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Title: Yukiko Llewellyn Interview  
Narrator: Yukiko Llewellyn  
Interviewer: Anna Takada  
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<Begin Segment 1>

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

Yuki Llewellyn: 00:00:03 Uh, Yukiko Helen Llewellyn.

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

YL: 00:00:10 April 22nd, 1939 in Los Angeles, California.

AT: 00:00:16 Um, and so I'll be asking you some questions that I already know the answer to. So it's not that I'm not listening, but just to have for the record. Uh, can you tell me a little bit about, Um, your parents and, and where they were from?

YL: 00:00:34 Um, my dad was from Hawai'i and my mom was born in, uh, Wyoming, but as a child was sent back to Japan to be raised by her grandparents. Well, she's known as a Kibei. And, uh, my mother had an arranged marriage, so she was married by Japanese law, you know, with her, um, father approving. And then she sailed to the United States to meet my father. Um, she was 18 when she moved to the United States. They were together when I was born and she was 20. I can always tell how old my mother is, you know, by, she was 20, so this is how old she is now. Um, I can't remember. I used to know how, I think my father was three or four years older than she was. Not, not very much older, you know. So there was a, they were a young couple, um they

AT: 00:01:54 What kind of, um, backgrounds where they're coming from? What did their parents do?

YL: 00:02:01 Well, momma was the high school graduate in Japan. She was not employed anywhere. She was probably the only young woman who wanted to go to the United States. And this was an opportunity. There was a family friend who said that I have a

son who's looking for a bride. Uh, unbeknownst to them really, uh, I learned this after the fact. My father was a Baptist. My mom was a Buddhist. She didn't speak any English and he didn't speak very fluent Japanese cause his parents were in Japan. But he was in Hawai'i and I don't, I don't know of any employment he had. Ah he was a fruit stand vendor. On his, um, on my birth certificate you have to, you know, put down what the father's job was and it said fruit vendor. And of course, I said, what's, what's a fruit vendor? Well, he had a cart, I guess, and, and sold fruit that, that he a got. But not, not a job as we know it, you know, not a category. Um, I understand from my mom that, uh, she worked as, uh, a maid, you know, did, did kind of, uh, I mean she didn't have secretarial skills. Uh, she did some, uh, sewing at um garment worker type thing, which she did later when, when I was growing up in Cleveland, she worked at a garment workers factory.

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**<Begin Segment 2>**

AT:	<u>00:03:48</u>	And what were the circumstances for them ending up in the L.A.? And do you know anything about their life there?
YL:	<u>00:03:55</u>	No, except, uh, where we lived was where I was born. I was born in the apartment that they lived in. Um, there are pictures of me with my mom as a baby on the rooftop of the apartment building. And you can see the L.A. Towers, you know, from downtown, from the pictures. They uh, split up sometime before the war because when the war came, she was with me by our selves and he was not in the picture at all. She told me as I was growing up that my father had died in the war. So there was no reason for me to look for him. Had I known that he was also in Manzanar, which I found out much later, I probably would have looked for him. But at three you're not, you know, you're not good to do that. So the, everything in the records that I could find in Manzanar was that, you know, there was Mikiko Hayakawa, Okinaga, they did attach that last name to hers on one record and then it was Mikiko Hayakawa. And then Yukiko, Helen Okinaga, which is on my birth certificate and then Yukiko Helen Hayakawa. So of course, I said, oh, does that mean I get twice as much money because I'm listed twice? No. So I'm listed both ways and they let her choose the government, let her choose what you and she said Hayakawa because I have more papers with Hayakawa on it from when I'm moved from Japan to the United States.

Karen Su: 00:05:54 When did you find out that your father was not dead? That he was still alive?

