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Title: Tonko Doi Interview
Narrator: Tonko Doi
Interviewer: Anna Takada
Location: Chicago, Illinois
Date: September 3, 2019
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<Begin Segment 1>

Anna Takada: 00:00:00 This is an interview with Tonko Doi as part of the Japanese American Service Committee and Chicago Japanese American historical society oral history project. The interview is being conducted on September 3rd, 2019 at the Japanese American Service Committee in Chicago. Tonko Doi is being interviewed by Anna Takada of the Japanese American Service Committee. Um, so to start, can you just state your full name?

Tonko Doi: 00:00:26 My legal name is Toshiko Doi.

TD: 00:00:30 And uh, where and when were you born?

TD: 00:00:33 I was born on December 6th, 1941 in Los Angeles in the Boyle Heights area, which is East LA.

TD: 00:00:43 Okay. Um, and so, like I mentioned to start, um, it'd be great if we could learn a little bit more about your parents' background. So, um, maybe to start, can you just tell me, um, who your parents were, their names and maybe how they ended up in Boyle Heights?

TD: 00:01:02 Okay. Uh, my father's name is Shiro Marauka and um, he was born in 1904, and he was born in Shizuoka, Japan. My mother, her name is Tomoe. Her maiden name was Nakamoto and she was born in Selma, California. She is considered a Kibei Nisei.

TD: 00:01:29 And um, do you have information about how your father, how and why your father, um, came to the states?

TD: 00:01:37 Yes. Um, my father was born in 1904, so when he was 14 years old, that would be 1918. He came with his parents and his nine siblings, there were 10 in his family. His parents were Christian missionaries and they were sent from Japan, like reverse missionaries. You know, usually missionaries come from the

		United States, but in this case, the, um, Christian, uh, people, uh, hierarchy in Japan sent him to try to convert the, uh, Buddhist farmers and Buddhist people who had immigrated to, uh, California. So he and his family settled in Sacramento, California. And there was a church established there, but they needed a Japanese speaking minister. So that's where they lived.
TD:	00:02:38	Do you, would you happen to know what the name of the church is?
TD:	00:02:41	it was called um, Go- Meyhew Christian Church, I believe it's a baptist church. It's M-A-Y-H-E-W, Mayhew.

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<Begin Segment 2>

TD:	00:02:56	And, um, and you mentioned your, your mom, uh, was from Selma, California and that she was kibei.
TD:	00:03:05	Yes.
TD:	00:03:06	Do you have information about, um, her family?
TD:	00:03:08	I do, um, my mother's father, um, worked for Sun-Maid Raisin Company and that was I guess, uh, the base is in Fresno, California. So she and her sister, my, uh, live, were born in Selma, which is like a suburb. Uh, in 1923, uh, my grandfather was sent to Japan to open the market for Sun-Maid Raisin. So the whole family went to, uh, Yokohama. That was their first, um, office, his first office because there was a port. And, uh, during that time, 1923 was when there was a great earthquake in Yokohama. And My mother told me a story of, uh, playing with her friend and the ground opened up in front of them and her friend fell into the hole and disappeared and she never saw her again. Uh, because the port was closed, my, my grandfather, uh, they had a cow. I dunno, maybe because my mother and father, I mean my mother and her family were used to drinking milk. So my grandfather bought a cow and they, uh, lived on the, um, kind of higher, higher ground. So their home was not affected, uh, by the earthquake.
AT:	00:04:34	And so how, do you know about how old your mom was when she went back?

TD: 00:04:40 Yes, she was a 10 years old. She was born in 1913.

AT: 00:04:45 And how long did they stay in Yokohama?

TD: 00:04:49 Yokohama? Well, from Yokohama they moved to Tokyo and um, maybe they lived in Yokohama for three years or four years. And then they bought a home. My grandfather bought a home in, um, a suburban area of Tokyo called Den-en-chōfu, which, uh, now is part of Tokyo and very, uh, became a very affluent area. And that's my grandmother. I mean, I'm sorry, my Auntie, she's lived there all her life. I wa-, I mean, she was born in the United States, but she was like six years old when they went back to Japan. So her grammar school, her high school, her married years, and she just sold that house last year. So, and she's 100 years old this coming October.

AT: 00:05:37 Umm. So your, your Auntie stayed. And does that mean that um, your mother and her parents came back to the states?

TD: 00:05:49 No, my grandparents stayed in Japan, but now this story my mother told me, um, when was in her 20s, she became engaged and the man, what came from a similar background, he was a Nisei and his family was in California. My grandparents knew him and the family and they were introduced, you know, and so they were engaged to be married. But shortly before the marriage took place, her fiance died. He had tuberculosis. So my grandparents thought, oh, you know, Tomoe is going to be so sad. So they sent her to America to visit her brothers who never, who did not come to the United States. And so she went to, and my uncle, um, he worked for Rafu Shimpo, which was the English and Japanese paper in Los Angeles.

TD: 00:06:47 So he published a picture of my mother saying, you know, Tomoe Nakamoto, you know, is here from Japan. And she went to uh, Soshin Gakko. Well, my father's sister also graduated from the same school, so when she read the papers, oh and she's very beautiful. So she somehow got in touch with my mother and said, I have a brother. Would you be interested in meeting him? So my mother says, well, you know, not really, but you know, I'll have lunch and tea with you. Well, of course my auntie brought my father. So they fell in love, my father and my mother. And when she told my grandfather, my grandfather was very upset because he knew if she married in the United States that she would not come back to Japan so easily. So he forced her, really forced her to come back to Japan. So she left my father and she went back to Tokyo and she became very ill. Everyone said she was heartsick, she was dying of a broken

heart. So my grandpa called my father to Japan and allowed them to marry in Japan, in Tokyo.

TD: 00:08:10 Interestingly, I showed your grandma that something from that you know her, their wedding, uh, invitation or something. She knows that church because she said her grandfather was one of the founders of that church in Tokyo. It's a small world.

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<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.

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<Begin Segment 4>

Speaker 4:	00:11:49	Okay. Um, so just to, I guess moving forward, um, kind of chronologically. Um, so you, you were born the day before Pearl Harbor.
TD:	00:12:09	Correct.
AT:	00:12:09	Was attacked. Um, and from, it sounds like you've, you've had some conversations with, with your family and, or you have a good sense of your family's background.
TD:	00:12:24	Yes.
AT:	00:12:24	Um, so was there any kind of storytelling in your family or stories that you've heard about, um, the bombing of Pearl

Harbor or kind of what happened within your family? Your parents when that happens?

TD: 00:12:39 Because, um, the date of my birth, December 6th was before the day before Pearl Harbor and I was in a hospital in Boyle Heights, White Memorial Hospital. And when my Auntie, my father's sister and my father wanted to come to visit us in the hospital, uh, on the way home there was a blackout. Uh, so they were stranded. Everything had to stop, no headlights on the cars. It was nighttime. So my father said he and my auntie stayed in the car all night until it was daylight and they were able to drive again. Um, now when my, when they, the notice came up, um, December, uh, February 19th of 1944 and President Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. Uh, my father and us, his family, my father's brother who lived in Venice, California, moved to Stanton to live with another brother. Now, how they knew that to do that, maybe they wanted to be together. You know, they did. Maybe they didn't know that you would be evacuated together. But as a, because of that move, we all went to the same two camps. We went to Santa Anita in May and then we left for Rohwer, Arkansas in October of 1942.

