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Title: Lisa Doi Interview
Narrator: Lisa Doi
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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<Begin Segment 1>

Anna Takada: 00:00:00 This is an interview with Lisa 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 6th 2019 at 9:20 AM at the Japanese American Service Committee in Chicago. Lisa Doi is being interviewed by Anna Takada of the Japanese American Service Committee. Um, so to start, can you just state your full name?

Lisa Doi: 00:00:31 Hi, my name is Lisa Doi.

AT: 00:00:33 And uh, where and when were you born?

LD: 00:00:36 I was born in Chicago, I guess, although I grew up in Evanston, August 23rd, 1991.

AT: 00:00:43 Oh, happy birthday.

LD: 00:00:45 [laughs] Thank you.

AT: 00:00:47 Um, you said '91?

LD: 00:00:48 '91.

AT: 00:00:49 Okay. Um, cool. And then, uh, can you tell me about where you, where and when your parents were born?

LD: 00:00:57 My mom was born also in Chicago in March of 1953 and my dad was born in San Diego, California in January of 1952.

AT: 00:01:09 Okay, cool. And, um, so like I mentioned, um, just for this oral history, we'll be, um, interested in hearing about your family's background and sort of their trajectory, um, pre-war and during the war. Um, so I guess, uh, with that, could you just tell me, um, what you know about, um, I guess it would be your mom's

family's background, where, who came to the states first and kind of that sort of, um, part of your family history?

- LD: 00:01:45 Yeah, so my paternal, or sorry, my maternal grandfather's family, uh, was originally from Hiroshima, Japan and I don't really know a lot about how, how or when they came to the United States. Um, I'm guessing in the late 1800s or early 1900s and they came to Stockton, California. I know my great grandfather was a barber and had a barbershop in Stockton. Um, I don't know if my great grandmother ever had a job. On my maternal grandmother's side, her family came from around Fukuoka in Japan and we've, well, we've visited both of their, you know, family homes in Japan. Um, but I know my great grandfather was from a very wealthy family and was the first born son, so he stood to gain a lot of money, but he, um, what I've heard about why he came to the United States with the, he was trying to dodge the draft for the Russo-Japanese war and, uh, so he came to the United States for a little bit, sort of gambled away all his money and his father made him a deal that was like, we'll pay off your debts, but in exchange you give up your rights to inherit, sort of, all this wealth. So he took the deal. Um, so I also have heard that they originally were in Portland and sort of working on like a fruit orchard or had a fruit orchards and he lost that as well. And so they sort of slowly made their way to Southern California and ended up in the, in the LA area.
- AT: 00:03:24 Um, do you have any idea, um, how his family had acquired wealth or?
- LD: 00:03:32 I've heard that they were a Samurai family, so I don't really know exactly what that means or why you would get wealth from that. But we've seen their house from like the 1400s. It's this absolutely beautiful, historic Japanese home. And I also know that on the estate are these very rare trees. And so on occasion in recent history, they've cut down trees to sell.
- AT: 00:03:57 Wow. Um, okay, so that was, um, can you clarify, sorry if-
- LD: 00:04:07 That was my mom's, mom's dad.
- AT: 00:04:10 Okay. Um, so he made his way down to Southern California. Um, and then, um, do you have any sense of like what time that would put us at?
- LD: 00:04:26 Um, so I think, so at that point he had kids and so my grandmother is the second youngest of five kids. Um, so she

was, uh, she was born in Portland, um, and she was born in the, I think 1926, so I would guess that was the mid 1930s is when they went from Portland to LA.

AT: 00:04:48 Okay. Um, and then, yeah. Can you, if you're able to, can you kind of just keep going on like we're um, I guess maybe we can go like up until more time, like what either family was doing respectively.

LD: 00:05:05 Yeah. So I believe that that great-grandfather owned a Chinese restaurant where that's what he was doing in LA. He worked in a Chinese restaurant. Um, my great, I'm sorry, not my great grandmother. My grandmother went to LA City College for some period of time before the war started and I know my grandfather was at UC Berkeley and he was going into his senior year of college when the, or he was, I guess in the middle of his senior year of college when the war started. I don't really know much else about them. Um, one of my great uncles had joined the US army before the war started. Um, and so I've always been interested in sort of what happened to him. Was he allowed to stay in the military? Was he kicked out for a period of time before he was able to rejoin? Um, but that's, I think all I really know about any of my family before the war.

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