

Densho Digital Repository  
Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and  
Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS)  
Oral History Project Collection  
Title: Tonko Doi Interview  
Narrator: Tonko Doi  
Interviewer: Anna Takada  
Location: Chicago, Illinois  
Date: September 3, 2019  
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-19-3

<Begin Segment 3>

- TD: 00:08:28 Yeah. Umm, would you, do you have a sense of, um, the timeline as far as maybe the years that your mom came back to the U.S. or, or that she met your father?
- TD: 00:08:43 Yes. She came back to the United States, I believe in 1937.
- AT: 00:08:50 And met your father shortly thereafter?
- TD: 00:08:52 Yes.
- AT: 00:08:53 Um, and would you happen know when they went or when she went back to Japan?
- TD: 00:08:58 Yes, she went back to Japan in 1939 and then my father went to Japan to meet her in 1940 and I have a picture, I'll give it to you so you can scan it of them on the ship with the entire family. When the two of them departed. And it was October, 1940 when they left Tokyo or Yokohama Harbor and returned to California. They were married in October of 1940.
- TD: 00:09:35 Yeah. And so when they left Japan and they arrived in the states, um, where did they settle?
- TD: 00:09:44 In Los Angeles in East LA, Boyle Heights.
- AT: 00:09:51 Um, and do you know why, why they chose that location or, or what, um, they might have been doing for, for work or professionally?
- TD: 00:10:01 Yes. Well, my mother, um, stayed at home. She was a homemaker. Um, I was born December six, as I said, 1941. So like one year or so about, I was born after their marriage, so my grandfather named me Toshiko, which I guess is like year or, you know, it was significant. Uh, they chose the, in East LA,

there were a lot of Japanese people living at that time. And my father worked in uh, J-town, Little Tokyo.

- AT: 00:10:36 And what was he doing there?
- TD: 00:10:37 He was, uh, he was a pianist. I just, uh, as a hobby, but he worked in a music store, uh, Sumida, I don't know if that was the whole name, but Sumida music store. So he demonstrated pianos and sold pianos, but he also had another job. He worked for Felix Chevrolet, which is still in Los Angeles.
- TD: 00:11:02 And was that, um, repair or sale?
- TD: 00:11:06 Sales. Always sales.
- AT: 00:11:10 Um, okay. And then, um, so your parents got married. They came back to the states and, um, they had you in December of 1941, so are you the eldest?
- TD: 00:11:27 I am.
- AT: 00:11:28 And do you have any other siblings?
- TD: 00:11:31 I have a sister who is the youngest. Laura. She was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1946. I have a brother who is in the middle. Tom, who is, uh, was born in 1944 and he lives in Honolulu.

**<End Segment 3> - Copyright © 2019 Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS). All Rights Reserved.**