AT: 00:14:24 Um, and, um, going back, I, so I'm curious, um, because I would imagine your mother was probably still in the hospital the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked.

TD: 00:14:42 Yes.

AT: 00:14:43 Um, did she ever say anything about, um, maybe her own reactions or changes that might've taken place after the bombing?

TD: 00:14:53 I think that in the hospital maybe she really didn't know, you know, what was going on until maybe a couple of days later. Um, but you know, there were a lot of Japanese people in that hospital, nurses, doctors, patients because it was in Boyle heights, which is a Japanese community. And, uh, I'm sure there was fear, but she never expressed fear herself.

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<Begin Segment 5>

AT: 00:15:23 Um, and okay, just to, um, just to get some of the details straight. Um, do you know when your, your Mom, so you said

that your, your uncle who was in Venice moved to Stanton to join another brother?

TD: 00:15:45 Yes, and my father and us too, we all moved.

AT: 00:15:48 To Stanton?

TD: 00:15:49 To Stanton.

AT: 00:15:50 Okay. Um, do you know when that would have been? You said it was before the signing of,

TD: 00:15:57 Uh, no. So if we left for Santa Anita in May, maybe we went there in March or April.

AT: 00:16:05 Okay. So right before.

TD: 00:16:06 Yes.

AT: 00:16:06 Evacuation.

TD: 00:16:10 When, when the evacuation, probably when the date was published, you know, when we had to leave, uh, your home with what you could carry, you know, I'm sure that they went there, um, in advance.

AT: 00:16:27 So let's see. Um, we were talking about, um, how your family had moved to, to Stanton in probably March, April, um, and Santa Anita in May and Rohwer in October. Um, so one question I have is, um, you know, of course you were a baby, uh, through all of this. So, um, later in your life, were there certain, um, family stories, stories or narratives that you were told about this time and this experience from your parents?

TD: 00:17:11 There was a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian and in that exhibit uh, was a picture of women lined up uh, with washtubs and my mother was the lead person and uh, you could recognize her right away. I mean, I knew it was her and she was wearing like, you know, from the forties with a bandana or this scarf on her head. And she was like this washing. So I, it was in front of us, look like a stable or a barrack. So I said, mom, what were you washing? She said, your diapers. Maybe she was just kidding, but that was uh, what she did. But are you going to go back to the train? Cause yeah.

AT: 00:18:00 Um, yeah, we can, we can talk about it.

TD: 00:18:02 Okay. So, you know, I, and I didn't have the wherewithal to ask her about the train ride. She did tell me that when the train went through, um, a community,, that the soldiers pulled the shades down and everybody has that memory who was old enough to know or remember on if they traveled by train. Um, and um, I guess the reason was that they didn't want people, the Americans, to know what was going on, that they were transporting Japanese or Asian people across the country. Now, where we were going from California to Rohwer Arkansas, I believe was the longest journey of all the internees.

TD: 00:18:55 So I asked people at Densho if they knew how long, and they said they don't have an exact, but they think it was like four to five days. And a friend of mine told me who was like 13 at the time, uh, told me that, uh, they arrived, uh, on Halloween in Arkansas. Um, and then I was thinking also I didn't ask mom that, you know, I was at that time, if it was October, I was less than a year old. I must've still been in diapers and, uh, drinking milk. You know, maybe I was breastfeeding for a while, but how did she feed me? You know, if breast milk, okay. But formula maybe forget about formula and sitting up in a chair like this all the way. And I think probably, do they have baths? Did they have toilet, I'm sure toilets. But do they have showers for people? I mean, we went the longest. So we were gone four nights, five days to Arkansas. I don't know what happened, but uh, the suffering, the physical suffering, they never talked. My mother never said she suffered. So I never asked her. But thinking about it now, she had to have suffered. All people, all the people had to have suffered, but especially those with children.

AT: 00:20:37 Umm, and so it kind of, it sounds like, um, you know, you mentioned seeing that Smithsonian image. Was that moment, um, uh, did that help you in kind of, um, forming the questions to ask your mom about that experience? Or, or what did that moment mean for you and your family and learning your family's background?

TD: 00:21:09 You know, my family, especially on my father's side, they're talkers. They're storytellers. So, you know, I, I heard a lot of things already. That picture, hmm, I saw how beautiful my mother looked in that picture. And it always amazes me when you see photos of the men and women, they're all dressed up, you know, their men are wearing suits, ladies, you know, who have dresses and suits and maybe a hat, uh, how did they take care of that clothing? You know, it's, it's amazing that they were so proud that for the photo they wanted to look their best.

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<Begin Segment 6>

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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<Begin Segment 7>

AT:	00:29:52	And so, um, do you know how long, um, your family was in Rohwer?
TD:	00:30:02	Yes, from 1942 to 1944. My mother was pregnant with my brother when we left Arkansas by train. Um, and so that was Tom.
TD:	00:30:18	Tom and my sister Laura, who was born in 1946. So they don't like it, and my sister doesn't like it when I tell her that she was born in Catherine Booth Memorial Hospital for unwed mothers.
AT:	00:30:36	And that was in Chicago?
TD:	00:30:38	No, in Cincinnati.
AT:	00:30:39	Oh, in Cincinnati. Okay. So, um.
TD:	00:30:42	Salvation Army and the Quakers helped the, uh, internees who, uh, left camp, we lived in a hostel in Cincinnati that was run by the uh, Quakers.
AT:	00:30:56	And do you have information about, um, why your family ended up in Cincinnati?
TD:	00:31:01	Yes. My father's, um, younger sister Chiyo, married, um, a man, Dr. Joseph Tamura, and he was a professor at the University of Cincinnati and living in Ohio. They were not required to evacuate. They were in an area that, uh, you didn't have to leave, which I was surprised that people in like Washington, D.C. They, uh, like the aliens, uh, they were sent to camp and they were sent to Rohwer, I understand.
AT:	00:31:40	So it was through that family connection?
TD:	00:31:42	Yes.
AT:	00:31:43	And how did she, um, was she also from Cincinnati? Had, were they married prior to the war? Yes, yes. They were married in Oregon. That's where my Uncle Joe was, um, houseboy and the two maiden women, it's an old word, maiden, uh, where, uh, they were Episcopalian and he was a bright boy. He came to United States when he was 14, and worked for them as a house

boy. And they realized his potential. So they sent him to school and to college. And, uh, he became, uh, a biologist and then he got a job in Cincinnati. That's why they went to Cincinnati.

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<Begin Segment 8>

AT: 00:32:35 I see. Um, and just before we jump into kind of, um, the resettlement period and leaving camp. I'm just wondering if there were any other kinds of, um, did you have any memories of in camp? I know you were very young.

TD: 00:32:55 Right. I only have pictures and I only have stories, but actual memories, no, I do not.

