" And he says, "Well, I was just going to, but I just didn't." But those are the situations that, in fact some of them were not even that kind, they'd open the door, looked at your face, and slammed it...Finally I was able to find a sleeping room, which was a small room, and a little kitchenette in the corner, it was a little gas burner and the only reason I found that the room there, was because there was a Japanese couple of living there and they appreciated the fact that the Japanese people were very, very quiet, they paid the rent and then they didn't complain about anything. And so that was my first, ah room that had. Then that was the biggest, biggest surprise was that first night that I slept there because it was 4th of July, it was hot. It was in the 90s. So naturally, you just take your--sleep bare on the top part and then I went to sleep. And then what, 10 minutes later, I felt stinging sensations all over my chest. And then I have wonder what happened, so I put the light on, I found bug, little bugs that were crawling on my chest and then I took them and I pressed some of them and find blood, my blood, my good blood all over there. And that's my first encounter with bedbugs and it was, it was really something. And so I asked people, gee what do you do? He says well you can use chemicals, you can use sulfur to kill them, but it doesn't do any good if the building is infested then it's no use because that it would be the short time, before they come back again. So the only way way to leave your lights on and tried to sleep with the lights on. And that was my first night. And, and then I found out about, first time about bedbugs. And I've go into the city of Chicago the last couple of years, they were saying there were several areas that the troubles, bedbugs, anything.

AT: 00:45:00 And remind me where that building was?

BC: 00:45:03 Pardon?

AT: 00:45:03 Remind me where that building was?

BC: 00:45:05 Yes, that was right on, right on 67, 67, 6017 Woodlawn. And that was, there was a small Japanese community there. Not a community, but a few people living there and like I said, there were no stores, no grocery stores, no restaurants or anything just apartment. And there was a, I guess a lower-middle class area and um, and 66th street was very shopping center. It was a good shopping center, they have stores and restaurants, they had movies and such.

AT: 00:45:49 And then how were you getting around?

BC: 00:45:53 The only way we got around was--nobody had cars or anything like that. So they had street cars and they had the L, L, L. And so, uh, and also where I wasn't living from there, you can go a balanced days on the, what they call the Illinois Central Railroad. Those are the three main one. So transportation in itself was good. Yeah.

AT: 00:46:20 And the WRA office, you said you were instructed to?

BC: 00:46:26 Registered there, yes.

AT: 00:46:28 And where was that office?

BC: 00:46:29 That was in the city there, the city of Chicago. I forgot where it was but right in the city, yeah.

AT: 00:46:36 So it was like I'm in a city officer or something?

BC: 00:46:40 Yes, uhuh.

AT: 00:46:42 And did you only visit that office that one time?

BC: 00:46:51 I was able to call in after, so overnight when I moved a couple of times I, I called and that was dealt with all I did.

AT: 00:47:05 What was the reason for you calling?

BC: 00:47:07 Well, I guess all these people like us who had, who had fathers in concentration camps probably was a matter of security and they thought that perhaps it was just a secur, security situation and once they realized that we were going to school and everything and wherever you do register and know where you were and it was, it was okay. Yeah.

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<Begin Segment 8>

AT: 00:47:39 Would you happen to remember, um, the areas they were suggesting you look for housing?

BC: 00:47:50 No, I don't, but there was more in the North Side and the West Side at that time, but I don't remember now, but it was not where I was going to which was the South Side, which had, which had housing that was more, more econ, economical then the other area.

