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Narrator: Hiroki Kimiko Keaveney
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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<Begin Segment 5>

HK: 00:19:39 By that time he was probably in his mid, late twenties. They're probably in their early-twenties or mid-twenties. Um, cause it's been like four years or five years. No, three years. Wait four years. I think there were deported in 1945. Yeah, so it would have been and Pearl Harbor happened in 41. Okay. Um, yeah, no, that's a good question. It's good to like track. So I was like, was he entering his Saturn Return? Like when he was deported? Oh my God. Okay. Anyway, so they were deported and because they were Japanese American, they didn't speak Japanese. Um, and so they ended up working at a U.S. Military base. Just the ironies upon ironies. I know from my family, but before they worked in Tokyo, like at a hospital, um, which is where they worked in Manzanar in hospitals too, um, like cleaning up people's like waste basically. Um, yeah, it was a really sad story. It was like, even my grandfather I think talked about it a little in Densho about like being on the train and seeing just the devastation, the atomic bombs, like just like, I can't even imagine like, like being treated like shit in your country and then like going back to the country that you're supposed to be and then like seeing it in total ruins because of the country you came from. And then, um, basically the story was they were on the train and they got to the stop and then my great-grandma, I assume it was her, cause they were rice farmers, they were looking for their rice farms and they couldn't find them and they walked for like miles, like along the train tracks and just by the time they got to the village, I guess, um, yeah, the way that the article that I read about my family was like my great-aunt Grace she just like sat down and just started crying just by the time they got there and it's just really hard to hear it cause my great-aunt Grace was my favorite aunt. She actually is my favorite aunt, hands-down. Um, and she's like one of the funniest people I had ever known. And so it's usually funny people are funny cause they've been through a lot of bad things and um, yeah, I think about my aunt Grace a lot, um, when I think about them going back to Japan, um, and how that impacted her.

AT: 00:22:03 And so were they returning to where your great-grandparents were from?

HK: 00:22:09 I assume it was my great-grandmother. Yeah. That was the sense I was getting, cause she was the one who really wanted to go back. So they had been rice farmers, so I assume, um, and yeah, I just assumed they were looking for their farm. But um, it was probably destroyed during the war, so because it was destroyed or they couldn't find it, they ended up going to Tokyo and working in like the hospital or the military bases, finding different jobs, befriending white people to, really, as a way to come back to America. Um, if it wasn't for this, like white soldier person my family wouldn't have come back to the United States. So it was my grandfather's way of befriending white people to come back to America. And then my great-aunt Grace, she came back to America by marrying someone she didn't love. She married like a soldier who she didn't really love because she wanted to come back to America. And my great uncle Benny, he has a lot of problems. He just came back to the United States when, um, they did the pardon, which I think was in the 50s where the government apologized and said, you are under distress, clearly, and you can come back to America if you want. Um, so, and then my, I think I'm confused about my great-grandfather. Like what, I know he was in America for a bit, but I think they sent him back to Japan cause he wasn't a good person. Um, but my great-grandmother, she ended up living in LA, like coming back, I think during the pardon, and just her story it was just, I feel like a lot of people in my family, honestly, had really tragic endings, but it's just, I actually learned my great grandmother's story through my second cousin, my great-uncle Benny's son. He's so nice. His name is Kenneth. He lives in Seattle. He's like, he's just so nice. And so when I lived in Seattle, I got to know him better. Um, and yeah, he shared with me about my great-grandmother and how she basically like, yeah, she lived I think by train tracks like somewhere in LA and that, like, she, she just like, her story was, she was just so disillusioned about everything that happened. And, um, I think my great aunt grace would always visit her, but it's crazy how disconnected I feel from them that I don't know their names, you know, that I don't know if my grandmother died alone, my great grandmother, you know. Um, and that's what internment did, it just, it just separated us as a family. Um like, yeah, I have family scattered everywhere. Um, yeah. And so in Japan though, my great-aunt Grace, she was a typist and that's where she met my grandmother, Kimiko, um, oh actually I don't know, my grandmother's maiden last name. That's a problem. Patriarchy, you know. Um, so Kimiko worked in the U.S. base too, cause she really wanted to come to America. So her mom, so my other

great-grandma wanted her to be a geisha and she was like, no thanks I want to go to America. And she would always talk about how like all the Japanese girls would like date, like GIs, like white soldiers. But she wasn't looking for a GI. She was looking for someone she actually wanted to love. And so she met my grandfather through my aunt because they were in the same class together. She's like, oh, I want you to meet my brother. And then they ended up getting married. She liked how tall he was cause like he's very tall. Um, and my aunt and uncle are very tall too. My mom's really short. She's adopted. Um, so we look nothing like our family. Um, so anyway, so they met my grandmother was from Fukuoka and um, yeah, and they met in Tokyo and then they immigrated to America I think in the fifties. Um, they were able to come back and they weren't able to get pregnant when they were in Japan. They had my uncle Gene. Um, and they tried and tried but couldn't. And so they adopted my mom from the same city as my grandmother's son, which was Fukuoka and, um, and they ended up getting pregnant that year with my aunt, I think.

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