AT: 00:33:02 Sure.

TD: 00:33:03 But what my mother did tell me when we were on that train, leaving Rohwer, I guess, and I don't know if she told me or whether, um, I knew it, but they gave us $25 and a train ticket. And while we were on the train, my mother said that a man told her and I, and, and, and I'm thinking that all of us Japanese was our first language. I'm pretty sure that we all spoke Japanese, even Niseis or Sanseis, you know, Japanese was the first language with their parents or older people. But of course, uh, you know, they spoke English to themselves, perhaps young, young teenagers. But anyway, I was speaking to my mother in Japanese and she to me and a man said, don't allow her to speak Japanese again or anymore. So I asked my mother, do you think he was being harsh, you know, reprimanding us? She says, no, she thinks that he was trying to educate us to let us know that we should speak English now.

AT: 00:34:18 Oh, and um, I know that you mentioned that your, your mother never talked about any kind of suffering or anything like that. Um, so her experience in evacuation and, and living in camp, um, but were there any other kinds of family stories or experiences from, from camp that were passed down to you or that stick out?

TD: 00:34:52 Are you talking about in camp or after camp?

AT: 00:34:55 In the camp.

TD: 00:34:55 In camp.

AT: 00:34:56 So before we get into resettlement, just--

TD: 00:34:58 Okay. Um, no, no, there were no stories of suffering. Oh.

AT: 00:35:05 In general, of experiences of, of camp or, or maybe experienced, you know, family stories that might've, um, shaped or informed your own understandings of what camp was?

TD: 00:35:18 Yes. Well, my father told me, and of course later that he could understand why they imprisoned him, why they sent him to camp, but he did not understand why they took me and my mother, who were both American citizens. We were both born in the United States. So he knew that that was wrong. He knew that somehow that wasn't right as an American citizen, that they took your rights away like that. No, but I think that in camp, maybe there was an underground, you know, people who, and I think it took place more in the other camps, like Tule Lake or something, but there was an underground movement. What my father did say, and I told him not to say this to anymore, when we went for the redress, he said he thought that the Japanese were going to win the war and when they won, they would come to the camp, open the gates and the Japanese would rule the United States. I said, dad, don't say that, especially at the redress meeting, they're going to give us money dad. [laughs].

AT: 00:36:41 Um, yeah, that's not quite the narrative that I think that they were looking to hear.

TD: 00:36:43 No he didn't say it.

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<Begin Segment 9>

AT: 00:36:49 Um, okay. Um, well in that case, um, can you tell me a little bit more about, so you explained some of the background of how your family ended up, um, going to Cincinnati and, and you mentioned that the Quakers had a hostel and you know, to house your family. So can you just, um, tell me a little bit more about what you know or remember if you did, um, of those early days in Cincinnati?

TD: 00:37:20 Yes. Um, first of all, I have a scar here and that scar, oh, was because I fell down the steps of the hostel. My mother told me, so I must've been like four years old and, uh, I fell down the

stairs and I uh, when I go back to visit Cincinnati, I always, I don't know if you do this, but you go by your old house, you know where you lived. Paul, my husband says, oh my gosh, again, we're going by these houses. But I go by the hostel and uh, where we lived in Cincinnati, uh, was a mixed community. It was uh, white Appalachian, uh people, black people, white people of all different, uh, economic, uh, levels. It was kind of an unusual neighborhood but in this house, which I understand used to be the dormitory for mortuary students because down the road on Ridgeway, there was a school, mortuary school where people learn to be undertakers.

TD: 00:38:36 Anyway, it was kind of a funny house. But in that house there were lots of JAs, lots of Japanese American families which made, and they must have been placed there, you know, by social service agencies, by the Quakers. But was like a little camp again, you know, people would go up and down the stairs, visited people you know. But my mother, to um, help supplement the income, I remember seeing her in, um, my father's old winter coat in the wintertime, old winter coat and she had a scarf and in the basement there was like a big furnace. And I saw my mother shoveling coal into the furnace and she would also sweep the stairs and keep the hallways clean. They must have gotten a reduction in the rent for that work. Now in telling that story, I have to give you a little history about my mother. I told you that my grandfather worked for Sun-Maid Raisin and uh, he was in charge of selling the product in Japan.

TD: 00:39:57 So his idea, he went to all the candy stores. He went to the grocery stores, he went in, nobody knew farm raisins. So he's the man or person who, um, thought of that small red raisin box because he said then it's like a sample. You know, people will try that, but they're not going to try this big box until they get used to it. So anyway, at one point, after living in Japan a few years and developing his business, my grandfather became the third highest paid man in Japan, because he was paid in US dollars and the yen was at 360 forever, you know, until the 60s. It was 360. And so my grandfather had a nice life. My, my mother went to a private Christian school. Um, my grandpa was a hunter and he had dogs. He imported, he brought with him, uh, wire hair, terriers.

TD: 00:41:08 I have a picture of my mom and her at home and there's a pack of wild hair, wire hair carriers in their yard. Well, he imported one at a time from Germany and in this book of, um, about wire hair terriers, they listed his name that he and baron so-and-so brought dogs to Japan. So my mother told me that when my

grandpa would go hunting. The train stopped not far from his house, our house, their house. So he would get on the train with his dog, with his gun, and he would ride the train someplace and go hunting. Well, you know, coming from that background, my mother was a very, I don't know what's the word, she, she didn't talk about wealth, so for her, to be a janitor, but she never complained about doing that kind of work even though, you know, and her, uh, that's another thing, I guess my grandmother didn't want to spoil my, my, her children. So she never had a maid, you know, everybody worked in that house even though, you know, they didn't have to. So, I don't know. My, I have to admire my mother for never complaining about her station in life. I wish I'd never come to the United States. I could have lived in Japan and you know, who knows, but I have to admire my mother and father. And that was a true love story, actually, my parents.

TD: 00:42:58 And, uh, when he found work, I don't know where he got this name, but they called him Jack. His name is Shiro, but, uh, all of the people that he worked with called him Jack. And, uh, so he worked at, in a, in a factory, uh, Juice, Juice Ridge. They, they took juice, orange juice and they packaged it and it wasn't far from our house. And then, uh, he wanted to be a salesman, maybe get more money. So he tried to do that, but it wasn't successful. So at that point we moved to Chicago.

AT: 00:43:43 Um, and just, just to clarify details because it, it sounds like you had a bit of family in Cincinnati, um, you know, extended relatives. So, um, as far as going to Cincinnati, um, who, who was, who did you go with and who were you staying with in this hostel?

TD: 00:44:06 Um, I, I don't know, but they probably did. Now the same uncle who moved from Venice to Stanton also went to Cincinnati and he and his wife, this was his second wife uh, his, her two daughters and his son and his daughter. So four and they were teenagers and he and his wife, us, we went to Cincinnati, so the two brothers and their families and my uncle Kenji was a dental, I don't know what you call him. And he made false teeth and uh, I guess he was very good. I thought he was a dentist cause I remember going there at night and he work on our teeth because we couldn't afford to go to a dentist. So I thought uncle was a dentist. They said, no, no, he only makes the false teeth, but he worked on our teeth.