AT: 00:48:13 And then how long were you at 6017

BC: 00:48:17 We all, well, I was in that one small, sleeping room and I had a friend that was, had a bigger unit there and he had a bigger apartment where they had some kitchenette in the corner that had a lot of big bed. They called them Murphy beds and you can push and they go up to this on the wall. And uh, so he invited me. Why don't you come and stay with me? And so I say, he said, come stay with me because we don't have any bugs, bug, bed bugs. So I said okay, sure. So I, I decided to stay with him and the first night sleeping in his bed, which is a big double bed. I had that same problem. All of a sudden they start to bite me. And um, and then I took turn the lights on and then, and then they find the bugs and had the same problem they were. And he sitting right sleeping right next to me without a shirt on and he doesn't get bitten at all. And so I said, boy, I said, I took a couple and put them right on his chest and all of the stinkin bug was just move around and just moved away. And so it just affects certain people just like mosquitoes. And so they love certain people, certain people they don't even bother. And so it was a couple of weeks time then, not only that, every time we turn the lights on off, cockroaches will just go into the crevices and then put the light on and they just scatter. And so we said oh, well, we asked around to see if we how we can exterminate some of these people, some of these bugs. And um, there was a chemical which is now was, is band after that, because it's poisonous. I forgot the name of it, but, but that, that was very effective. You spray or on the mattress, crevices and everything like that. But then as far as the cockroaches go they said they have you have to use sulfur. So we got sulfur, put it in a bottle and we left the sulfur and we left there for almost a day, full day. And then we went back there in the evening and I found all the cockroaches, sleeping, no dead, cockroaches. And it was all right, for about one month then start coming again. Again they find out that once the, once the building is infested with cockroaches, you just can't exterminate one room because the whole house has to be exterminated. So that was it.

AT: 00:51:27 And what about, while you were living there, were you enrolled at a school in the city?

BC: 00:51:33 At that time, that was July and school wasn't going to start 'til September. So because with the money that I made in camp, which is \$60 a month, you couldn't save any money. And uh, I didn't have any money, so I looked for a job. I found a job on the 30, 6300 street on the West Side. And so I went to work for the company called H.P. Smith. And at that time they were making a wax paper that were used to line a cigarette packages

because they couldn't use a tin foil. Tin foil was used for ammunition for bullets. And that's where I worked and I worked from about 8 o'clock to 6 o'clock. And then I started school in September and when I started school I asked them, you know, could I change to, to a, a later shift? And they had three shifts going at that time and the second shift was from 4 o'clock to 1 o'clock in the evening 1 night. And so I was able to change my job hours and I went to school from 9:00 to 3:00 and I got out of school and took the L and went all the way on to 6000 South, um, and 3300 West and worked from, from 4 o'clock to 1 o'clock, to midnight, I'm sorry, 4, 4 to midnight. That was the second shift. And then I had to go home and take a bath and, and sleep and I get up in the morning and then go to school got up at 7 o'clock, had breakfast and then go to school. And most of my studying was, was uh, on the way to the school--on the bus, or the street car, there was a street car going at that time also. But it wasn't too bad because as far as school was concerned with was more clinical work. It was in my last year actually so, it was all clin, mostly clinical, so it didn't have too much bookwork work concerned. But then we did, I did that for six months and I just couldn't take it anymore. So I quit my job at H.P. Smith and still went to school then and I was able to find a job right now, the school that I was going to was in, was in the loop of Chicago loop on Walker...Walker, Whacker Drive and the, and the, and a Chicago River. And so I was find, I was able to find a, uh, a job to the Capital Optical, which was grinding lenses. So that was fine. I got a lot of experience about lenses and such. And so, so I worked there from 4 o'clock to closing time, which was about 6 or 6:30.

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<Begin Segment 9>

- AT: 00:55:01 And, um, at, at the time that, that you're working and in school, besides your friend who helped you out when you first moved? Did you know any other people in the city?
- BC: 00:55:15 Oh yes, I knew people because we had people that were living around 43rd Street towards the people, and, and um, and people that were living in the same apartment. And several other people that, uh used to be. So we had friends there. Yes, as far as that's concerned.
- AT: 00:55:36 Were they folks that you knew from camp or back home?

BC: 00:55:40 Mostly, several from back home and, and several from camp and then other people that had moved there. So it wasn't, it wasn't as, it was not a lonely or related to situations or anything like that. But then...And then when I, after I graduated, I, I, uh, told my boss at the Capital Optical where I was grinding lenses that uh, I wanted to quit because I wanted to find a job, maybe working as an optometrist someplace. And he said, "Well, I hate to lose you, he said. But let me see what I can do for you." So this is being that it was the whole, wholesale optical shop where they made glasses and there was everything like that. And so all the doctors used to come there and he, and he asks what are the doctors were very, they came almost every day. His name was Dr. Hurst or Walter Hurst. And talked to him, he said. And then he was a very kind gentleman, nice gentleman. He says, yeah. He says, "Well, why do I do arrangement so that he works there over there at that shop for you at work, at the Capital Optical. And then have a couple of at the nighttime because he only worked 5 o'clock and he's dead and he can use my office. So he made arrangements. So I go to the office and the nighttime. So I worked there from, I went there from 6 o'clock, sometimes 7, 8 o'clock at night. And the only thing I had to do was clean his office for him a little bit. Clean the walk, clean the waiting room a little bit and whatever supplies I use, I, I replenished. And that's all I had. So, uh, I, I, I, I worked there for about six, six months and, and, and, and, and have some of my patients that I knew evening night. So it was, it was very nice. Very very nice.

