

Densho Digital Repository
Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and
Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS)
Oral History Project Collection
Title: Chiyoko Chiyo Omachi Interview
Narrator: Chiyoko Chiyo Omachi
Interviewer: Anna Takada
Location: Chicago, Illinois
Date: March 30, 2018
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-17-8

<Begin Segment 8>

- AT: 00:43:11 And what were some, do you remember? Because I mean, Terminal Island was, of course, you know, very impacted immediately--
- CO: 00:43:21 Yeah
- AT: 00:43:21 After Pearl Harbor. Can you tell us just sort of what was happening? Like what the feelings were at the time or, you know, because I imagine people were probably--
- CO: 00:43:35 Well, you know, when the, and then the men were taken, and--
- AT: 00:43:41 How soon, were people starting to-- [overlapping]
- CO: 00:43:46 Well, my father was not because he wasn't a fisherman and I think they were after fishermen because they had the idea that the fishermen were-- could contact the Japanese. Well, they weren't doing any such thing because-- for one thing, the Japanese, unless they had planted people-- which I doubt-- the Japanese fisherman were a different, a different class of people than the ruling-- the, the Japanese who were rulers in Japan and it would have been orchestrating whatever, you know, whoever was orchestrating the, the war. Well the class differences, I think, the Japanese were very-- What is that? You wouldn't even call it sensitive, you would say, class differences would, would mean that, you know, the ruling bodies in Japan would not be in--
- I3: 00:45:18 Communication.
- CO: 00:45:23 Yeah, communication with the likes of fishermen, you know, whereas my father was well educated. He'd been to England [laughs] It was [overlapping dialogue] different, you know, different class of people.

AT: 00:45:44 Was your family fearful that your father might get picked up by the FBI as well?

CO: 00:45:50 Yeah. Yeah. He was all packed, you know, and his suitcase all ready, but they never took him. And he could never understand why [laughs].

I3: 00:46:03 Wait, so they took the men somewhere else?

CO: 00:46:04 Yeah, and I think they--

I3: 00:46:07 Before you went to camps?

CO: 00:46:08 I think so. Oh, yeah. A little time before we went to camp and we left that island, it was like five months.

I2: 00:46:16 So did the fishermen ever come back?

CO: 00:46:17 We went to Terminal Island. We went to Los Angeles because the Baptist Church helped us. Now how the other folks on my island, what they did, I don't know.

I2: 00:46:31 So you don't know what the fishermen's families ended up doing?

CO: 00:46:34 No

I2: 00:46:34 Did they have to go with the mom and the kids?

CO: 00:46:38 Yeah except the Baptists.

I2: 00:46:38 And the fathers weren't around.

CO: 00:46:39 You know that were the Baptist and they went with us.

I2: 00:46:42 Yeah, but you had no idea what happened to everybody else?

CO: 00:46:45 No, you know.

I3: 00:46:45 Where did they take all the fishermen?

CO: 00:46:48 Pardon?

I3: 00:46:48 Where did they take all the fishermen?

CO: 00:46:51 I don't know at that time whether they took them to,.

I3: 00:46:54 They went straight to camp?

CO: 00:46:56 Well, they went to Lincoln, you know, what was the name of that place?

AT: 00:47:01 Um, there were a couple of department of justice camps, which were like separate from

CO: 00:47:08 From men, from women

AT: 00:47:10 And from like the 10 camps that we know.

CO: 00:47:14 It wasn't known to anyone at the time. Where did they go?

AT: 00:47:19 Yeah. And those, those were technically internment camps because there were some German nationals and

CO: 00:47:25 That's right, at that time.

<End Segment 8> - Copyright © 2018 Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS). All Rights Reserved.