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Title: Joe Takehara Interview  
Narrator: Joe Takehara  
Interviewer: Anna Takada  
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<Begin Segment 12>

AT: 00:48:45 Do you know what year that was when you left camp, for Chicago?

JT: 00:48:58 August 30th or something, '45. August 8th, I think it was.

AT: 00:49:13 And um

JT: 00:49:13 August 30th, 30th. I think next few days of school started, right? In September. That's another funny story.

AT: 00:49:23 So, okay.

JT: 00:49:25 That's what my life changed a lot.

AT: 00:49:28 All right. Um, so you, you left camp. How did you all get to Chicago?

JT: 00:49:36 We came by bus that I remember and I'm 14 and I'm the, what do you call them? You might say the man of the family. Right. You have there. So when we're packing in big crates, I was the one that was doing the packing and pounding the crate and put the lid on, stuff like that. I remember that. Yeah.

AT: 00:50:00 And can you tell me about, um, what it was like a arriving to Chicago?

JT: 00:50:08 I forgot what day it was. I think it was Friday was a few days before school started. The first thing I do is I go outside. She had, he was an Italian kid who was a little bigger than me, I was older, but I was small. He started picking on me. So we start fighting. So I grew up not taking anything from anybody. Because I was always with my older brothers and stuff. I was, I was tough. I had a chip on my shoulder I guess. So we start fighting and I got the best of him. So the problem with that is

then the next guy comes, challenging me. So that's the first day, I go walk outside. So I tell my mom I don't want to go to school. I knew what was going to happen. So my sister talks to the lady who had on the first floor, had a son that was older than me and he, I don't know what he was, but I, I think he's doing some shady things because he was dressed nice all the time, nice pants, slick hair, good looking kid. So the mother told him to take me to school. So of course we get two blocks away and he takes off. He's not taking me school. So on the way to school the a big Irish kid who I became friends with, he starts picking on me too. So I pick up a rock and I said, "I'll kill you." So that ended it, but when I get into school, my gym class, who's there but him again. So he starts fighting with me too, I guess. So the coach says put the gloves on, boxing gloves, and I'm getting better. I said I know how to box a little bit. And so if you know a little bit, there's, I mean, there's no contest, right, because most kids don't know how to box. And so, so there happen to be a Mexican kid, he was older, he was 16 and I'm 14. And the coach was Mr. Ellis. He has mentoring this kid or trying to straighten him out. He was a dropout school drop out, but he came to see the coach and he saw me. So he'd come up to me afterwards. He asked me, where you, where you learn how to box. I didn't know how to box, so I told him in camp. So there's a kid in camp. My good friend who has to go fishing with and everything, his older brother was a boxer from LA he did boxing I guess when he's in LA. And so he kind of showed me how box a little bit, you know how it is when you're in camp. Put them on. So that's how I learned how to box a little bit. So I told him, this guy to challenge me, this guy in camp. So this, this guy, his name is Peter Dias, he says, I know him. So there he used to go to CYO. It used to be the Catholic Youth Organization. It was a big thing for boxing day. It was, I don't know, some Wabash or something like that. So he knew this other kid. They were both at the CYO boxing and and so. So anyway.

AT: 00:53:40 Did you have any idea that this kid who taught you some boxing was in Chicago?

JT: 00:53:46 No, I didn't know. I kind of knew, I think he came out to Chicago, same time, my, one of my cousins came together and they were going to school together. Anyway, so that's, that's, that's how I learned. So this, this Mexican kid took on, took me under his wing. He kind of protected me. We used to, we used to go play and he, I, he used to drag me along. That's how I learned, that's how I met the other Mexicans.

AT: 00:54:20 Was he in school?

JT:

00:54:21

No, he was a dropout. I don't know what he was, he's probably doing shady things anyway.

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