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Title: Yukiko Llewellyn Interview
Narrator: Yukiko Llewellyn
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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<Begin Segment 7>

AT:	<u>00:32:19</u>	Um, could you tell me a little bit about what it was like to, to start school in a, um, a totally new environment and, um, were you involved in any activities outside of school?
YL:	<u>00:32:39</u>	Running away, does that count? I didn't speak any English when I got to Cleveland. So when I was taken to Clara Morris Elementary School, they put me in the lowest grade, which was kindergarten. It was the only time I was a large kid in a group was smaller kids that didn't last very long. But you know, there was, and the little kids were fine, you know, when I first got there. But when I couldn't speak English, they, you know, I forget that I can't talk to her. Um, I had trouble with, with language, I had trouble with the lunchtime, you know, trouble understanding what people were trying to ask me to do. It's like I don't speak the language, I don't understand the language. Why are you speaking to me in that language, you know, little sign language would help, you know, a little demonstration, you know, sit here, you know, that would help. Instead of saying, sit in that chair, you know, it was, it was strange. But at once we got to the boarding school, leaps and bounds of understanding what people were saying. Typical things that teachers say. I didn't know that they had typical things that they say. And these were college students, but they were older. They were all probably older than 30, when they lived in the boarding house. So they were grown men and women, you know, had, and in fact, the woman who lived there, Elaine, uh, became a secretary after she graduated and stayed in the boarding house until she got married. And so we were all there at the wedding because we felt like we were her family, you know, although her family from Hawai'i did come. And, um, but they, they were so helpful. I don't know what I would have done. I probably would not have been able to go to college in that time where I was supposed to succeed at junior high, high school. And then pass the exams to go to college. Had I not had these hovering grown men and women, say that's wrong, do it over, oh for Pete's sake. It was, it

was great. But you know, only in hindsight at the time it's like, oh my god. But when I got the papers back, you know, and my grades kept getting better and better, especially the written stuff, you know, the science thing was really easier because a lot of it was in the lab. And if I understood what was going on, it was easier to do. I can see why people who don't like English like to do science because they, I can do that. I can't write it, but I can do it. Well they made me write it also, you know, this is the experiment, now write it. Well, there's the experiment. What do you need me to write it for? It works.

- AS: 00:36:18 Talk a little bit about the difference from your, from Clara Morris, uh, Elementary School to when you went to Patrick Henry
- YL: 00:36:27 Patrick Henry.
- KS: 00:36:29 Cause you described how different they were and what was that like for you?
- YL: 00:36:35 It was a revelation when after fourth grade or fifth grade they gave exams to all the students, academic exam. And I passed a test that I didn't know I was even taking, you know, I whatever they gave me, you know, I would fill out, but my mother was sent a letter, I don't know if you got a copy of the letter that said, you know, from, uh, the board of education that Yukiko passed this test. And that she qualifies for special, uh, accelerated program. But it's only held at Patrick Henry Junior high school, which was like an hour and a half streetcar ride from where I lived. Cause this is, don't forget the inner city. And this was almost in the suburbs. And I didn't know what that was. I didn't want to go there cause you know, my friends were going to the local school and my mother knew enough to, showed the letter to somebody in her church who understood English and said, no, no, she has to go to this school and explained, you know what it was. Patrick Henry was almost half Black and half Jewish from the inner city, which is kind of a mixture of the people who lived there. It, these are a mixture of people who lived near Patrick Henry. But I didn't know that. I didn't know the neighborhood's changed so much. So we had holidays on all the Jewish holidays. So I know all the Jewish holiday's and the Black kids loved it. You know, when I first got there, they tried to explain to me, you know, just as a new student, not of my color or anything. And they said, and these are the days that we get off because it's a Jewish holiday. I said, Oh are you Jewish? No, but half the school is, and so on Jewish holiday's, those kids don't come. School closes. Hey, it's all cool. I said, okay. It, it was wonderful, it was wonderful. I learned French with a Japanese

accent. Not very well. It's a different, you know, atmosphere. First of all, I had to get up early to get on the streetcar because it was an hour and a half to get there. But it taught me that there's a progression in life. All the things I thought I knew, you know, I didn't know, although my English was so much better that I got to speak it more comfortably. Um, people still said, you know, you speak with what kind of an accent? And I didn't know I still did, but of course if the ear is just used to English, you know, there, there are some words that I didn't do well. I, um, the sesquicentennial of Ohio was celebrated while I was there and we had this huge festival. It was the first one I was part of. It was just that every class had to do something, some dance, something. But it was so much fun. It was so much fun. It was my mom's first experience with the parent teacher meeting. She who does not speak English well. She who smiles all the time is the quiet, docile parent. You don't want me to tell her about her teacher? Well to show you the how, you should not underestimate your parent. She uh, went to the parent teacher's meeting and I told all my teachers that she was coming, but you know that she didn't understand English. And I said, I don't know why she's coming to tell you the truth. But she insisted because she got the letter cause you had to sign the letter and return it. So she was going. So she took the street car, in the evening, of the parent teacher meeting. Came back and I thought, oh this is going to be a breeze. You know how everything was wonderful. She laid into me for every everything I did wrong and every class. I found out later that she didn't say anything. She just went to every meeting, talk to the teacher, not at her head, smiled, didn't even write down anything, but she knew everything I had done wrong. Why was it that I had lipstick on when I got to school, but I didn't have lipstick on when I left home. Well, because I put it on the street car. I see. I don't do that anymore. Everything about Yuki talks too much. They said that, how could that be? She understood everything they said, everything they said. Hurt me a lot. I wish I could, I had the guts to go back to the teachers. How dare you. I didn't, I understood what had happened and I would never underestimate my mother again if she was going to talk to anybody, go let her talk, but I probably should go along and make sure.