YL: 00:06:02 I was married and working at the University of Illinois and I'm trying to remember, there was a company and I don't know, the company's name was find people fast and they came to the radio station in Champagne. Well, the guy said, I can find anybody for you, you know, I have all this data. And my friend Nancy called me, I was at work, and said call the station and just give your father's name because we thought, I think somewhere along the way my mom said something about he, she didn't know if he was dead. And I said, well why did you tell me? It was easier. Then you know you're not going to fight your mother for having that lie to a child. So then I start, but I was grown woman, you know, with a child and called the radio station and Okinaga was such an unusual name. He said, oh, uh, I don't think there are many Okinaga's. And I said, what? And there was only like half a page and they were dates from, oh, I don't know, a few years and of current people and where they lived. And then the people who have just died and my father had just died, just died. Imagine that. But at least his last address was on there. And so I got the address. I mean they were nice enough to send me what they had. Uh, I wrote to my father at that address saying, if you received this, and I enclosed my, birth certificate that had his name on it. So people wouldn't say, why is this person writing to me about this guy who had died? His widow answered my letter and she said, by your, the copy of your birth certificate, that is my husband, who was your father. Said, I did not know he had a child before he married me in Manaznar. They had three children in Manzanar and if it weren't for her kindness to filling me in what she could, she sent me a picture, you know, of the children, picture of herself and my father at you know, his seventy years old or whatever he was, I would have nothing. I would have just that blank space. So it's real hard for me to tell the story of my parents because I don't know it. Uh, the kindness of this woman who I don't think I would have done it. I don't think I have that in my heart to do it. She must have been distraught to know that this child was looking for her father who was married to her. He never said he had a child. He said he had been married before. Didn't say any names.

AT: 00:09:41 Did you continue to be in touch with her, after that exchange?

YL: 00:09:45 I tried, but it's really hard. Um, I heard from her children and they were very nice, but there was nothing a hook to get, you know, there were no interests. There were, our kids were different ages, you know, I mean it was just really hard and I

didn't, I've, I've heard kids, you know, who had like second families, but they were right there. These people lived in New Jersey, you know, when I lived in Champagne, Illinois. Um, but they know my name, you know, of course I know their's, cause it's Okinaga. And when it was, it was known that the child in the picture, you know, named at birth was Okinaga, this woman said, my children said, isn't that fascinating? It's our name and our name is so unusual. Are we related? And at the time it was like, well, no, I'm sure we would have known. So it was a little strange, you know, and I didn't fault them for not contacting me. I tried later, I think it was too little, too late. Uh, the letters came back, you know, the address was not correct and I don't know where she is. I don't know where the children are. The, there was one boy and, uh, two daughters. And the boy was a police officer in Tennessee. And I thought he would be the easiest defined, but then it was also probably easiest for him to find me, you know. So I, I just let it, my son really want me to find him. And, and he, when he wrote to me, said, hey, great to have another boy in the family because he was a boy with two sisters and that sounded promising, but you know, I didn't hear anymore. And um, Chiyeko was, her name was, I mean, isn't that fascinating to have somebody with that much heart? This letter comes in the mail.

- AT: 00:12:14 Well, thank you very much for sharing.
- KS: 00:12:18 Do you want to hold the picture?
- YL: 00:12:21 Of?
- KS: 00:12:21 Of you. It's interesting that they saw the photo of you and noticed that you had the same name.
- YL: 00:12:30 This is the picture you know, and, and one of the newspaper stories, you know, they said, oh, we found the little girl and her name at birth was, you know, Okinaga. But she's been known as Hiyakawa until she got married and she's now a Llewellyn, who knew? I mean there are some college friends where they knew me as Hiyakawa who don't know about this cause I never talked about this when I was in college. Hm.
- AT: 00:13:05 When, when did you start talking about that photograph or that
- YL: 00:13:10 Probably not really until I came to the University of Illinois because when I was in grad school, I was in theater. And nothing about historical background of our lives ever. I mean I didn't know the background of my colleagues in the theater

department and they didn't know. And at the time, of course my name was still Hiyakawa cause I got married, uh, end of my grad school year.

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**<Begin Segment 3>**

AT: 00:13:44 Um, to go back just a little bit, um, so you, you were with your mom and camp, um, and would, would've been three years old. Um, can you tell me about what, um, given that you were so young, how were the, how was the information in the stories of yours and your mother's experiences kind of passed down to you? Or do you have memories from camp?