AT: 00:57:47 For some of the other folks that you knew who were living in the city, do you know what, was it relatively easy or was it difficult finding, finding work or?

BC: 00:58:06 That time in Chicago, I think I, if you look through the wa, wa, it was full of opportunities that almost every kind of job, you know, because the young people have gone to war and Chicago was probably one of the big cities that, that, that was in defense work. And so I don't think it was any trouble for most people to find a job as far as Chicago's concerned. And that's probably the one big reason that so many people came to Chicago at that time from Rohwer and uh, and Jerome, Arkansas.

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<Begin Segment 10>

AT: 00:58:51 And uh, what year did you finish your schooling?

BC: 00:58:55 My, I finished, I in uh May of 1944. And then I took my state board in July and then I got my license and after I got my license, I worked at Capital that then I opened my office, my office, and I made enough money saved up money so was able to open my office in 1945, right on Clark and Division.

AT: 00:59:39 What was the address there? Do you have

BC: 00:59:41 1200 North Clark Street. At that time, I guess because settlements of Japanese were in that Ellis and Oakenwald area from about 19, 1941, I mean 1942, and up to '45 and '45, '4 or '5 And then it was a small group that lived on the South Side where I was before in the 1600 block and then Clark and Division. But by that time there were a lot of people leaving Camp. It was towards the end of the war and then towards, uh in 1945. So they were a lot of them coming to Chicago. And at Clark and Division was probably the biggest settlement of Japanese people because from all the way from Chicago Avenue to North Avenue, East, North and South and East and West and it was about from Dearborn Street until uh to Wells Street. So it was a long area. And by that time I opened my office, my office, 1945 and I stayed til 1960. And the reason I had to move was because that whole area from Chicago to, uh, I mean, I'm sorry from Division Street, I mean the Clark and Division, yeah, Division street to North Avenue was to be demolished and, and, and urban renewal was going to set up, build a lot of high rises. And as you know that whole area is full of high rises with about 20. And, and the, and the, at the time from 1945 I was, but 1960, 1965 all the way through Clark Street and and on both sides of the street. Oh, probably every, every other, every other store or apartment was run by Japanese people. So there was quite a, quite a settlement there. And it was talking about a Japanese, a Japanese, uh uh area probably that was the biggest, probably.

AT: 01:02:19 Do you remember any of the names of businesses?

BC: 01:02:19 Oh, there were a lot of stores. There was Son grocery stores and Toguri's and all those stores. And Hidaka's clear, clear, cleanings. And, and we had...I was upstairs, right on Clark and Division. We have myself. We had Jiro Yamaguchi was an attorney and here we had Dr. Hira, the dentist. And then there was a Tom Hira and there was--even JAACL had, had a small office at that time for just a few times, few years. But, there were all kinds of restaurants. There was, um, it was a movie house right across the street from my office. There were grocer, drugstores and bowling alleys and, and so it was quite a community as far as community's concerned. And when, when

that, when they started to demolish that area, all the buildings, every building was demolished. So people started to move from Clark and Division, those people that, well, in other words, those people on the east side of Clark Street were alright because they were, that they were in, and the, and on the west side of, of, uh, LaSalle Street was, were not going to be demolished. Yes. That's just the area between the LaSalle Street and Clark Street, and so those people had to move. And so those people most of them moved a little further north in that area that they call Oakdale to, to, uh, about the other side of Wrigley Field. And then the east and west from Southport all the way to Broadway. It was a diverse area. Geographically, it was a big area, not like Clark and Division, Clark and Division. But there were, oh, there were all kinds of grocery stores. You have--Kanekos were there, they had a lot of rooming houses. Chiya Tomiya's father had buildings there. And, so there, it was a bustling area, really.

AT: 01:04:38 And I'm noticing you're remembering a lot of businesses by, by name. And the family's too.

