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Title: Ryoko Kobayashi Interview
Narrator: Ryoko Kobayashi
Interviewer: Anna Takada
Location:
Date: November 16, 2017
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-16-4

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- AT: 00:15:50 I want to backtrack just a little bit because you see you were born in Seattle, but you weren't there for your entire childhood. At some point, you move.
- RK: 00:16:02 Yeah. 1937, we moved to Santa Monica, California. And then 1939, we moved to Los Angeles Uptown and my folks are operated a fruit and vegetable market.
- AT: 00:16:17 In, Uptown LA
- RK: 00:16:21 Santa Monica and Uptown. Yes.
- AT: 00:16:23 And, as far as, were there any immediate impacts of, of Pearl Harbor, did anything change in your life as a 15 year old?
- RK: 00:16:37 Yeah, umm, I became very depressed, you know, because um, coming from Seattle and Santa Monica and so forth, and I finally got to know a lot of school kids, became friends and start to enjoy school and all of a sudden it just cut me off and I was just sad. Then when you went into camp, I just sat on the front steps in the camp. I just didn't want to, it's just, I was just depressed. And, um, my mother said, why don't you go out and meet people? I say, no, I don't want to meet anybody. I said that I lost, I lost something I cherished, you know, as. Then, I said that, uh, so I said, well I might as well work or something. So that's I became a waitress there. And then wake up four o'clock in the morning and then, um, was \$4 a month, I think it was \$4. Then, work, uh, carrying bowls. Why is like this. And serving coffee and then chatting with the kitchen helper. And then after six months they said that the barracks were built. So you'll have to go to Jerome mark. So we got an order, you know, so when on the train, took a bus three days just to get to Arkansas and they pulled the shade down so we could not see out. But you know, as kids, we, I saw, you know, Black people picking cotton, I said,

oh my goodness, where are we going? You know, and then, um, oh, it was lucky my mother got me to pant suit and the boots and the, it was muddy. When we got off to get, you know, then she roam. Yeah, it was just a terrible experience. But, uh, after awhile I got to know a few, you know, girlfriends because we'd go to school and I didn't care for school and it was just a terrible experience for me. But later on have to move to Roller. Uh, it became easier for me and the people were at Roller. I got different group of friends and we all went to school together and this and that. And uh, so, 1945, oh, we, I graduated high school in Roller and um, let's see, we went, uh, we went to Little Rock, we got permission to go Little Rock. So we ran on the army truck to go to Little Rock and we bought our dresses and shoes for the graduation and we came back on the bus on the truck again. And uh, so we better hurry, you got, you girls better hurry, because they are gonna close the gate on us. So we have to hurry and look for dresses and shoes, and. But uh, and, let's see, after graduation, do you know, we've got a notice then, there was a big meeting that the war has ended. So we went there for a prayer meeting and then, and also another meeting was the, when Hiroshima was bombed, we went to that one too. We pray for the people and uh, in Hiroshima. But, um, then my father said, well I could go out now, so I'm going to go out to Chicago. There was a people that will support him for one give him apartment and so forth, rooming placed anyway. And uh, he called us, um, and he said that, uh, I guess he wrote to my mother and he said, we are coming out now because, uh, I got a place, I got an apartment and I have a job. So the family could come out now. So, um, the address was 4115 South Drexel. And uh, it was a second floor. I remember. And I just sat by the window and just look out and I said, oh gosh, what's going to happen to me now? Because I'm, I can look out, and then, I'm so used to seeing Japanese faces. Now it's different. And then, uh, my mother said, take a month off, get yourself adjusted and then, start looking for a job. So I just sat at the window and, uh, I said, gee, what's going to happen? And um, uh, fun, yeah, find a job and lots of jobs. So I just, I came out with no money in my pocket, so at least. Its about \$26 was my first pay check. And then I worked on the line, you say, hey, you! Meaning, you know, as, you better do better than this. I said, oh gosh. And then the day after day, you know, they say, hey you! You know, these were tough women. I finally got sick, my nerves all shot. For 10 days I was in bed, my mother had to feed me. I said, Oh God, you know, it was just the one thing after another. And then, so I just went to the, mmm hmm. Manager and I said, I'm sorry about quitting. I spent 10 days at home. I can't take this job anymore, so I said, just send me my check. And I walked out.

AT: 00:22:43 And where, what was the company or where was the,

RK: 00:22:46 It was on 26th street. Uh, it was a, um, they made a metal picture frame. And what I have to do was a spot weld on one corner, so it becomes a frame. But if you don't do it right, they send it off. Then it became a, I just think, well, I couldn't take it anymore. And I got awfully sick and I was in the washroom and a girl came and said, we got to make a quarter. What are you doing down here? I said, I'm too sick. I can't move. And they called the superintendent. So he came, he said, yeah, you look sick. So he sent me home. And but the,

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