YL: 00:14:16 Oh, I would, four or five and six were your twinges of memories. But they're all childhood memories there, there of friends coming to play, me going out to play a, having a sitter come to take me to the mess hall for movies. And that was when I saw that they were Westerns and the bad guys were always people who look like us. The Indians were not, they did not do well in these Westerns. But, um, I did have a, a teenage girl take me to the movies. And one time, I guess I was crying and she was upset that she had to leave the movie, take me outside because I was crying. Not a good babysitting job, I guess. But I had, my mom had pictures of my classroom at Christmas and we had a Japanese Santa Claus. And there are snapshots of Obon Festivals. And I was in a Japanese kimono and I had a dance lessons, Odori lessons, because there were so many Japanese people who were stuck in the United States when the war came and they were thrown into the relocation camps with us. But true to form, you know, it's like, well, you could teach a class, you know, and so we had really good teachers of Odori and Shamisen. And things, I mean I don't know where they got the things to teach with, but, uh, every little girl probably went to the dance class. And, um, and the irony of it is, you know, they were trying to get rid of everything Japanese before we went to camp, but here was a gold mine of talent and they wanted to do something in camp, you know, so teach a course. And I didn't know that they were excellent teachers. I didn't know that they were professional dancers in Japan, but they couldn't get back to Japan. So they taught and I guess the parents were pleased as could be. They couldn't afford to do that in the real world. But, uh, so I have, I have pictures of that. And, um, all the holidays there, there were always, you know, snapshots of that, uh, the making of mochi. And, and it was a great time to be a kid.

AT: 00:17:18 Did your mom ever speak with you about it, about, you know, her experiences from her perspective?

YL: 00:17:26 Only when it involved me. Oh you were so cute when you had on the kimono and all you did this and oh you did that. But of course, as a kid I never asked her. So what did you do mom during the day? I don't know. She volunteered at the canteen are, I guess it's not the canteen, it's a store. It's the camp store where they sold thread and cloth and she did the, I don't, it was something like a quarter, an hour or something. But she earned money and she, that means she had expendable income and she could afford to hire a teenage girl to come take me to the movies that she didn't want to go to. The movies were free. But the teenage girl was not. And uh, I loved it. I loved being able to go and then meet all the kids. We didn't like the Westerns. But interestingly we found out later that they probably were filmed outside the camp gates cause the mountains looked familiar. Oh look at that. Doesn't that look like the one behind our camp?

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**<Begin Segment 4>**

AT: 00:18:45 But um, and then what, um, how long were you and your mom there at Manzanar?

YL: 00:18:51 The entire time til it closed. From opening to close. 42' to 45', I think is you, you, there were people there, you know, til 47', I think. And we were among the last to leave because we had to have sponsors. So you couldn't just leave because the camp was closing and if you had family that was reason enough to be able to get out of there. But we had no family. And so um a Buddhist church in Cleveland had a family said, we'll take whoever, especially with a family, you know, who don't have a place to go, we'll bring them to Cleveland, you know, find them a job, put the child, children into school and if it weren't for them, strangers, strangers, uh, we would, I don't know what they would do with people who are still there. When the camp had to close, it said, no place to go. I don't know what we'll do with them. Really, never occurred to me to ask because we had a place to go.

AT: 00:20:01 And can you tell me a little bit more about, um, uh, the, the process or what happens to you and your mom after camp? Um, so you all went to, you were sponsored by them?