BC: 01:04:46 Oh yeah. I was there long enough and we used to, we used to see a lot of the same people. So we knew most of the people that were there, I wouldn't say more but quite a few. Yeah Kei Kawahara had that beauty shop right across the street from my office and the Mark Twain Hotel. In fact, Mark Twain is probably the only 20, hmm Mark Twain is probably one of the only buildings that are still remaining from that time 'cuz all the other buildings have been demolished. New buildings have come up and new stores come up. And so that's about the only place.

AT: 01:05:31 And where were you getting most of your patients from? Is it just the area?

BC: 01:05:35 As far as myself is concerned, probably I was probably the luckiest person alive. Everything I did turned out well and uh and I was probably the earliest of the optometry, Japanese optometrists and there was about the same time that I started, ah the South Side, uh, uh, Randolph's Kai, Dr. Sakata, opened their office on South Side and I was, Clark and Division was on North Side and most of the people that came from different camps were mostly from Rohwer and Jerome in, in, in, in, uh, in the camp that was Rohwer. I was working an optometrist there. So when I was in Clark and Division, they all came to me and I was the only, then the Japanese Issei's came after their children were in Chicago, they brought their family and they couldn't speak any English, so they already, they were coming to me. So,

so I was, from very beginning, I was very fortunate to, very, very busy, busy.

AT: 01:07:08

And uh,

BC: 01:07:08

See that, that area that at that Clark and Division. That's where the Chicago Resettlers, which is now the, ah, JASC used to have their first building, 1160 North Clark Street. And their primary function at that time was to take care of people that wanted to find housing jobs. And so they were very helpful for a lot of people that are looking for jobs in the city.

AT: 01:07:42

Did you ever use their services?

BC: 01:07:45

Pardon?

AT: 01:07:45

Did you ever use their services?

BC: 01:07:47

No. No, I never did have to, use. Uhuh.

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<Begin Segment 11>

AT: 01:07:52

Did you know the folks who were working there?

BC: 01:07:55

Yes. Well, yeah, um Koki Kawasaki was probably the first person there. And then there was Abe Hagiwara which is his...Every, every person in Chicago, any young person should know, should know, and I appreciate what he did for everyone because he was a social worker and he was set up, uh, we have, we take trips, we used to take trips, to YMCA camps and, and he used to, was a social worker and uh gradually, as more and more people, young people came with, we developed a lot of social activities. Uh, and, and uh, sports activities, and gradually, like, in our case, our church, um, eventually because the fact that we had to move to all an institute and we stayed there for about two years and then, uh, he was there at that time. He moved there too as a social director of the Olivet Institute. And uh, from there we, we developed basketball teams and, what they call the Japanese American Service. I mean uh, the JAS, CNA, Chicago, Nisei Aesthetic Association. And um, and then we had, we had mostly young people I think, but this building and we had.

AT: 01:09:44

Were you, were you involved in organizing some?

BC: 01:09:47 Yes, yes. Yeah. Abe and us and I think several others yeah, and we got. At that time there were quite a few churches, there was probably about six or seven Christian churches with that Japanese population two Buddhist church. And there were a lot of girls, teams, girls' social clubs and there they had had boys clubs and everything. And we assembled. The leader is different for every different group. Got together and said, why don't we set up a basketball team, league and that was the beginning of the league. And um, then after that'd we--well we had all different scenes, we had most of the games at the beginning. Was at Olivet Institute where Abe Hagiwara was the associate director, but then the, the league got so big that we had to, to go to the, to rent some of the high schools' gymnasiums in the South Side. And eventually we moved to the Chute Junior High School in Evanston and we had our basketball games and um, on Saturday, all day Saturday and on Sundays from 1 o'clock. And then that became too small because we had a lot of girls team and we had some younger teams of people from maybe 12 or 13 and they had and then rented a Middle School, Haven School in the Nor, in Evanston. So. And then, and then from the basketball it was very big a league. And then we had towards the end of this season we had the team from Detroit, Cleveland, Minneapolis come through for a tournament. And so, and then from there we started baseball, baseball leagues and we had every Sunday we were able to rent a Grant Park and they have six baseball fields there. And so we use to occupy all six of them. And it was, it was, it was a lot of fun because we would, we would get, people will bring their lunches and we had the games from 1 o'clock and, and then yes.