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<Begin Segment 10>

AT:	00:45:04	Um, do you know how long you all were living in that hostel in Cincinnati?
TD:	00:45:09	I would only guess that less than a year.
AT:	00:45:18	And, and did you move to any other residents before going to Chicago or was your family just in Chicago?
TD:	00:45:29	710 Ridgeway and um, that's in Cincinnati and that's where all those other Japanese families lived. Uh, we moved to Dayton for a short time, less than less than a year, but my father couldn't make it as a salesman. So that's when my aunt, another sister, the oldest sister who lived in Cin-, Chicago, arranged for my parents to open a cleaners. My mother was a, seem- good seamstress. She learned dressmaking in school. My father learned to be a presser. And uh, so they opened a cleaners through, uh, the Hidaka family. The hidaka family had a plant and they helped JAs open independent cleaners in neighborhoods. But the smart, of course he was doing it because to help us, but also to get the business, the wholesale business. That's what, uh, so we did that for many years.
AT:	00:46:38	And so about what year was that, would you say that your family came here?
TD:	00:46:42	1957. I was 16 and I would, it was in August. And in September, I started Lakeview high school as a junior.
AT:	00:46:57	Um, okay. So, um, so let's see. Your, your brother Tom was born in '44 and um-
TD:	00:47:12	Laura in '46.
AT:	00:47:15	Okay, so Laura was born in Cincinnati?
TD:	00:47:17	Yes. Tom also in Cincinnati.
AT:	00:47:21	Okay. And then so they were, um, Laura is about-
TD:	00:47:30	They were, yeah, they were adults, not, they were kids.
AT:	00:47:32	Sure. So you all were kind of, um, you know, around teenage years or,

TD:	00:47:38	Yeah, I was a teenager. I was 16 and they were in grammar school.
AT:	00:47:42	Um, okay. So, um, Lakeview High School then, I'm guessing that your family came to the North Side of Chicago?
TD:	00:47:50	North Side.
AT:	00:47:51	And where, where were you guys living?
TD:	00:47:54	The first place we lived? Huh, well, the first place when my auntie called us from, uh, Ohio. Uh, she found a, an apartment in the, what was the name of that Cortez Hotel? It's on Sheffield. It was like a, not a hotel for anyway, it was like transient people, you know, but we lived there for a couple of weeks and then we found an apartment. Um, my auntie found an apartment near her on Kenmore and Irving Park. Yeah. Coincidentally, SJ, my granddaughter, she lived just down the street from our first apartment.
AT:	00:48:38	Um, okay. So, um, your family went to Kenmore and Irving Park, uh, was your mom then, did she kind of become a homemaker again? Oh no, you said that she was seamstress for business. Okay. And, um, so where was that cleaners located?
TD:	00:48:57	1900 Irving Park.
AT:	00:49:00	So it sounds like between-

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<Begin Segment 11>

TD:	00:49:05	Lincoln and, yeah. Yes, yes. Very close. And we still live in that neighborhood, you know, so we haven't moved far.
AT:	00:49:17	Um, can you, so you were 16 when you came to Chicago. Um, do you, would you happen to remember some of your first impressions of coming to the city?
TD:	00:49:30	Yes. Well, was I 16 or I was still 15? I think I was still 15 and then be, I became 16. I became a junior. My impression, well, you know, we didn't live in such a beautiful neighborhood in Cincinnati, but in Cincinnati, it's not like Chicago, it's not so congested. And where we lived on Kenmore, the train ran and back the the Red Line was right in back of our kitchen. So it was

very noisy in the beginning and now you become accustomed to it. And I remember that, uh, I, uh, was where I was got off the train, I was 15 and I was gonna go for a job some place. Oh, I know downtown applying for a job. So I was wearing heels, which I don't wear heels. Well anyway, I got off the train and it was so hot in August that my heel got stuck in the asphalt.

TD: 00:50:29 You know how you at that time, I don't know if they still have it like that, but you know, the asphalt melted. So what's that? And we didn't have, um, air conditioning, so, and we didn't have any air conditioning in Cincinnati either, but my father was very creative, but so in Cincinnati when it was hot, which it is, it's like Louisiana, you know, it's humid, very humid. It's right on the river. He would take us the whole family and would sleep in the park. And it was nice and cool. There were other families there too. Not so many, but my father he knew it would be cooler in the park.

AT: 00:51:11 But I'm guessing that wasn't something you'll try it in Chicago?

TD: 00:51:16 Aye. You know what, my father, no, we didn't sleep in the park in Chicago, although he would have I guess. Um, but he bought this, um, gadget. It was a scam really. It was like a cooler. You're supposed to put water in it and the fan blows. We didn't get cool.

AT: 00:51:37 All right. Um, so, uh, the last question we were on was, um, about first impressions of Chicago. Um, and you had mentioned some of the comparisons between Cincinnati. Um, so you said it was very hot. It's congested. You're living right off of the red lines. That's very noisy.

TD: 00:52:00 Another thing, um, Kenmore in those years, in the 50s, um, oh, okay. it was a mixed street actually, and I found out that there were a few JA families that live, but we never saw them. We just went toward Irving park to get to work or we didn't meet mingle with anybody on the street, as, uh socialize I should say. But there were, um, Appalachian families who were very loud and I think, uh, fighting and when we had our windows open, you could hear them, you know, there was uh, fighting on the street, which you didn't hear in Cincinnati, Cincinnati, even though you lived in a poor neighborhood, people were polite. My opinion.

AT: 00:52:51 Chicago was a little rougher?

TD: 00:52:53 Rougher, rougher. Yeah. I mean, in the building that we lived in, in Cincinnati, as I said, there were many, like 90% JA because of the Quakers placing them there. But whenever we would come to Chicago, not often, but when we did and while we lived here, my parents are, were just astounded at how many Japanese Americans there were. And when they would see with it, it'd be like a sighting. My mother says, "Oh, Nihon-jin". Now how do they know they were Japanese? I don't know. Not, oh, Chinese, no. Nihon-jin, Japanese. That's what she said. Um, they were so excited.

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AT: 00:53:37 And, um, you did mention the, the story about, um, your mother being told to not speak Japanese with you, um, in Cincinnati and later Chicago. Um, do you remember speaking Japanese?

TD: 00:53:53 No. No. And, um, how about, um, you know, one, some experiences that, that we hear a lot are about, um, Japanese school.

TD: 00:54:08 I was too old when we came, um, from Cincinnati to attend Japanese school. Now, in Cincinnati in 1948 my father's mother came to live with us. She had been living in Japan from 1939, but I should say my grandparents, the two missionaries in 1939, he retired from the church and they returned to Japan. That was their 50th anniversary, wedding anniversary in 1939. Could that be right? But anyway, he, um, they moved to, back to Japan. My grandfather died in Japan, but my grandmother survived the war and came to live with us. Uh, someone must have sponsored her. Maybe my father sponsored her or my uncle Joe, you know, through the university. So she came to live with us and in our small apartment in Cincinnati, the first one, well I used to have a bedroom, but when grandma came, I shared the bedroom with her and my grandmother was bilingual, English and Japanese. And I found some old letters that she was writing to me in English from Los Angeles. She had arrived in Los Angeles first and she was visiting old friends and she wrote, well, once you arrived in Cincinnati, her time clock, she was, she was writing her memoirs. I would sleep like with a blanket over me like this while she would be writing the light shining. Right. So finally I moved into what was the hallway and I slept in the hallway. But uh, my grandmother's memoirs are somewhere and I have to find them.