YL: 00:20:14 Yeah, we went to Cleveland. They found us a place to live in a inner city apartment and it was really an inner city hotel. And my mom was like the maid, she, she did, uh, picked up the sheets, the linens from the tenants and then washed them. Um, I don't know. I can't remember if there were washing machines or what, you know, but I'm sure there was, cause it was a business. And I was the, you know, person who swept the steps, all the public spaces and um, took the trash out to the back. There were all these um, trash cans, but you had, when you went out there, you, you took a broom and hit the side of the trashcan so the rats would jump out so you could, didn't open the thing and have the rats come out at you. Interesting trick to that. And um, so that was the job they have for my mom. Um, I don't remember getting paid at that either or some people really owe me money. And um, so we did that and I don't know the timeline of that. All I know is that, um, my, my grandmother's brother or some distant relative of my family in Japan, this older man he was like my grandfather's age was in Manzanar and he also moved to, uh, Cleveland. There was some other people he knew, who were Buddhist, and he offered, uh, my mom, an opportunity to buy a house in a better neighborhood than the hotel, someplace where I would be able to go out and play with kids. But the specific reason was that there were so many Japanese American college students coming to Cleveland because there were a lot of institutions that people were looking for boarding houses for the students students want, that's what they wanted there. There weren't any dorms for them. These were like older students and my mom's thought anything to, you know, make life better for us. And it turned out to be quite a good thing. We had a really nice house. It was lot of rooms, you know, a lot of bathrooms because we knew that we wanted to attract tenants. They were like friends. They were like family that you all of a sudden got because they were students at Case Western Reserve. You know, probably other schools too. But do you know what they were? They were the best tutors for me to speak English. They were already college students and I didn't know how much that helped me except that every time I had a paper I had, you know, four or five people say, well that's not good English. He said, How would I know? But it was great. It was great.

AT: 00:24:06 And these students, were any of them Japanese American?

YL: 00:24:09 They all were.

AT: 00:24:10 They all were Japanese American?

YL: 00:24:11 But they were outside of camp. None of them were in camp. They lived in Cleveland or around and had a hard time being students or whatever they were doing at the time. But they were all students when I saw them. And so it was wonderful for them to be in a house with other students, different ages. I mean some of them, there were a lot of difference in ages, but they all also spoke Japanese. So of course that was great for my mother because she didn't care about the other stuff. But the fact that she had someone to talk to and someone for me to learn from. I get, I got to be really good in science because a lot of the guys were in science, I didn't know what science was, you know.

AT: 00:25:02 Would you happen to remember the address of that building?

YL: 00:25:06 No, but I have pictures and I think the house, cause I had a dog and we sat in front. I think that the address and there's got to be something, you know, in, in my box of photography. You know, yeah sure. It, it was on 30 something street and I could find it if I got to Cleveland. You know, cause the house was there a, I saw it when I moved my mom from her apartment cause there was just a few blocks from the apartment that she was in for years. Yeah. Cause we said, Oh let's look at our house. You know, isn't that nice that you call it your house? Yeah, it's still there. It's across the street from a school. I don't know if the school is there, but.

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**<Begin Segment 5>**

AT: 00:25:57 And can you, uh, describe for me what the, what that area where you first went to in Cleveland was like?

YL: 00:26:05 It was the inner city.

AT: 00:26:08 And so it sounds like there's a number of Japanese Americans already there.

YL: 00:26:14 No

AT: 00:26:14 No

YL: 00:26:15 No, we were the only Japanese American family. The students all came from different places to this house. And then when they got their degree, they left, you know, and quite a few of



them went back to California. They were from California. They went to the Midwest during the war. And um, and some of them settled and they got married. You know, started a family in Cleveland. And I have um, one of the former student's, wife's family. The wife became a really good friend of my mom's and their children and I correspond. But they, I don't think the kids realized that their dad was a student in a boarding house that my mom helped to prepare the food, you know? But just the friendship became because of the church. Cause they were all Buddhists.

KS: 00:27:25 Was that the church that sponsored you?

YL: 00:27:28 Yeah. Yeah.

KS: 00:27:29 That was a Japanese American Buddhist Community?

