

Densho Digital Repository
Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and
Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS)
Oral History Project Collection
Title: Junko Mizuta Interview
Narrator: Junko Mizuta
Interviewer: Anna Takada
Location:
Date: October 4, 2017
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-6-2

<Begin Segment 2>

- AT: 00:06:48 Were you going to school by then, when you came back?
- JM: 00:06:51 Yeah, I went to Buckman grade school. And, it was nice. I don't, only thing was I couldn't speak English the first years I think. And that was kind of bad, but once that was gone I was fine.
- AT: 00:07:11 Were there other Japanese American families where you lived?
- JM: 00:07:15 Not that I know of. There were a couple where there was one family later on, another family moved in, but they were kind of far, you know, like, not like next door maybe they were, what? Portland six walk seven blocks away.
- AT: 00:07:34 And did you and your sister, did you have to go to Japanese school?
- JM: 00:07:38 Well, not really. I don't think that was in the plan, but my, um, these two other gals, they were going and I was around 12 I think and then I found out they were going to Japanese school and so I came home and I asked my Mom if I go to Japanese school because they were going to school and she said, well Dad and I all discuss it and we'll let you know. So a couple of days later my Mom said, yeah, well we decided you could go. So that's how I went to Japanese school. My sister never went.
- AT: 00:08:25 Hmm. And were you speaking Japanese at home?
- JM: 00:08:28 Yeah, with my parents, not with my sister.
- AT: 00:08:34 Hmm. How long were you going to Japanese school?
- JM: 00:08:38 No, too long because I started late around 11, 12 and then the war started when I was 16. So maybe four or five years at the most.

AT: 00:08:52 Did you, how were you as a student?

JM: 00:08:56 I don't know, I guess it was interesting, you know, we have to write composition and read and of course I was the oldest in the class because most of the kids start when they're probably a lot younger, but it was an interesting experience. I mean like today I can look at a character kind of looks familiar, which I wouldn't have had if I hadn't gone.

AT: 00:09:27 Hmm. Was Your family religious at all?

New Speaker: 00:09:30 I'm sorry.

New Speaker: 00:09:31 Was Your family religious at all?

JM: 00:09:33 My Dad was, my Mom too. I guess it must have rubbed off on her, but I was reading the, um, the, well, the DOJ report, it said that my Dad was a Christian from Japan. I don't know how that happened. I wish he were living in and I had known, I would have asked him. But yeah, I was raised a Methodist. My Mom was, of course my Dad was like a deacon at the church. Very active in the church.

AT: 00:10:11 And you said that you wish that you asked your Dad, was that, that he was religious in Japan?

JM: 00:10:19 You, yeah. Well, how he became a Christian in Japan, but I didn't know this until I read the report.

AT: 00:10:29 Hmm. Speaking about about your parents, um, can you describe them? What, what were they like when they were raising you and these,

JM: 00:10:46 I don't know, my Dad was fun. You know, I didn't know, can't really recall. You know, we used to do things together as a family. So, but my Dad was always busy, you know, who is always going to meetings and stuff like that. And uh, my Mom was, I guess she was busy with her business when she opened it, but, uh, she was a home, you know, home person, until then.

AT: 00:11:33 What was her business the one she

JM: 00:11:35 She opened the laundries in store, so she had her own business and my Dad had his.

AT: 00:11:45 Was your Dad's just being the, the apartments?

JM:

00:11:50

Yeah, he had the apartment. And when she first opened the business was about a block away, but then there was a vacancy on the first floor storefront. So she moved your business to the first floor of the apartment. So it was convenient. Yeah.

<End Segment 2> - Copyright © 2017 Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS). All Rights Reserved.