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Title: Anne Yuki Watanabe Interview
Narrator: Anne Yuki Watanabe
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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- AT: 03:01 Okay. Um, you, can you, can you talk a little bit about, um, about your family's connection to the history of the Incarceration during World War II and Canada and you know, where your grandparents were?
- AW: 03:21 Yeah, so I don't feel like I know a whole lot because I haven't really gotten to talk to them about it a lot. And you know, my family's, which partly has to do with sort of my relationship with my family in general. But, um, my dad's family was all incarcerated in Canada that during World War II. So they originally were from the West Coast of Canada, like I think in like Vancouver and um, and they were incarcerated in the Tashme and Lillooet camps. I don't really know anything about those camps. I did. Um, I tried to do an oral history interview with my grandfather, my dad's father, and then also with my Auntie Fumi who is my grandmother's sister. Um, but yeah, I feel like, you know, I, it was really hard to kind of get any stories and I feel like I like really kind of got the summer camp version of the story where it was sort of like, yeah, you know, like it was hard, but we worked hard and it was fine.
- AT: 04:34 Um, so growing up, uh, where your, did you have your grandparents alive and did you have a relationship with them?
- AW: 04:43 Yeah, my grandfather is still alive. Um, but I would say like, you know, my relationship with my dad's family has always felt kind of fraught. Um, cause like I think my parents were both sort of like the black sheeps of their family. And, um, in my, you know, my dad kind of like moved far away and so we wouldn't see them that often, like maybe like once a year at the most. Um, but there was always a lot of tension between, like, there was, there was like tension about like the Nikkeiness of like my family where like my mom had this narrative that like, they didn't like her because she was too Japanese and my, and, but

she was also like very like judgmental of them as like Nikkei, like Japanese Canadians where she felt like they weren't like truly Japanese. Um, and you know, and there were like tensions for other reasons. So whenever we went there to visit, like I was always kind of being given this narrative, like, like, we should be careful here because they don't really like us. Um, and so I think I just never really felt that close to my dad's family because I didn't, you know, I felt the sense of like distrust when I was there. Um, but yeah, I mean, I think like, you know, the, the like, yeah, I mean, I grew up knowing, I don't remember like how exactly how I learned about it, but there was like openness about the fact that like, you know, like Japanese, um, incarceration during World War II had happened. And I later found out, I didn't know this at the time growing up, but I later found out that my grandfather was involved in some of like the reparations work, like the organizing around it. Um, and he was very like, you know, like he's Nisei and like he speaks Japanese fluently and like he, um, you know, like did Taiko drumming and stuff. And so he didn't, I think he tried to like pass on sort of like, he just, um, well what am I saying, uh, yeah, just like he, he clearly like felt that the incarceration was an injustice and he was like open and from that and he liked, did work around that and he did work to like, you know, personally connect with his Japanese heritage and for his children to have some of that too. Um, so yeah, that's definitely something I saw, but it does feel like there is, you know, um, like there's this way in which like, it impacted my family that like, like nobody really wanted to talk about that. Um, like I think, you know, my, like, I think, part of my fam, my parents both leaving their families of origin like had something to do with like family trauma, although it's not really clear to me like what exactly, but my dad dealt with like a lot of addiction later in his life. Um, like my dad died in 2012 but in like, you know, like the five, let's see, 2012. Yeah, I would say like the five or six years before he died, like he dealt with like a ton of addiction to some like pretty hard drugs. Like he was addicted to crack and heroin. Um, he kind of went through this like midlife crisis and um, you know, he was like in and out of jail and he was in and out of rehab briefly. And then he went back to Canada and he actually liked, got completely clean and like had this like major recovery, but then he liked died of a heart attack a couple of years later. So I, I dunno, I'm just like, you know, I just like, and especially like growing up too, like there was a lot of trauma in my nuclear family. Um, and like stuff that my parents were struggling with and that my dad in particular struggling with. And so I kind of feel like you don't like do that unless you're like dealing with some like demons, but he just, and, yeah. And I just like, you know, I saw, I noticed all of the sort of like gaps in my family's ability to like, you know,

there's just kind of like, we don't really know where that came from. Like we don't really know or like just like not talking about like the Incarceration and how it's impacted our family. But like, I believe that it has, but I don't quite like, know in what way.

AT: 09:27 And does your dad have siblings?

AW: 09:29 Yeah, he has four siblings. Um, he has one older sister and three younger brothers.

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