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Title: Fumino Tsuchiya-Knox Interview
Narrator: Fumino Tsuchiya-Knox
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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- AT: 37:25 Um, so we can be wrapping up, but I have a few more questions. Um, so we've, we've talked a little bit about, um, kind of how the stories have been passed down or not. Um, and I'm wondering when you started to have children, what were your, um, what were your views or your thoughts about sharing um, your family's story with your kids?
- FK: 37:53 Yeah, well, I definitely did share the family story and, um, you know, that's why I think my daughter Lourdes is so interested in it. Um, but you know, at that time, and I really feel kind of badly about it, but I was still in the mode of not really accepting my Japanese heritage. So I, I wasn't speaking Japanese and I didn't make a big point about their learning of that Japanese culture. I know Lourdes wanted to learn Japanese. And I did take, uh, she and her sister to Japanese school for awhile on Saturdays at the Buddhist church in Oakland. Um, but it was, it was just too difficult because I wasn't speaking at home. Um, so, you know, they gave it up after awhile. Um, and it's so interesting. Uh, her daughter, Mari now, uh, started learning Japanese at this Montessori school that she went to after school while she was in grammar school cause the woman was from Japan who ran the school and taught Japanese there. And so in high school, Mari, um, took Japanese as a class and then the whole Japanese class went to Japan for a exchange program. And, um, Mari just loves it. And the first time she went to Japan and she came back, I met her at the airport and I remember she said. I'm gonna cry again too. She said, grandma, I'm so proud that I'm Japanese. And that was just the most, um, moving thing I had ever experienced because I could never say that. Yeah. It was really wonderful. Yeah. And uh, I mean, she's blonde haired and it's gray eyes, but she's speaking Japanese, she's majoring in Japanese and she's going to go to Japan to study and she wants to live there. She says, I don't know. She'll follow through on that. But, um, so anyway, she has gotten me re interested in Japanese and I started taking Japanese again, um, this year and

it's been really great because it's all coming back. Um, yeah. So it's, it's great.

- AT: 40:42 One thing I like to ask folks, um, is if you can, if you could pass down any kind of legacy year or message to your, your grandchildren, to your children and your grandchildren, what, what would you want to leave them with?
- FK: 41:06 Well, I certainly want them to remember the history of what happened and um, you know, really make sure it doesn't happen again. Yeah. And you know, and to be proud of their heritage. I think that's, that's really important and I really feel sad that, you know, it took me so much time to get to that point, that I could feel that way.
- AT: 41:45 Thank you so much for the time to speak with me.
- FK: 41:49 Oh well, thanks so much.
- AT: 41:51 Is there anything, anything else that you'd like to add or that I might've missed?
- FK: 41:56 No, I, well I was going to say one thing about my mother's family in uh, in the little Tokyo before the war, which was kind of interesting. Um, her father ran a gull parlor in their living room. That was how he mainly made his living. Um, but it was an interesting time in the 19 teens and twenties in little Tokyo. Um, there's a lot there to my, my mother and her sister were in a number of movies of Japanese movies made at that time down there and um, you know, that that whole community that existed at that time was really wonderful, really close. And something, another piece of history to really remember. Yeah, yeah.
- AT: 42:47 I actually did remember one thing that I wanted to be sure to ask about. Um, so as you know Lourdes, um, has done presentations about, um, some of your family's experiences and I know she's covered particularly about your father's museum in camp. Um, I'm just wondering if, how, how did your family compile all of this information? Cause it's, um
- FK: 43:22 You know, my mother just saved everything. Um, I have about, gosh, maybe 10 big cartons of plastic cartons at home filled with photographs. We have photographs from the 1890s in Japan to, you know, through the whole time period in Los Angeles of my mother growing up. And uh, so she saved all these documents from camp and from the museum. She had photo albums that

my dad was a photographer, you know, hobby, his hobby was photography. And so he had taken a lot of photographs of the museum too, in Chicago. So we had all that. So it was oh, um, you know, I guess that was something else I didn't mention was all of that for me growing up was also such a contrast to the camp experience that it was always almost surreal that my parents had these lives before the war that were so, um, I don't know exactly what to call it, kind of rooted in either the community in Los Angeles or like rooted in that profession that my dad had. Uh, and then it was all lost and it was almost like we were just starting from scratch after the war without any history, you know. But I would say these things in the albums and, um, putting that together with our present circumstances was really, really something that's difficult to do for me. Yeah.

AT: 45:22 Well, if you don't have anything else to add, um, thank you so much again for your time.

FK: 45:28 Oh, well thank you so much.

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