YL: 00:27:34 Yeah, kind of, but the Sashihara's were the only ones I ever met. They were the actual sponsors and they were kind of, you'd say, upper middle class. The girls were going to college. They were high schoolers at the time, but they were already planning to go to college. I didn't know what college was. I didn't know that everybody got to go to college, you know? But it was that kind of thing there. Their house was so luxurious in my eyes, and my mom confirmed later on, you know, I said, was it really as nice as I thought it was because I was a child? She said no, they had a very nice house in a very nice neighborhood, but they were like the only Japanese living in that area, so there wasn't a Japanese community. I met Japanese people at church and when I went to school, there were Japanese kids already in school and there wasn't a welcome feeling from them. They were not in camp. They were all still in Cleveland. Um, I had a hard time with the Japanese community. My mom didn't, she, she had a better experience with the church. Um, made friends readily. I did not. Most of my friends were kids from school who were not Japanese. They weren't Asian at all. Um, they just were, they lived in the neighborhood. You know, there were people who lived next door to me. Um, there were some racial things from kids, but not a big effort on anybody's part. I was so used to it then as long as they weren't going to hurt me or my family, you know, I didn't care.

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**<Begin Segment 6>**

AT: 00:29:46 Can you tell me a little bit more about the, um, the response of, um, the Japanese American, um, students, young people your age, who were already in Cleveland?

YL: 00:29:58 We had a picnic, every year, the Japanese Americans and everybody was invited who was Japanese American, and I got to meet kids who were like lived in the suburbs, didn't live in Cleveland proper. And they look like a different breed of kid. They were very open. They were friendly, they didn't care about camp. You know, that was a stupid question to ask. Only your parents asked, their parents, you know, were you in camp? The kids never asked me if I was in camp. Uh, by then my English was good enough to pass, uh, because I could only speak English to this group from Cleveland, except I knew that they were bilingual because their parents spoke Japanese primarily. When we went to Buddhist Temple, that's all I heard was Japanese. And of course all the movies they showed on the weekends were Japanese movies. And it was strange. I, I didn't see a community except at Obon and that summer picnic every year. And the picnic I think really was because of the teenagers. Kids went to different high schools, then they went to different colleges and that was the only time they could, you know, meet each other. And it was invaluable. There were some good friends I made, but, you know, like one or two families. It wasn't, I didn't go to any of their events. It was the community event that everybody went to. But I know there were other things that happened and there were, you know, things that happened to me that didn't happen to anybody else. But I, I dunno, maybe it was just the, I was, you know, not as understanding of what they were going through. I don't know. I don't know.

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**<Begin Segment 7>**

AT: 00:32:19 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: 00:32:39 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 reva, 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.

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**<Begin Segment 8>**

AT: 00:43:04 Oh, one thing, I wa, I wanted to be sure to ask a, just to get a better sense of, um, kind of what the Japanese American community looked like in Cleveland in those, um, those early days that you all were there. Um, do you remember any, uh, Japanese American owned businesses or, um, did, did people own any kind of restaurants or, or property that, you know of.

YL: 00:43:35 Not restaurants, but there was a grocery store, Toguchi's. Um, they tell me that it had been there for a long time and it was the only one we, we went to, but it had everything that we needed, you know, especially tofu cause you can't, couldn't get tofu in the grocery store. Um, it was a while before we got stuff from Japan, you know, foodstuffs from Japan. But, um, actually the, the Japanese community individually did celebration dinners at Chinese restaurants, not, I mean, they never looked for, you know, the Japanese restaurant, cause there weren't any, but they were fine with Chinese restaurants. I always remember going to a Chinese restaurants for weddings and, you know, things like that. And we always had favorite Chinese food. Um, we always made Japanese food at home for holidays and, uh, but I don't recall businesses. I mean, if, if there were like insurance adjusters, I don't know about them. I didn't look in the yellow pages to see if any, you know, uh, companies had Japanese names. Um, most of my friends', parents didn't own businesses. They worked for somebody. Um, I would not call Cleveland while I lived there, an Asian American inspired

