

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-1-6-9

<Begin Segment 9>

AT: 00:50:30 To go back a little bit.

JM: 00:50:31 Yeah

AT: 00:50:31 You were in Milwaukee?

JM: 00:50:35 Yeah

AT: 00:50:35 Uh

JM: 00:50:35 And then my Dad died. So then I went back to camp and it was strange because, uh, my sister called that day and she said, you know, I want to come over and you know, we never got together except on our day off and this was not our day off. So she came over and she was with me because it wasn't my deal. So she stayed with me. And then that night we got a phone call and from camp and it said, you need to come home, because Dad isn't feeling well. And so the couple that I was staying at was wondering how urgent it was because I had to get a plane fare and all this stuff. So we called again to find out how urgent it was and they told us that he had died. So then we decided it was urgent, so we went back when my sister and I feel bad, I think I left my stuff there at this house. I was thinking about it the other day I wonder what happened to. I think she wrote me and asked me what should we do with your things and I think I just told her just throw it away.

AT: 00:52:05 Hmm.

JM: 00:52:06 But I never really kept up with them. They were, you know, good to me compared to what happened with the first family.

AT: 00:52:21 And um, when your, when your father was released, and came to Minidoka was he just staying with your Mom? Had your older sister left already?

JM: 00:52:33 Yeah, yeah, because from Milwaukee, I went back to camp for the funeral and then I left again in August, I think. And I went to Iowa, and I went to a Methodist college, Simpson College. I went there one year. I worked in the kitchen, to make, so I could have room and board free and I had made enough money for the tuition. So then when the school year ended, in the meantime, my Mom had left camp and she didn't want to go back to the West Coast. So she said she wanted to start new out East, so she came out here to Detroit and so after my first year as Simpson, I went to Detroit and I was there in Michigan for about three months and I worked, I didn't like working, so I thought, well there must be a better way of doing things and working. And I thought, well I'm going to go back to school again. So in those days, it's not like today. And I went up to Michigan, University of Michigan, I talked to the administrative person, gave him my story and he said you can start this semester, which was like next week. And uh, but in the meantime he had to get my transcripts and stuff. So he got my transcripts and Michigan would not accept my high school credits from camp. So that meant what that meant, the one year that I did at Simpson, they took those credits and put it down to my high school credits. So that because of that then I was accepted. But then in the meantime I lost so many hours. So I went a couple of summers to make up for the hours that I lost in, but um, it worked, you know, it worked out fine.

AT: 00:55:01 When you were at Simpson, what were you, were you on any kind of track or what were you studying?

JM: 00:55:06 Oh I wasn't. I was just, you know, it was small. It was during the war. There were only 394 kids, it was smaller than my high school. I guess that's what I didn't like about it. It was like high school. I did live in a dorm, which was a good experience, but I don't know, I just, I didn't care for it. I mean you know, I guess I thought it was his college, you know, it's small. So then I went the opposite and went to Michigan with about 35,000 students, you know, but.

AT: 00:55:56 Do you know any, anything more about your mother's decision to move East?

JM: 00:56:02 No, because I really wasn't there. Just what my sister said. She just said Mom just didn't want to go back because there was nothing to go back to. She lost her business. My Dad lost his

business. He wasn't around anymore, so she said there was no use going back. So she said it's going to start new. She wanted to go out East.

AT: 00:56:38 And um, as far as the rest of your schooling, um, did you finish at University of Michigan?

JM: 00:56:46 Yeah I finished at University of Michigan in '48.

AT: 00:56:50 Hmm. And hat was your degree in?

JM: 00:56:53 I had a BS degree, I don't know what it was. It was a long time ago. Yeah.

AT: 00:57:03 And, and where did you go from there?

JM: 00:57:05 Oh, then in the meantime, my Mom, uh, moved to Chicago because she really couldn't find a good job in Detroit. She was doing domestic and then she, what was she doing? She was working in a nursing home and she had her room and board there, but she, um, but had friends here and the friends said come to Chicago, you'll find a better job. My Mom was a good seamstress so she said, come to Chicago. So that's what she did. And when I finished I came here.

AT: 00:57:51 Was your sister still in Detroit?

JM: 00:57:53 My sister was here, but then she moved back to Detroit.

**<End Segment 9> - Copyright © 2017 Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS). All Rights Reserved.**