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<Begin Segment 13>

AT: 00:56:08 Um, and so can you tell me about, uh, your experiences, um, moving to Chicago, being new to Chicago and starting a new school? You, I think you said it was your junior year that the first year here?

TD: 00:56:26 Yes.

AT: 00:56:27 Can you, um, tell me about what um, Lakeview High School was like at that time?

TD: 00:56:31 At that time, uh, it was predominantly white. And at that time, even kids from Lake Shore Drive went to Lakeview.

TD: 00:56:43 Uh, now, uh, the makeup of uh, Lakeview is very different with open enrollment I guess. But, um, yeah, at that time, uh, it was predominantly white. There were Asians, Japanese Americans who lived in the Lake View area. So, you know, there were those, but I never felt part of either group, first of all, because I came as a junior. But what happened was, how, I became active in the JA community is my auntie was very active in her church, which was CCP Church of Christ Presbyterian. And at that time they were on Sheffield down the street from Wrigley Field.

TD: 00:57:36 So she said, come to church, you know, and then, you know, Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah, Dah. So I went to church and I met some people, but I was very enterprising. I met some kids and I like to dance. So I asked the, um, elders, and they're not so old, like Jim Saiki. I mean, he's old now, but you know, and his brother and John Toriyumi, you meet these people probably were in their forties at the time and they were looking to expand their youth membership. So I said, well, you know, why don't we hold dances downstairs? now CCP that was very conservative. I didn't know that, but they bought a jukebox for us and they stocked it with records that we chose. And every Friday night that social hall was filled with kids from the south side, the North Side, everybody was dancing and they were good dancers. They liked to dance.

AT: 00:58:41 And was this a predominantly Japanese American church?

TD: 00:58:44 Oh yes. Oh yes. CCP was a, at that time, almost 100% Japanese. And my Auntie, my father's sister, you know, was part of the

Fujinkai. I don't know if you know, that word, Fujinkai: Ladies Organization. So anyway, they approved it and, um, we had dances and we had uh, a good time.

AT: 00:59:10 And so, um, in high school, um, you know, of course social life is pretty important at that age. Um, who are some of the, the people that you were spending your time with because it sounds like CCP there was a greater Japanese American population at school, for example. Right. So, um, were you spending a lot of time with JapaneseAmericans?

TD: 00:59:37 I was, I was at that time, uh, it was a new experience for me, but, um, it was easier. They were more accepting. At Lakeview, I belonged to a club that was predominantly white, but you know, I wasn't so interested in that group,

AT: 00:59:59 What club was that?

TD: 00:59:59 That ,it was called, um, what do we call that Alphas, I think.

AT: 01:00:04 Just a social club?

TD: 01:00:05 It was a social club. I don't think you were allowed to have, there was some kind of rule, I don't like a Sorority, you know, but it was approved by, um, the school, but with the Japanese events, so as a result of these dances, we would go to basketball games, baseball games, and you know, I became friends with different people and at the time nobody drove a car. So we would take the red line to the south side at night, one o'clock in the morning and we would come home on it. But there was no fear because I don't know, we didn't have fear of people hurting us. We'd go to Clark and Division, which is a completely different look now. If you, I take my friends from out of town, Clark and Division, they can't believe it. It's all car dealerships and high-rises. But at that time, as you know, it was a Japanese American community. So there was a place called Ding Ho, Chinese restaurant. We would go there to eat, we would eat at the rib house late at night, have ribs for like $3 or something. Yeah.

AT: 01:01:20 Was that Clark and Division?

TD: 01:01:22 Clark and Division.

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<Begin Segment 14>

AT:	01:01:25	Um, and uh, so at this time, late 50s, early 60s, um, how would you describe the Japanese American Community of Chicago?
TD:	01:01:41	They were divided by, um, areas. There was the south side and there was the North Side and in schools all over, uh, you know, where there were a lot of Japanese Americans. Um, they had social clubs, uh, by year, by your age. So my sister-in-law, she belonged to the Donnell's and uh, another one belonged to the Jolene's that were southsiders, but they were all women their age and from that school, usually the same thing with the boys. You know, they belong to clubs like the Bruins, the Saxons, the Vikings, they gave them, they had names like that, but you would know their age. They were like the younger brother, uh Saxons were younger brother of the Vikings, etc. So there were social clubs who also were a sport clubs, teams, they played basketball, baseball, um, under those names.
AT:	01:02:47	Do you have any idea, um, whether at the time or in retrospect why those groups were formed?
TD:	01:02:54	Yes, because they didn't feel part of the white community. I mean, there were some that joined uh, organizations. I think there was one in Hyde Park called the Drakes. But if you say that to some of the guys that, you know, they, they say they wouldn't accept us. Well, they were more intellectual, you know, the Drake's perhaps, but they had friends, but the clubs were all Japanese. Now, there was a, uh, a league called CNAA: Chicago Nisei Athletic Association. There was a rule at one time that you could not play on a team if you were not Japanese, part Japanese, married to a Japanese. Our friend Leon Macpherson was totally white. He was the only person that was allowed to play on the team because he grew up with, and even, though he was a ringer, he was tall. Uh, they allowed him to play on the team cause they knew him, for, since he was in grammar school. He was my husband's friend. But they were, they were, um, how would, what's the word, not racist, but segregated. No. Isolated. I don't know. What's the word where you divide people by race. Segregated. Segregated.

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AT:	01:04:25	Um, and the next thing I wanted to talk to you about your family's business. Um, so they opened a cleaners. Yes Um, on,

on Irving Park. How, how long did that, they have that business and what was the business like?

TD: 01:04:43 Um, as I said, my mother, uh, it's an ideal business for a couple and that's why you see Korean people entered the business after the Japanese people left the business, uh, a husband and wife could work together. Um, the children came to work there, you know, while mom went upstairs, to cook we would take over, um, cause it was only like half a mile from school. Um, we lived upstairs, there was an apartment that became available. So we moved upstairs from 1900 and I remember some guy saying, oh yeah, I remember going to your house on Irving Park. But um, yeah.

AT: 01:05:28 Who's the clientele of the business?

TD: 01:05:30 I'm sorry?

TD: 01:05:30 Who was the clientele?