AT: 01:12:42 Were all of the participants Nisei,

BC: 01:12:44 Pardon?

AT: 01:12:44 Were all of the participants Nisei, in the league?

BC: 01:12:52 Are they what?

AT: 01:12:52 Um, everyone in CNAA was everyone Nisei, including the kids you were bringing in from Detroit and Cleveland?

Mrs Chikaraishi: 01:13:00 It sounds like Nisei and Sansei weren't there?

BC: 01:13:01 Oh yeah. We mostly, mostly, Nisei's when it started, but then, and then we got into the Sansei's because we started the leagues in 19, about 1946 and that was the only for mostly fellows and then, and then, uh, yeah, they had to expand to a

younger groups of people coming. And then the Sansei. So we, the league itself, the CNAA was from 1946 to I'd say about 60. Yeah.

AT: 01:13:37 And um, you were involved in organizing that through MBT, is that right?

BC: 01:13:44 Yes. That MBT there were about three or three or four of us, Yas Hara another fellow from Christ Congregational Church and somebody from the, Mas Kimotsu from the CCP. And so different school. So we got, we always of got together to, to, to, uh, set up the leagues. Yeah. And we had all the representatives of the different churches and everything come in.

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<Begin Segment 12>

AT: 01:14:21 And so another thing I wanted to ask you about was about your involvement with MBT and some of the in the early days?

BC: 01:14:33 Early days?

AT: 01:14:33 Can you tell me about?

BC: 01:14:33 Well our first service was in July of 1944 and previous to that, late 1943, there was a group of um, Buddhists that were renting a monthly hall downtown on Van Buren and Clark Street. And, and um, so that was, and what happened is a lot of the younger people from Rohwer, came to Chicago. Ah the parents of the children was able to tell a certain Reverend Kono, who was the minister at the Rohwer, if he might go to Chicago to set up a church or some religious groups who, for religious work and everything like that. So he, he did that. He came to Chicago and with the help of about six or seven young people, they were able to set up the first uh. What happened is that, that he, Reverend Kono was, could not understand English. So he, he called a ministerial student from Poston, Poston now to Chicago. And he helped him and to set up the first first service. They contacted a lot of fraternal organizations and social clubs and to see if they can rent, rent a space for us. And so they went to several, several places. But every place they went they said, well, we would have to talk to the board and see if it's okay, but we never saw or heard from. Finally they were able to find we were able to find a social hall on 4400 break, block on South

Park ah, South Park. And that was on the South Side, if we just now Marthar Lee, Marther, what's his name?

AT: 01:17:02 Martin Luther King

BC: 01:17:02 Dr., yeah! And they we were able to route or a, rent a room in the back of the three story, uh building and had the ser, first service in July of 1944. And then, um, my friend Barry Saiki was one of the leading groups that organize the group. And he asked me several times to become, to help set it up. But I told him that gee, I was just starting studying for my book, my State Board. And I didn't want to miss that because the fact that gee, I spent, uh, two, two, two extra, two extra, two ex, one year extra because of evacuation and then you want me to miss me getting my license. So I missed the first service, but I, I went to the second service which was helping that social agency building in the south side street, in the back, back room. And we only had 17 people at the service and it was kind of funny because when we weren't the lead lead service that recall, no will tell us, please go out in couples don't go out in big, to be, so she didn't want us to be conspicuous. So we went in, couples about two or two people together. And uh, and then that's it. Nobody had automobiles. So the on, the only means of transportation was the L. So we walked from the, they ah Parkway, a social agency building to the station and we walk in and at that time in July, and it was very hot. So, so it was even, it was a area where people would just sit on the sidewalks outside of the stores and as I, we walked by, they look at us, they look at us wondering what, I don't think anybody in Chicago there was only about around Chicago area they said there was only about 490 ah Japanese families in this whole area. So they didn't know what we were by Japanese. So everybody looked up. But nobody had encountered any trouble, didn't have any trouble or anything like that. But then, and then gradually as a more people start to live with the Clark and Division area, we decided that we will look to see if we can find a building. Uh, where we can have a service on and the North Side and so we can have one service in the morning on the South and then one in the afternoon in the, at the Clark and Division area. And so, so we wanted to find out a lot trying to find a place, on the North Side. And somebody told us to call Dr. Preston Bradley. I think it's well known that the head of the People's Church at the, uh, right across from Heiwa Terrace that's where their church is. And he told us, go to go see Dr. Preston Bracket Jack? I didn't, I forget his name. But anyway, he was the executive director of the Council Against Racial and Religious Group. And so he said, well sure, I'll be very happy to. He was, he was very aware of the situation of the Japanese

