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Title: Joe Takehara Interview
Narrator: Joe Takehara
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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- AT: 01:18:50 We have some time for a few more questions.
- JT: 01:18:50 Okay.
- AT: 01:18:58 Oh, I guess one thing I'd like to know is, uh, over time and throughout your life, in what ways have you felt connected to your Japanese heritage?
- JT: 01:19:23 The only connection, which is unusual, I started to have some connection with the Japanese a few when I went to, when I graduated high school, I went to Navy pier. It was a branch of the University of Illinois. That's when I met a few Japanese. One guy was, Yukio Matsumoto He was a wrestler on the wrestling team. Then later on he became, he started doing gymnastics too. I met him. I met another guy, [inaudible] he became, I don't know, a microbiologist or something. He was in my chemistry class. He knew my cousin. He was in the Unknown's too. So I met him. At that time, I wanted to meet the other Japanese people and most of them didn't want anything to do with me. I know now later on they become friends or this at that time, no one, they all kind of knew me. Uh, I, I think a lot of the girls that they kinda just didn't like me, because, my wife was one of them, she went to Navy Pier. She used to say, you know, you thought you were too good for us or something. It was the opposite. I was dying to meet some Nisei's. And so what happened was, my good friend was a Chinese girl and another girl was a Greek girl because they were both athletic. And so I didn't see much, Japanese, but every once in awhile they used to hold, what they called [inaudible] So they used to open up the gym and guys would play badminton, volleyball or basketball and things like that. And there were the gymnastics hardly because the whole gym was taken up with other sports. And so that's how I met these two girls. So, so became good friends of mine. So I think that created another problem. They see me hanging around with them. You know they have this

thing Japanese, he thinks he's too good for us and I'm dying to to met them, I met my wife later and that's what she told me too. And I said, no, it was you guys. But yeah, that's what happened.

AT: 01:22:13 Do you think it had anything to do with where you were living? Since there weren't many other Japanese Americans on the North Side?

JT: 01:22:13 There was not many, there's only one other kid named Terry Murakami, he lived there his Japanese family lived above us. He went to McKinley, but he was a quiet guy who he, he became a barber. I used to go to his barber he was on. He had barbershop by Howard, Howard Street. He was quiet. His brother was a real sports nut, but he had a bad way. I don't know what you, maybe it's not a good term to use, I guess we used to call it club foot. So he couldn't, he had to raise heel on one foot. But he was a sport nut. So he's going to the baseball games all this time. Every time he couldn't get a date or somebody else he'd take me. So that's how I became a Sox Fan. We used to go Sox games, we saw some Cubs games. Basketball games. But that was how I started to see a baseball was from him, in fact I heard my first baseball. The first week we came to Chicago in 45' that was when the Cubs were trying to make the World Series. That's, that's when they were, they lost. But that's when I remember they let us all go up to the auditorium and they put it on the radio and said listen. I didn't know what was coming off. That was my first contact with the baseball, with the good teams.

AT: 01:23:57 Well, and in '52 you moved not to far from Wrigley Field, what where were you living with them?

JT: 01:24:14 We lived in Newport. It was a six flat. It was three apartments on one side and three on the other side, a middle stairway. And so we lived on the first floor, my mom, my family. My sister lived on the second floor. And on the other side, my other sister lived on the second floor. The first floor there was a group of single Japanese guys, you know, mainly from Hawai'i. On the third floor on that side, was another friend of my brother-in-law. My brother-in-law was an orphan. He lived with, the Salvation Army in San Francisco. And so a lot was his friend. So they lived on the third floor, that's what happened. But then my sister, they moved first to California. So I said, well, that far away from Wrigley Field, and I was a Sox Fan. I mean, I went to some Cubs Game because some of my friends after school, we would sneaked into the Cubs. We would get tickets with people still had their stubs we'd get in there. A lot of times they would

let you in. Baseball wasn't that popular. You would, game, there were a lot of empty seats. One of my friends was a good Cub fan we used to sit in the bleachers all the time, but I didn't go with them. I wasn't a Cub fan, I went a few times. Yeah.

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