TD: 01:05:31 White. From the neighborhood. Ah, this is what my father did. He was so smart in that store, in that shop, there was, when you looked in the window, there was like a wooden covering over the radiator. My father built a fish pond. It would be like from here to here, from there to here. And He created a fish pond with coy and he, he made um, you know, like a Japanese garden with Moss. People were just fascinated by it. He was very creative and, uh, my father and mother would sell Botan Candy and kids who became, who became adults, they would say to me, if I saw them in later years, I remember buying that candy where the paper would melt in your mouth. They didn't know, you know, but they remembered that. So it was an ideal business for my parents. And, uh, even though the clientele was white, we weren't friends with them, but we became friends with other people. JA people, uh, through, uh, my parents would go to church, but, um, you know, um, my auntie's friends, people from camp that they knew, uh, my father and mother befriended a lot of people who came to the United States from Japan in the 60s and 70s, uh, with business and teachers. And they would come to our house and my mother would prepare a Japanese meal for them. And, uh, oh.

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<Begin Segment 16>

AT: 01:07:14 Um, let's see. One thing I want to ask is, um, just as far as your own, um, person, personal identity development. Um, would you say that you were like pretty well aware of your, your Japanese, well, how do I want to phrase this? Um, so today, is ,do you identify as Japanese American as a Japanese American?

TD: 01:07:57 Yes, yes. But sometimes I question and at a JACL meeting I said, do we say we're Japanese American? Can't we just say we're American, um, of Japanese descent? And I know that a lot of people come up to you or to me and they say, oh, where are you from? You know, or what are you like, they ask SJ all the time. What are you right? Can't quite see what her ethnicity is so that, um, I mean to being Japanese and being American, it's very important to me. My heritage is very important to me. My history. Um, when I went to Japan for the first time of over 20 years ago, I did not feel Japanese.

AT: 01:08:56 Why is that?

TD: 01:08:57 Why? Because their, their mannerisms, their behavior.

TD: 01:09:05 That's the thing my father said, do not speak Japanese in Japan because your Japanese is not so good. So I said, okay. Uh, so one time, maybe one of our first visits, Paul and I, we got lost trying to find a train station. So we're standing there on the corner looking, you know the, you know how the streets in Tokyo are wind-y, you don't know. We didn't know which way to go. So here comes a lady coming up this way. So I said, excuse me. She goes like this to me, you know, that means no, she doesn't want to talk to me. Okay, here comes another lady. I said, excuse me? I said, oh man. So here comes another lady. So I said, "Chotto matte. So I grabbed her arm, she got scared, she thought I was some kind of an assailant or something. I said, "Densha eki wa doko desu ka?" So she, she didn't want to speak English to me because she felt her skills were not so good. And I said, mine aren't so good either, but she led us do the train. So I think it's kind of a similar thing, you know. Um, but now I come to admire Japanese people. I don't feel more Japanese, but I come to admire them more to respect them more than I did when I first went and I feel more comfortable because I understand them better.

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<Begin Segment 17>

AT: <u>01:10:41</u> Um, so I just, I have a few more questions before um asking a little bit more about your current involvement in the community. Um, I guess, um, because I'm in this project we're focusing on, on resettlement, which of course has a legacy in internment. Um, I'm wondering what, if any role would you say that the incarceration history has played in your life? How do you think that that um, experience and family history has maybe shaped your own life?

TD: <u>01:11:34</u> Well, in moving to Chicago from Cincinnati where I really didn't have much of an identity or sense of myself as, because I was young and also there wasn't a strong racial or ethnic feeling there. Um, since moving to Chicago and associating more with JA people, I developed more of a sense of who I am. Um, going to Japan often, I developed respect. And you know, interestingly um, couple of things, I think visuals play a big role in your emotions. It was kind of a simple movie, but, uh, I think it was called Snow, "Snow Falling on Cedars," one of the first, um, films that was shown in the theater. And when I saw those people, and I know you know the story, you know what happens, you know, we've read about it. But when I saw those people actually walking across a bridge, I started to weep. It came up unexpectedly. I didn't, that emotion, seeing them giving up and going. So peacefully, peacefully across that bridge. I just started to weep. Um, another thing, um, like that dog, "My Dog Teny" you know, uh, what people gave up, uh, you know, and it's, it brings out emotion. So, stories, films, um, you know, they, you could read about it, but it doesn't have the same impact.

TD: <u>01:13:26</u> Just like the orange story. Jason's, you know, but you know, the other day I was watching this program called Terror. Have you seen that?

AT: <u>01:13:35</u> I have not yet seen it.

TD: <u>01:13:37</u> Okay.

AT: <u>01:13:37</u> I know all about it.

TD: <u>01:13:38</u> It's kind of, I wasn't, I didn't know what to expect. It's kind of like a, you know, what do you call that kind of film where ghosts and horror film. Yeah. But, um, you know, when he, uh, the, uh, what do you call that? Oh, when he showed the barracks and uh, the dress of the people, it was so real to me how they're living and, you know, um, the whole thing started bringing up an emotion. Maybe something that I had put away, you know, that I saw when I was two to four years old. Maybe, you know,

if it made you feel something even though, um, he did it very well. I mean the casting, the um, what do you call that? Uh, the scenery. Everything. Yeah.

AT: 01:14:40 Was, um, this, um, particularly or, sorry, was this, um, this particular family history, was that something that you um pass down to your children and maybe grandchildren that you talked about openly?

TD: 01:14:58 I did. I do. I do. SJ through the JACL of course and going to Kansha, which I think is a wonderful program. I mean, you know, and you participated. So you know what it is, because at the last, um, culmination, uh, all of them spent, and most of them are biracial. Right? Is that what you call that biracial? Um, that they said they never had a sense of who they were in a community were they white were they Japanese, but mostly, probably more white, uh, or other, and, uh, how they felt part of the community that embraced them and they understood where their grant, great-grandparents or grandparents, you know, their lives were like, so, yeah.

AT: 01:15:53 And why, why do you think that's important?

TD: 01:15:58 Ah, I think history is always important, right? Where, where you, your, where you came from. Like I gave, and you know, interestingly, my daughter-in-law is uh, Black, and, uh, she, I asked her, would you prefer to be called Black or African-American? She says, hm, I don't think I'm from Africa. I don't know so much about Africa, but Black. So I say Black. Well, for Christmas I gave her the National Geographic, um, uh, DNA test and she was so excited to find out her history. Um, and she found out that her mother, uh, I guess I focus more on her mother, uh, was from Eastern Africa and that, and it said the women, uh, went to Western Africa and pinpointed certain areas in Africa where her family may have originated. It was very, she, she, uh, appreciated knowing that so much because she's Black, but where is, does she, where did her ancestors come from? So, I gave it to SJ as well, and I gave it to Mitchell, my son, because I don't know, maybe you know better than me that the DNA test, if, if you, a man takes it, if it's from both sides can get history. But if I did it, I only get it from the maternal side. Okay. So I did the right thing. I gave it to him.

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AT: 01:17:34 Um, and then, uh, another thing I wanted to be sure to ask you about was, um, you had mentioned talking with your father about the, um, the redress hearings. So, um, could you share just about, um, your recollection of what region, what redress was like and kind of what was happening and how your family was involved?