people and he in fact, he had written several, several letters to the War Authority telling them about the situation. But it is, yeah, no, no, no effect at all what he said. But he said, "Call my brother. He's got a theater on North Clark Street, I mean North LaSalle Street." So we called him and he said, sure, be happy to, happy to help, you know. So he said, he granted us, their theater which is a five, 500 foot, I mean 500 seat theater. [inaudible] theater on Sundays. So we had our services there for two years. And on the second year on, on April the 2nd, I remember that because I was supposed to be the speaker at the service at that time because we used to get lots of Japanese people, I mean English speaking Japanese people and, and, and I remember I, I, I didn't have a car so I used to use the subway and I went up the subway and there I saw a waterfa, what to you call it? Uh, the uh...

Mrs Chikaraishi: 01:22:33 Fire hydrants

BC: 01:22:34 Well the hydrants were being used by these tubular water containers and they were stretched all the way from corner of Clark Street all the way to LaSalle Street

AT: 01:22:45 A fire hose?

BC: 01:22:47 Yeah! Fire hose, a fire hose yes yes. Yeah. There were all several hoses going all the way, I was wondering what happened, cause gee, it's going the same direction I'm going. And they went back to the Uptown, Uptown Players Hall. That's what they called ah where we have the services. And find out that that night and there was a big fire. And uh, and then that whole building demolished. And so, so after that we had all, Jack of all of the executive director and he goes why don't you go to all of Olivet Institute? That's what we got out into the, Olivet Institute.

AT: 01:23:35 Do you know?

BC: 01:23:35 Yes?

AT: 01:23:36 What was the cause of the fire was?

BC: 01:23:37 That I don't know, you know, because it was a big fire so that's all I know. Yeah. Then then, then over there at the Olivet Institute, there was a person named Mr. Highsted who was really a wonderful gentleman and he said sure, he'd be happy to help us. So he rented a hall, a main hall for \$40 a whole month. And we have every Sunday morning services there. We had our social service, in fact, at about time, the Olivet Institute was

probably the, the, the one, one are or place where Japanese people that the young people, uh, men, ladies, they have all their socials. They had dances there, they had everything there, a lot of events, they had basketball games there. Yeah.

AT: 01:24:45 And um, just for context, um, by this time your family has probably arrived to Chicago, is that correct?

BC: 01:24:52 Yes, yes, the families have. This was, this was in 1946.

AT: 01:25:02 And where did your family, did your family come to live with you or did they

BC: 01:25:06 Well, they came and uh, we were in the same building on 75th, 757 ah Brompton Place and they had their own apartments. We had our own apartments there and the fact that owner of that, the owner of the building was Mr. Murata. And then, and I don't know if you knew or knew or heard of Jane Murata Yeah, that's her father's place. So we lived there for several years and then after living there for several years we decided that, uh, that perhaps uh, we should look for a place and so we found a place on the Fremont Street near Cubs Park.

AT: 01:26:00 Is this you and your wife?

BC: 01:26:04 Well, together together, Joe's my wife's brother, he was in the service at that time. So he had a furlough. So we walked around certain areas. And we happened to see this for sale sign for the building. So we went and looked at the building and asked the building and so we liked it. It was well maintained and everything. So. So we said, well, we're going to buy it. Yeah. It was that simple at that time we didn't, we didn't go asking your neighbors or anything like that.

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AT: 01:26:47 So it seems to me that in the, your early days in Chicago, um, you were pretty involved with the Japanese American community.

BC: 01:26:59 Yes. Yes. As much as I could. Yes.

AT: 01:27:03 What, what drove you to want to be involved?

BC: 01:27:08 Pardon?

AT: 01:27:08 Why did you want to be involved? What drove you?

