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Title: Tonko Doi Interview
Narrator: Tonko Doi
Interviewer: Anna Takada
Location: Chicago, Illinois
Date: September 3, 2019
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-19-6

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- TD: 00:22:03 Um, I can, um, do you want to ask me something? Okay. Um, and you heard this story about my husband's mother, so I'm going to tell you that story as well. Um, my husband, Paul, mother died giving birth to her fifth child at Santa Anita Racetrack Assembly Center. Now she was a healthy woman according to everyone. She was 38 years old in 1942 so she started, 'cause she went into labor, they took her to what was the first aid station. It wasn't a hospital. And when she started her labor and delivering the baby, she started to bleed. And the doctor who was a Japanese American woman, and she's well known in Los Angeles, maybe she's dead now, but at that time she was already a doctor and she told my sister in law that that was the worst time of her life. They could not stop the bleeding. And as a result, their mother died. Now, at the all camps reunion, you were there.
- TD: 00:23:31 So you saw, and I asked my sister-in-law Grace to tell the story because she told, she told me this, she's told this story many times, but when she stood there in front of people, I didn't expect her to break down and cry because it's a story she always told without emotion. So I don't know whether telling it in front of the people brought up the emotion, but you know, that was a horrible time for them. Now, my husband was six years old. I think he still had to have been affected, but he doesn't talk about it. And when he was in the hospital now for his back surgery, he was a little loopy, you know. And so a psychiatrist came in and wanted to talk to him, but he would not talk to her about anything prior, you know, oh, older, hurtful things. But I, I the question I was, so I'm kind of surprised when my sister in law broke down telling the story that I forgot some of the other questions I was going to ask her. The questions I was going to ask them was, um, she was eight.
- TD: 00:24:55 No, she was 10. And her oldest sister, their oldest sister was 12. So Santa Anita, they took the role of the mother. So I said, when

you went to Amachi, what happened? You know, um, and as it happened their mother's, cousin's, uh sister, the sister who adopted the baby, all lived in the same barrack, you know, row of apartments. So she said, well, Obasan (Auntie) and Mama's cousins, they showed us how to take care. So they showed them, they did it. Of course, you know, they carry the laundry to the wash place. Uh, how to wash the clothes, how to hang the clothes and um, you know, taught them to be homemakers at 10 and 12.

AT: 00:25:58 Um, yeah, thank you. Thank you for, for sharing that story. And if there's other things that you want to bring up, bring up through too, that's um, perfectly fine. Um, and, and I, you know, it's important too because of course, just where we are in time, a lot of the detailed stories and informations that we, information that we have is what's passed, been passed down. Um, one question just in regards to your husband's, um, mother's story. Was it a situation that, um, had they been in better medical, um, if they had been in a legitimate hospital? Um, is it believed that she would've survived?

TD: 00:26:57 Well, according to the doctor who was in Los Angeles, when my sister-in-law spoke to her, she said my sister-in-law, Carrots went to her for OBGYN care in the 50s. She looked up her name cause it was on the death certificate and she said, you took care of my mother in Santa Anita. Um, and she died giving birth to my baby sister. Do you remember that? She says, I'll never, the doctor said I'll never forget it. It was my first death as a doctor and there was nothing I could do. So, you know, I'm sure if she was in a hospital, she would have had better equipment, better care. I would say yes, she probably would have lived and their lives would have been different.

TD: 00:27:59 Now when it's interesting because as Japanese Americans who, uh, lived in the same camp and we came to Chicago, I came later, but came to Chicago. It's interesting how many people you meet, who knew you when you were a child or knew your family when you were in camp. You know, there's kind of a kinship. And even Paul, my husband, Hannah Hogan, Eric Langowski's grandmother. She in pre-war, they, she lived in the same neighborhood as Paul in, um, it was called the Seinan District, which is, uh, like Jefferson, um, 35th street. She knew where Paul's mother's, a barbershop was, you know, they attended the same church, which was Centenary Methodist Church in that neighborhood. And the same with me with, uh, Francis Chikahisa who used to be the, uh, she carried me in camp. She was 13 years old. She carried me in Santa Anita. She carried me in Rohwer and uh, Keti Takaki who is uh, Kali Takaki's

wife, you know, from the Nisei Post. I remember I was working at the Ginza Holiday and, uh, this woman leaned over the booths and she says, are you Tonko? And did you live in Rohwer? I said, I did. She told me that she lived across the, uh, in another barrack across from us and that she used to play with me when I was one and two years old. She's the same thing, like 13 years old at the time.

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