TD: 01:18:00 Hmm. So when the, uh, hearings were in Chicago, I went with my father and my mother didn't go, but my father and I attended the hearings and we listened. And I warned him, as I told you, not to say about the Japanese winning the war. And, uh, it was very important for him to get redress. The money was very important to him. It's not that he lost so much in Japan and in, in Los Angeles, but he wanted it to be an inheritance for my mother. Unfortunately, he died, he died in April, and the redress money came in August, so he wasn't able to get that. So my mother, uh, received, uh, the money, $20,000, but he was so interested in the redress because he felt he deserved it and as many of my friends, but for me, I kind of feel guilty about it. Oh. Because I did not suffer really, you know, uh, I just followed my parents. I was a child, so I, I kind of feel guilty when people, especially non-JA they say, well you got the money, you got $20,000, didn't you? You know, with that should be enough. Maybe not in that way, but in that tone. And they made me feel guilty.

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AT: 01:19:44 Um, okay, so we have a few minutes left. Um, and okay, so given that kind of background uh, just shared, um, one question that we're curious or we'd love to hear you about is, um, um, for is it, are there any particular reasons that you have found yourself recently? Um, being a little bit more involved in sharing your own story publicly?

TD: 01:20:25 It's not so much that I'm so interested in doing it. You asked me, so I did it. Um, and for them, they came for us. You asked us. So we did it. My friend Ken Nishimura and his wife Pauline, because they live in the suburbs, um, don't always have the same opportunities to engage with JAs like we do, who live in the city. So, I don't know if you were at my house that day, that night, when was Ken at my house? And he started, you know, usually Ken's, they come to our house in the afternoon about eight o'clock and he's ready to go home. Well, you know, he stayed til 12:30, talking, he was so amped up, you know, from

telling the story that maybe he's held inside, and uh, for so long, that he just couldn't stop. And 12:30, I had to tell him, you have to go home. Usually he goes home like 8 or 8:30, but if you invite him here, he'd be very happy to come. 'Cause his story is a little different.

AT: 01:21:44 Um, an-another thing I wanted to ask about is, you have been organizing all camps. Um, you know, of course we haven't had it consecutive years, but, um, for the past several years you've been organizing that vent- event. And, um, could you, uh, tell us a little bit about why that's a, uh, program that you, um, like to kind of curate and, and why that's why it's an important program to you?

TD: 01:22:19 Um, for many years, and I can't tell you when it started. Um, there has been, um, uh, uh, a meeting of all-clubs reunion, I described those clubs to you. And used to be only the south side, but in more recent years it became north and south side. All the clubs, we get together in Las Vegas, um, you know, people from California all everywhere, they came from all over to meet again because that friendship that they had in those years, their teenage years, their adolescent years was the most important thing in their life. They felt important and that friendship was something special because they were like people, there were people that came who are millionaires, multimillionaires. There are people that get by on social security, they belong to the same club. But when they get together and they're talking, it's like the old stories where, "Oh, you fell down that flight of stairs" and "Dah, dah, dah, and you like that girl, blah blah, blah."

TD: 01:23:37 They don't focus on today. They focus on the happy times they had in those days. So, um, we haven't held an all-club reunion for a few years because of the age of the people. They don't travel well, uh, to Las Vegas. But I thought of having an all-camps reunion before people were unable to tell their story. I believe that this year was one of the more successful stories. Uh, told Times your, um, uh, uh, films, your interviews were wonderful. Everybody loved those because you know, they could relate to it. Um, and when people agreed to come up and answer questions, you know, about their lives and camp or pre-war, uh, it was very honest and hopefully it was filmed and I think it was, you know, so their children, but that's what I want to focus on. Then for the next all-camps reunion is more people coming to share their history and their stories, which, you know, people really appreciate because there were people in the audience like Hannah Hogan who knew about Paul's mother dying. She knew her when she was alive, you know, so that,

that's the reason why I think the all camps and people like you, uh, would learn from the spoken word. And the visual, your grandpa has stories to tell. We didn't get to him that day.

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Maria: 01:25:26 You said the, and sorry you said that people again, I need it. Do you think like people like Sansei need that as well, that opportunity to share what they experience and why do you think your generation needs that as well from your position as a Sansei yourself? Because we've talked about the legacy and Yonsei being, we're talking about this now because we've been listening and we're learning the history. So why, and if you think, if you think this is the case, why aren't Sansei talking more about it now?

TD: 01:26:01 Truthfully, I do not know why they're talking about it now, but I would guess is because it's been introduced to them. Uh, and they have the opportunity to go to the site of the interment and to the area where the Japanese lived. Pre-War. Uh, we gave them the JACL. Uh, we put aside $15,000 a year in our budget to send 10 Sansei, Yonsei who identify as Japanese American. They can be biracial, you know, just a drop of Japanese blood and show the interest. We send them, they pay either a hundred or $150 and we see the results that they go. And maybe if they did not go, maybe they would not know or feel or be impressed by their heritage. Is that it Maria? Did I say?

M: 01:27:02 Yeah. Yeah. That's kinda because from an outsider I can see that I've been to many events regarding, you know, like yeah, eh, incarceration and all of those things. And I noticed that there are two platforms, eh, in the JAs, like we see more young people, being in the Never Again is Now March, you know, for IC. But then in the all-camps reunion, it's mostly, uh, you know, like Sansei population, the one that is there, eh, rather than there being, you know, like Yonsei. So um, more of like, eh. The question is, are Sansei, in your opinion, based on the years that you've been doing this, are you noticing that Sansei are talking more about what happened during the incarceration now rather than years before? And why do you think that is? Why do you think that now is the time to talk about it?

TD: 01:27:56 Because of the immigration policies of the government. Um, I think that foremost brought the attention to the Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei, you know, they feel, um, that they must, uh, help by

raising their voices, uh, against, um, the Imi-, the, the uh, government policies, which kind of related to the Japanese American in a different way, but in a way similar, right. As I mentioned, my father was very aware of the difference that as a Japanese alien and a Japanese American citizen, we were sent away without due process. So in the, um, executive order, it says, I believe it was in the executive order. If you have one 16th Japanese blood, you had to go to the camps. If you lived in this area. Now, why was just this area? Why didn't they take everybody? Because, I believe, and others believe it was more first racial, racially motivated and economically motivated. The Japanese farmers controlled a lot of land. I don't, there's a percentage. I don't know if you know the percentage. I don't, but it's huge. And they, they, um, even before the, uh, first world war in the Sacramento River Delta area, the Japanese immigrants in the 19, early 19 hundreds, learned to irrigate and to develop that land, that delta to grow potatoes.

TD: 01:29:54 Yeah, it was a, um, there's a lot of things that were lost and, and, but I think the relationships now is uh, connecting it to the, um, current policy of the government, ICE, etcetera. I don't know if, if uh, would they march just because Japanese Americans went to camp? I don't think so. Yeah. But because there's a like, um, project, it's, it comes together.

M: 01:30:27 And what do you think telling their stories does to Niseis, because we've talked to some Niseis and what do you think about being able to share what happened? Because you've been saying that your friends are sharing their stories, so what do you think that does to them? Having the opportunity to speak up about what happened to them. And have you found this to be easier with, not like now that more people are sharing their stories or is it still something that is, eh, difficult to get to happen?