BC: 01:27:11 Well, let's see. Well, there are so many young people in our churches and then, and in Japanese family that we knew that perhaps it'd be nice if they have some something that keep them busy, keep them out of trouble and it can hardly be happy to say that while we had our, ours CNA, we didn't have any person that we knew that it had gotten in trouble or did drugs and things like that. And so busy because we had a basketball, basketball season, baseball season, and we had track meets, we had volleyball and uh, all kinds of things. So all year round we were. And was, it was, it was nice. It had a, uh, not only help the young people, I think it helped the adults also because I, in order to maintain the teams, you know, we had to buy that job, the churches and everything. They had to buy a equipment for basketball and baseball and all the other things like that. And so, so practically every weekend we had different groups, different churches, and things, they had their, ah spaghetti dinner, we had a pancake breakfast, so we used to, we used to support almost every group that happened. So for the every day, every, every weekend we had ah going to different places. And so we not only got the young people playing the sports but for the parents. So, so it was very, very good.

AT: 01:29:02 And um, are you still involved with the Japanese American community today and the church?

BC: 01:29:10 Not, not, no, no, but, but even at that time or later, uh, after my wife and I got married and we had children and we had, we had to go to church to help at the church at uh almost every, every Sunday. And then, um, and uh, took so much time that we had more seats a the church. So I didn't to participate too much in the political activities, but mostly I, in the athletics and the social programs.

AT: 01:29:53 And what, how do you think, how does the, the Japanese American community in Chicago had, how would you compare it from those early days of resettling to today? What are some of the things you've seen change over the years?

BC: 01:30:16 The situation is so different now, you know, that at that time the church has probably the area where most of the social programs or recreational programs and cultural programs, uh, they were the center of, of the old activities. And so the people had to assemble at the different churches. Not just the Buddhist churches just but the other churches too. And then now, now

that the Japanese people like in Chicago, as you know, have probably half of the Japanese people living in the suburb like you people probably do. And just ah half in the city and their recreational activities and source of community are so different. Um, they have more electronic games. There are different kinds of, uh, and those days, in the early days people did not have the means to, for all of those electronic things that they had but. And so the social, the athletics and such, were the only way that they can, they can spend their time.

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- AT: 01:31:51 And what about your, your hopes for the, for the future of the community and maybe of your children and your grandchildren?
- BC: 01:32:01 Well, I think like our children, we have a big family. We have, we have 16, 16 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren and they're all assimilated and they live in different areas and, and um, is so different from the times that we did things together really as a family because they have so many but, but, but I think things, it comes to things that are a little different than much different from time when we were here yeah.
- AT: 01:32:46 And what about, um, any lessons that can be taken from the, like some of your war time experiences and resettling to Chicago. What, why is this, this history of um, I guess the Japanese American experience, why is that important and why should people
- BC: 01:33:11 I, I think that assimilation, like all our grandchildren are living separately, I mean, not separate areas and um, well, it's so different from the times that we had because of the economic situation, the, uh, the so many things that they enjoy.
- Mrs Chikaraishi: 01:33:47 They assimilate into their own friends. So it's changing for them I think.
- BC: 01:33:47 So, so, so we're very comforted that hopefully that I, our children and our grandchildren will retain some of the, the, uh, the, the uh, values of the Issei's and the Jap and the second generations and you know, as well that was one of the biggest things that the most important things

Mrs Chikaraishi: 01:34:17 There are a lot of good things about Japanese culture.

BC: 01:34:17 We always telling own children to behave themselves to, don't do anything that will disgrace the family and, and stay out of trouble. And, and, uh, we just hope that some of the values of that that was handed down will continue and that's one thing that had to hope that something would happen.

AT: 01:34:43 And before we wrap up, is there anything else that you would like to add or that we might've missed in the conversation?

BC: 01:34:54 Hmm. No, what do you think I can say is that my wife and I, we can say that we're very fortunate. We both in good health, we lived a long life. We regret the fact that

Mrs Chikaraishi: 01:35:14 We brag a little about our kids

BC: 01:35:14 We lost some of our friends and, and uh, we had good children that never had any trouble in our lifetime.

Mrs Chikaraishi: 01:35:32 The Japanese community

BC: 01:35:32 Yeah. Yes. Probably our grandfather and grandmother saying the same thing they're really happy to have a good family like yours, yours, and the whole family. Yeah.

AT: 01:35:46 Well, thank you so much for coming in and speaking about your experiences.

BC: 01:35:48 You're welcome. I hope that I can help in some way or anything like that, but yes.

AT: 01:35:57 Thank you.

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