community. We had a Chinatown, but the Japanese families usually told their teenagers to not mingle with the Chinese students, which of course made us mingle with Chinese students. We had a good time with them. They were our age. You know, we had interests similar to our, they looked like us. Um, we just didn't tell her parents that we went to Chinatown because they had a gym, you know, so we could play in the gym and they were receptive to having us there. There were a lot of romances that sprung up with them. We just didn't tell our parents because there was a taboo on them racially by them. You know, it's just so silly, so silly. But no, I, I, I've heard a couple things during our visit from people who just came out and talked to us about one person said he was in Cleveland and about the Japanese community and I, I felt like saying what Japanese community? I don't know. Is that something that happened recently? Cause you know, once I left in 1958, I didn't go back, to Cleveland. That's a long time from 58'. So if they were active any time from then on, I'm not aware of it, but there was nothing like that when I was there. And you know, to tell you the truth, I was looking, I was looking for it and it wasn't there.

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**<Begin Segment 9>**

AT:	<u>00:47:48</u>	As? Go ahead.
KS:	<u>00:47:48</u>	I was gonna ask how long did your mother run the boarding house? That was her business?
YL:	<u>00:47:56</u>	Yeah, yeah.
KS:	<u>00:47:59</u>	Yeah, okay.
YL:	<u>00:47:59</u>	Uh, it, it was, uh, my uncle, you know, the older gentleman in the family who financed it. He made it possible, uh, when you wanted to return to Japan himself, he still had family in Japan. You know, no children or anything but, uh, cousins thing and they knew that camps were over. So, you know, they wanted to know where he was. And then he said he was doing this a boarding house. They thought that was a good venture. So, you know, they didn't complain. But, um, he made it possible for my mom to get enough money for the apartment knowing that she still worked as a garment worker. You know, part time. She worked there probably as long as she could, but we lived cheap and it was still in the inner city. It's still, you know, the odd thing

was it was a apartment building mostly with Japanese people in it. Uh, and I don't know what, maybe the landlord was Japanese, I don't know. But, um, the neighborhood was white, white, blue collar. My mom got a beagle dog when we were living there, Hiro, everyone thought it was H e r o, it was H i r o for Hiroshi. You know, so when I tell my kid my grandchildren's, you know, we had a dog Hiro. Oh, Hero! Oh no, no, Hiro, little different. But Hiro had to be walked a couple times a day. Mom lived on the third floor, walked down every morning, you know, walked the dog around the block. Good thing beagles are small. And every night. And it got so that the teenagers, the boys in the neighborhood, noticed this woman, Japanese woman from that a corner apartment had a dog. Then they, so they started following her and I got alarmed when I when I, I can't remember the timing of it, but I know I was away at school someplace, when she was living alone. That was why she got the dog cause she was living alone. And when I got home I was so alarmed that these boys were around and she said, oh no, no, no. They make sure I safe. I said yeah, right. I walked the dog one time, cause I didn't believe her, cause ours is going to really get to those guys. And they said, why are you walking Hiro? I said I'm her daughter. Oh she's okay. Isn't she? She's not sick or anything? No. Do you know her? Oh Mrs. Hiyakawa? Oh yeah, we've, we walk with her every morning. Oh my god. How mistaken was I? And she said, I tell you so, you know, what's the matter with you? They took care of Hiro and my mother and called her Mrs. Hiyakawa. So I'm sure at some point she said, my name is Mrs. Hiyakawa, cause that's how they addressed her. Wonderful.

AT: 00:52:05 Are there any ways, um, you know, as an adult that you see yourself as being shaped by growing up in the Midwest or Cleveland? Are there any particular things about you that you, feel is relevant?

YL: 00:52:24 The Cleveland Indians won the world series. My mother let me cut school and go to the ball games. She knew, everything about the Cleveland Indians, the batting averages, the pitching, you know, stats. I was like, why do you know that? Well, she listened, you know, we didn't have a T.V. She listened to the ball games and she heard people talking about the Cleveland Indians and she just got herself fixated with the team, read everything about them, you know. And when she went to church, she found, you know, like people who also follow the Indians. So people say you're from claims go Cleveland Indians. Now the Cleveland Browns are another story.

