

Densho Digital Repository  
Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and  
Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS)  
Oral History Project Collection  
Title: Constance Yamashiro Interview  
Narrator: Constance Yamashiro  
Interviewer: Anna Takada  
Location: Chicago, Illinois  
Date: August 10, 2018  
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-18-2

<Begin Segment 2>

AT: 00:05:00 And so you were being born in 1938 you were very young when the war broke out. Do you have any memories of LA or as a child before the evacuation?

CY: 00:05:17 Actually, before the evacuation, I have no memories, I don't remember anything, but I do remember, going out to the camp and I remember the trip out there and I sometimes get confused whether it was a bus or train. I wasn't too sure because we went to Manzanar from LA, you know.

AT: 00:05:42 And, I'm sorry, were your parents, were they both from LA then or did they?

CY: 00:05:54 Right, right, right

AT: 00:05:55 Okay. So they were born in LA?

CY: 00:05:58 They were, well, my father was born in a place called I believe Stockton and my mother was born in LA, but oh, excuse me, in Pasadena.

AT: 00:06:07 Okay.

CY: 00:06:08 Same thing.

AT: 00:06:10 Okay. And then, so you mentioned that you do, some of your first memories are actually of evacuation?

CY: 00:06:23 Well, I remember the first getting into camp, I remember it was hot and dusty. It was very, very, a relief to get, I think it was a bus. I think we got off the bus, released to get off the bus. I remember I had to go, the washroom there was some kind of toilet set up that a lot of the Japanese women were upset about because it wasn't completed. You know, the facilities were so

bare and, there was no separation, of the individual stalls. And I do remember that because my, and everyone was in a horrible mood. My grandmother was just, I was with my grandmother. I don't know why my mother and father weren't with me in the same bus, but there was someplace else. And I remember my grandmother being very, very upset and angry and, we all crabby and she, and she was spanking me and you know, just because I was crying and try to figure out, you know, what was going on, that I remember.

- AT: 00:07:38 And so you mentioned that it wasn't completed, so it sounds like you, you're probably a part of that first or one of the earlier, earliest arrivals.
- CY: 00:07:49 Right. We didn't go into the, we didn't go to those horse stables and some people went into, I think the LA people in straight into Manzanar, you know, and they were putting up the barbed wire fences. I remember that very well. And a lot of constructions still going on.
- AT: 00:08:13 And do you have, so you actually remember like visually the, that it was under construction and they were still putting it together?
- CY: 00:08:22 I remember, is like scenes, you know, it's like a certain pictures in your mind. And I do remember, the barbed wire. I remember the bathroom, which was such a big, you know, important, event for a little girl. And because by that time I was four and I was, well I guess trained. So I was very upset, you know, that you had to walk for half a mile to get to the bathroom and, and, it was very difficult.
- AT: 00:09:01 And as far as the actual like living situation and the barracks, were you, was it the same where you with your parents and your grandmother? Like at home?
- CY: 00:09:13 At the beginning of, it was, I remember they were there, but they went to work in what they call the sugar beet fields. And, excuse me. And I don't remember seeing much of them anymore, but I was always with my grandmother. So that's why as I grew up, of course I only spoke Japanese because my grandmother was being, Issei, and, and she took care of me, you know, and camp. Yeah.
- AT: 00:09:42 And, in that case, what was your first language?
- CY: 00:09:46 Japanese.

AT: 00:09:47 It was Japanese?

CY: 00:09:52 Um-hum, um-hum,

AT: 00:09:55 To jump back a little bit, as far as family background, was your family religious at all?

CY: 00:10:02 No, unfortunately they were not at all religious. My mother was, not religious at all. I don't even know if she ever went into a church. Maybe she did to, visited once or something, but my father and mother were not religious.

AT: 00:10:19 How about your grandmother?

CY: 00:10:22 My grandmother was, always looking around for different religions and she focused, on the Christian religion because I remember she bought me a book on Bible Stories and, you know, and I became very Nambour knows all the different, stories in the, in the Old Testament. And yeah, she was, she was religious in her own way, but she wasn't one to make a big deal out of it, you know.

**<End Segment 2> - Copyright © 2018 Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS). All Rights Reserved.**