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Title: Chiyoko Chiyo Omachi Interview
Narrator: Chiyoko Chiyo Omachi
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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<Begin Segment 7>

AT: 00:33:04 Can you tell me about your memories of the war starting and--

CO: 00:33:16 Oh, yeah. Yeah. It was a Sunday and my grandmother had come to the Baptist church. She was going home on the ferry. And then, I think, one of the-- my uncle or my aunt called to say, "Grandma wasn't on the ferry." They must have-- they used to meet her on the other side, I think cause it was a little, oh, maybe, I don't know in mileage, how far they were from the ferry boat, you know, down at the, down at the seaport. And they used to live way beyond there. And I suppose my grandmother wasn't on the ferry. And, I think, on that day my uncle called and said, my grandmother was on the ferry. And I think the FBI rounded up all the Asians on the, 'er Japanese, on the ferry. And-- Now, this is very hazy. I can't recall exactly. Because we were having all sorts of excitement on our side of the island. We had just come back from the church, from church, and they said the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. And we were prob-- I was listening to the radio and, and then I don't remember the rest of the day, but I know my grandmother finally did get home. Her children must have picked her up at the ferry, took her home. And we were on this side, Terminal Island. And then soon after that they were patrolling the, the, the roads-- jeeps and soldiers. And then it wasn't until several months later that they said, oh, they wanted all the Japs off the island in 48 hours. And so the Baptist church in Los Angeles, which was the, you know, the, the mother or Father Church, the one that was in-- on the island-- came in buses. And it seems to me, we packed up our things [mumbles] my father was busy running around helping our friends because the fathers had been taken away by the, the government. Well, my father, now being a fisherman, was not scooped up. And so he went around and helped. And then my uncle who was, you know, this young man, came across and helped us pack and get ready to move. And, and then we sold everything. You know, my mother had huge, beautiful dishes

and we had a new console, RCA victor radio-phono-combination thing. And I think he sold it or gave it to some neighbor down the street. We just got rid of everything. And we had had a new refrigerator, an ice box. It was [gestures] it was still a ice box, I think. But got rid of everything. And I over our-- we had a fireplace and on the mantle I used to have a, a little yacht about, I don't know how big it would be, you know, but from an adult point of view maybe about [gestures] that long. And, and the cabin was scooped up. It was beautiful, little old ship with a mast. And, the cabin was where I sat and it had wheels, and must have given that away to some neighbor or something. But it was a wonderful teak and Mahogany ship that was my kiddy car. But all those things-- all of our books-- we had two encyclopedias and we left everything and got on these buses that the Baptist church sent down for its members there weren't that many members. And, the-- there was a Japanese minister who was a wonderful man of the church: Yamamoto Sensei, and my father was the only other man because all the rest of them were fishermen and they had been hauled away. So there were about two or three men. I think there was one other man, maybe an old man. And we got on the bus and it took us away to Los Angeles and the Baptist Church there had a summer, summer camp or something, with a kitchen, you know, and-- I, I think like little cottages and, uh, my grandmother was with us and my aunt and, and we all stayed in this little place and we felt very comfortable cause we had our-- all of our relatives with us. But, I remember Kanshi Amashte's father was taken away by the government-- he was a fishermen and his mother and my mother were good friends and so it was so sad. All the men were gone. So my father was one of the few men left.

- AT: 00:41:12 And the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked, as a 15 year old, do you remember your reactions or, or what you were feeling at that time? Did you know [overlapping dialogue]
- CO: 00:41:27 No, I think we, we knew that it meant that Japan had, you know, attacked America, and what that must mean for us.
- AT: 00:41:47 Did you have--
- CO: 00:41:49 No.
- AT: 00:41:49 Do you remember--
- CO: 00:41:49 Not much. No, not much understanding.

AT: 00:41:54 Did you have convers-- [overlapping]

CO: 00:41:57 A lot of fear.

AT: 00:41:59 Did you have conversations with your parents about any of that or--

CO: 00:42:05 No, not much. My Auntie Kiki was my, my friend and, you know. And of course we spoke English and our parents didn't. There was that difference. Whereas my aunts and uncles-- [overlapping]

I2: 00:42:24 Auntie Kiki was only five, four-five years older. So she's kind of [overlapping] like a sister--

CO: 00:42:30 Yeah, my aunt was only five years older than I, we were good pals.

I3: 00:42:34 And you didn't know enough Japanese to communicate that well with your parents?

CO: 00:42:40 Who me?

I3: 00:42:40 Yeah.

AT: 00:42:41 No.

I3: 00:42:42 And they didn't know that much English?

CO: 00:42:45 Well, my aunt, yeah. My aunt and my uncles, would spoke much--

I3: 00:42:49 They translated? [overlapping]

CO: 00:42:50 Much better Japanese. No they-- No, there was no-- no, I don't think [overlapping from 2nd Interviewer] So we had a vague understanding of what was going on, you know. But, I don't think the parents knew what was going on either.

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