<Begin Segment 10>

- AT: 00:53:30 But um, well, and we have a few more minutes, so I have just a couple more questions, but I want to be sure to ask you. Um, I do want to bring up the, the photograph of course. Um, I'm just, uh, one thing that I would like to know in regards to, you know, having your photograph taken, um, at a young age and like you say you did nothing, you know, to warrant. You were just a, a child that the moment captured. Um, in what ways, if any, uh, has that photograph, um, impacted your, your own life or your experiences?
- YL: 00:54:19 Huge.
- AT: 00:54:20 Can you talk to me a little about that?
- YL: 00:54:24 Well, for a long time, of course nobody knew about it, you know, and so I didn't know that other people knew. And then I have, I have friends from college, from grad school, from the U of I who now, you know, and that'll spend the 50 years or so, uh, will drop me a card saying your picture was in such and such, you know, as something I went to see in Vermont. And so that's kind of cool to find out that people are using that photograph for something that would be social issues type thing. Um, I like it because it, it could be anybody, you know, it doesn't say, here's a picture of Yuki Llewellyn. I would hate that if every time the pictures was shown, they identified it, that would not work for me. But to see it and see the people's reaction to it, that there was a child who was incarcerated and that puts a different picture on that whole thing. I like that. I like, later on when when they identified me and I had some calls, it, it was not intrusive. You know, they just want to know who I was. But since you know, I wasn't a big celebrity, they just said, okay, thanks. And went on their way, which is great, which is great. But I enjoy this opportunity when there's a concentrated effort and other people who have similar experiences sharing this with me, their pictures are also shown here at the gallery. And I remember some of those pictures. So I feel like I'm with my people. We are all the same on this. We had the experiences, different kinds of experiences, but in the same thing. That's valuable to me and I will do anything to help people understand. Oh, but I think everyone understands, you know, it, my celebrity is just the picture, you know. Um, I haven't a written anything except these speeches that I do for you guys. Um, I meet wonderful people like Karen who are doing other things too. So I like that. And then this film that



you're showing here, it doesn't stop if there's going to be a repeat of getting a bunch of people into prison because somebody doesn't like them, we can't let that happen. That is really scary stuff. Scary stuff.

AT: 00:57:59 And um, can you elaborate a little bit? Um, um, you mentioned the impact that the film had on you. So could you tell me more about what exactly that was that touched you?

YL: 00:58:12 I hadn't realized how far it's come to identifying a body of people who are now in United States who are trying to live their lives the best they can to be targeted similarly to the way the Japanese were. And luckily we have some Japanese people who say, wait a minute, we recognize that we know what it is. Nobody stopped it for us. We're going to try to help, stop it for you. And I'd like to join that bandwagon

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**<Begin Segment 11>**

AT: 00:59:14 Given the current, um political climate, um, are there any other ways that you see this particular history as, um, do you see any echoes of this history happening with other, um, communities or people today?

YL: 00:59:44 I would like to not see it. Um, I would like people to come here and see what you've done here because some of the exclamations were strange to my ears when they said I didn't know that's what they did. It's like, oh my god is, are there people still saying that? You're going to be part of something just like it if you didn't know that it happened before. So I don't know how to make that happen. I mean, I was glad to see the crowds that were here yesterday, but I mean, the, those comments were, were really jarring. They said, did that really happen? Ah, hello photographs, you know, documentation. That's the scary part. That's the scary part. And as a people, the, the Japanese people, Japanese American people did not want to talk about camp when they left camp. My mother forbid it in the house. That was her and me. Why can't we talk about it? I don't know anything about what my mom did in camp, she died in 2009. I asked her more questions even to her dying day. Can we just talk about it? No. And you know, I admire her more and more as I learn, you know, the hardships that she went through. I couldn't have been an easy child. I know you can't believe that I could have been a hard child, but I, I mean, think of, think of the, the changes she saw me with, you know. Going into

theater. Hello. I mean, you could teach, could go into a science, but I went to theater. She supported it, you know, she was amazing. Uh, compared to the lot of parents I see, you know, with, with students, they say, mom won't let me do history. She wants me to go into engineering. I said, well, have you talked to her about you like history? You don't like engineering? Uh, that was the first thing I said. Said, oh, you'll get used to it. You know, so I, I get a lot of that. And a lot of them are Asian, you know, these are Asian American kids whose parents still want them to be doctors, lawyers, you know, teachers are okay, but it has to be professors. You can't want to teach where they're needed, in elementary school and the men especially where are the men teaching the children? And if you find a guy who be interested in that, you know, mom is pushing them for the Higher Ed, higher pay. I don't know how to fight that. I don't know.