TD: 01:31:01 I think it's the opportunity. I think it's a camera. It's you with you, you know, you're asking the right questions and opening up the dialogue. Sometimes when you have stories, like I'm a talker, you know, and I, I know the stories, so it's easy for me to tell the story. But some people they didn't have the same relationship with their families. Like my friend Ken, his father and mother never talked to him. So he just went along like a mope. He didn't know, you know, but he knows some things and he knows what happened. So those stories he's happy to share. But um, basically I think that's it. You have to ask the correct right questions of them. Like many Nisei or older Sansei they say, oh, well we went to camp, we had so much fun. You know, we just played games and danced and this and that. Well

there was more to it, you know, but they're not, they're not able to say it. Right. I think the hardship of their parents, if you go back to the hardship of what their parents did and endured.

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AT: 01:32:19 Um, I have just a couple more questions.

TD: 01:32:26 Yeah, go ahead.

AT: 01:32:28 Um, so given your heavy involvement in the community here over years, decades, really, um, how, how would you describe, um, I guess the Japanese American community from when you first arrived in the late 50s to today? Or maybe how has it changed?

TD: 01:33:00 Okay. I think, uh, now, uh, the social service, is that the right word? Social Service like.org organizations, um, you know, are more sharing and there are more, you know, like there's the historical society, the JACL, the JASC, uh, mutual aid. Uh, and before I think people lived, uh, joined and they were more isolated. Now it seems that the organizations are coming together more and, um, working toward certain goals, um, for the community. I, oh, go ahead. Oh, no. You know, I was just thinking,

TD: 01:33:50 Oh, what is your ethnicity?

M: 01:33:55 Me? Hispanic.

TD: 01:33:55 Hispanic. Hmm. Um, when I went to Italy for the first, no, not the first time, but when I went to Italy, I visited an area called Pietrasanta, which, um, there was a man, his name is Americo Bugliani. And he came to the United States, came to Chicago and became a commander of Nisei posts like two or three times he came to America. He was an Am-, his father was an American. So when he came to United States, he came kind of to search for someone. The guy's name was Paul Sakamoto. Now you've probably heard this story before, Anna. In his town of Pietrasanta, the Nisei, uh, the 100th and 4th, uh, 100th battalion 442, they, um, well, I don't know what the word is, but they stayed there before climbing the Apennine Mountains. Now, the 100th and 442, which is I guess a battalion and regiment of it was a segregated, they were segregated units of

only Japanese Americans, their leaders, their officers were white. There was a segregated Black regiment.

TD: 01:35:20 This was close to the end of the war in 1944. And they bivouacked in Pietrasanta. When they left there, they didn't know if their lives would end or they would survive. So the Black, the White and the Japanese climbed the Apennine and broke through the Gothic Line in 38 minutes, I believe, within 30 to 38 minutes. And they, they broke through the German Line and ended the war much earlier than anticipated. Well, Americo Bugliani when he, when he was in Pietrasanta as a 13 year old boy, there was a man called, uh, Paul Sakamoto, who was a member of the 442. He was from Hawai'i and he gave the boy his musket, he gave him his toothbrush, his toothpaste, uh, a jacket, I believe.

TD: 01:36:14 And he left, and he climbed the mountains and he survived. But all, many years and years later, uh, Americo wanted to find him because he was so kind to him. He was just a raggedy begging boy in Italy. So he called all the Paul Sakamoto's in California. He couldn't find them. He called in Hawai'i, couldn't find them. Well, one year the, uh, American Legion Jap, uh, went to Hawai'i for a convention and he asked about Paul Sakamoto, and he found him in Hilo on the Big Island. And I, there's a picture, I'll show you the picture of him. And uh, he said, "Why, why were you looking for me? Why?" He said, "Because you were so kind to me. You gave me everything you had." He said, "I did that because I did not know if I would survive. I didn't know if I would need my toothbrush. And you know, I wanted to give it to you."

TD: 01:37:17 So anyway, that Americo Bugliani, in the town of Pietrasanta, which is a half a mile, half an hour from Pisa, that, he, he created a park. Now Pietrasanta is a town of sculptors. Michelangelo had a studio there, Botero, he had a studio there. There are many students and each of the sculptors are asked to give a sculpture for the town. So it's in a plaza, it's a very small, beautiful town. Americo Bugliani and his wife Ann retired Diddley. She worked uh, for Loyola as uh, I think dean, dean of uh, foreign students or something. And now she, he died last year, but every year in May they would come to the, um, uh, memorial day at the cemetery because they memorialized the, you know, that's for soldiers who died memorial day. People don't, I didn't realize it, but ever since I went to Italy, I go to Memorial Day, you know, to honor those Japanese soldiers. So, but then this year Ann came and she was at the luncheon. I'll show you her picture later. So, well that made me interested in the Nisei Post because, uh, uh, I'm grateful and I respect and I, I

pay honor and homage to those men who were so brave and gave their lives, you know,

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AT: 01:39:01 Tonko, um, I want to ask you just in general, um, what are some of your hopes for the future of the Japanese American community here in Chicago?

TD: 01:39:18 Well, I hope that all the organizations get along well, that we work hand in hand with each other to, um, to help the history I think is important of the Japanese Americans from way back when. That information should be shared so that their children, their grandchildren, their great-grandchildren can understand and appreciate why they came to America, how they prospered in America, how they suffered in America, and how they, their lives grew in America. The whole story. My grandfather wrote a book I found out when I went to the mission school, it was called '50 Years in America'. Now in that book is a lot of history, but it's written in Japanese and it's in certain libraries. It's in Iolani in Hawai'i, it's in, in Do-sha-sha, Do-kyo-sha in Kyoto. But it's in Japanese and you can't take the book out. You have to read it there. But things like that, you would know, your grandchildren will know the story. It's important like with your film.

AT: 01:40:41 Um, one last question, and this is kind of more for this part that we're focusing on in the documentary, but, um, what are some of your thoughts or, or maybe perspectives on, um, Yonsei involvement in the community today?

TD: 01:40:59 What are my thoughts? I'm proud, I'm proud to see that because it's not just social now, right? I mean, each church and each organization, the kids would help with fundraisers, etcetera, but now they're working to helping people, right? And they cross lines, you know, now they're becoming one and, uh, working toward helping those who are less fortunate and don't have a voice. You know, it's like that, uh, what, uh, the German poet that, uh, then they came for me. Yeah.

AT: 01:41:45 Before we wrap up, um, one thing that I like to ask folks who record oral histories is, um, if you could leave some kind of legacy or message behind, um, whether it's for your family or, or for future generations, what is something that you would want, um, people to have or to know?

TD: 01:42:09 I think, um, as I said, like the German poet, uh, if you see something wrong, you have to speak up. You have to say, you have to vote. I mean, it could be one way or it could be the other. If you believe in something, you have to stand up for it. If you see something wrong happening, you have to speak and say that's wrong. Um, no one spoke for the Japanese people when they were taken to camp. The Japanese people themselves went to camp without much, uh, pressure. Some people blame the JACL for not making a stronger stand. But are you going to fight thousands of men with guns? No. If you see something, you hear something, you read something, you say something and you write in response.

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