- AT: 01:03:24 Do you want to ask something?
- KS: 01:03:24 You said, your, your mom kept a news clipping of the photo of you.
- YL: 01:03:31 Not the famous one.
- KS: 01:03:33 Not the famous one. But I know another one. But it meant something to her. Do you, did she say why it was special?
- YL: 01:03:42 It was me.
- KS: 01:03:43 It was you.
- YL: 01:03:43 She wanted to document that somebody took a picture of her kid at a time when she didn't think anybody was going to care and she just kept. I was flabbergasted because it wasn't the famous one.
- KS: 01:04:01 She knew you started talking about your experiences. Was she okay with you talking to a lot of people?
- YL: 01:04:12 She never heard me.
- KS: 01:04:15 Oh.
- YL: 01:04:15 And I don't, I don't think she ever really knew. She knew I had a lot of books of the, you know, times and, but you know, once you go away to college and don't go back into the home where you shared, she doesn't know anything about what I studied.

And I mean she didn't even know about theater until I said, you know, we're going to New Orleans because I got a scholarship. Oh good. In what? Theater. What, theater? Although she likes movies, you know, but I didn't make movies so. So much there.

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**<Begin Segment 12>**

AT: 01:05:09 One, one thing I like to, to ask folks, um, especially in wrapping up, Uh, so you, you have children.

YL: 01:05:20 One.

AT: 01:05:21 You have a child. Um, if you could pass on any kind of legacy or, or message that your, your child's and maybe grandchildren or future generations, um, something that they would just understand and have learned from you, what would you want that to be?

YL: 01:05:47 Well, my son has three children. My son is half Japanese. His children are one quarter Japanese. They all get comments. Well, the little one is only five, but they get comments about who, what kind of person are they? They look different. I don't think you're white. And there wasn't, no, we're not white, but we're American. That still happens, you know, in this day and age, my granddaughter's 13, she, she only faults me for being so short because she wants to be taller and blames me for the fact that she's not going to be six feet tall, which is what she thinks she has to be to be a good volleyball player. Said sorry, can't do anything about that. And um, it's interesting that that's what, that's what concerns is my height. You know, she likes being part Japanese. She likes it when she's in the sun a lot in the summer and she turns bronze when her friends turn red and she said, must be by Japanese blood. You know, I thought, well that was never said, you know, 30 years ago. But, um, I would like them and I think they're learning because their father is very good about it. To be kind to everyone and not be phased by appearances, good or bad, good or bad. And that if somebody reacts to them superficially, find out why, you know, don't react to the fact that they've insulted you. You know? Why would you say that? And it's hard to do that in the face of somebody yelling at you or calling you names. Just say, well, why? Why would you say that? What have I done to you? I don't know if they'll do that. I know my granddaughter 13, my grandson 9, and my other grandson 5. But if we keep saying the same thing for the same interactions, maybe they'll learn that.

But if they're just kind to everyone, I think that'll help in the long run.

- AT: 01:08:40 Well, thank you so much.
- YL: 01:08:41 Oh, you're absolutely welcome.
- AT: 01:08:43 For taking the time.
- YL: 01:08:43 You're absolutely welcome.
- AT: 01:08:45 Um, is, before we wrap up, is there anything else that you'd like to add or that we might have missed or maybe Karen, that there's something else that you wanted to?
- YL: 01:08:54 Well, you're only going til November 19. The marvelous exhibit. Marvelous. I learned so much and I wanted to come. How do you attract people who don't want to come, to come? Thank you for everything you do.

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