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Title: Lois Shikami Interview
Narrator: Lois Shikami
Interviewer: Anna Takada
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<Begin Segment 11>

- AT: 01:09:13 You mentioned that the Japanese American community in Chicago, um, what, what was that like at that time here in Chicago from what you
- LS: 01:09:30 Yeah. Um, during the time I was in Delavan I kept hearing about all the fun that the young people were having who came out of camp, you know, they had basketball games together and, and lots of dances and they would have picnics and I was so envious and I, there I was in Del, really, I was sad about that, but by the time I came, a lot of the young people were married and having their families and I somehow attended the, a Christ Church that was called something else at that point, Congregational Church. It was on, um, it was near my, it was off Broadway, um, and when I went there I met some single women, so I did a couple things with them and then I met more fellows and then I was on that sort of merry-go-round. It was wonderful. You know one thing after another. So but they had picnics and church outings and stuff like that. I got involved in some of that.
- AT: 01:11:09 Do you remember, were there any Japanese American owned businesses or restaurants or
- LS: 01:11:16 Uh, yeah, as soon as we got married and we lived on Melrose, we used to go to Star Market and there were um, restaurants, uh, Matsuya and Naniwa, Sen, Senko. Yeah, that Clark Street area was filled with different businesses. Yeah. I really liked that. I used to put the kids in a stroller, one stroller held one child and one hitched a ride in the back and then I'd have one at that point, one kid holding on and we walked everywhere. We walked to the beach, or walk to the lake, walk to the lake. Those are happy times.
- AT: 01:12:20 And how did it, um, when you were living in Glenview, how did that compare to your experiences in Roger's park or

LS: 01:12:34 Um, when I first got there, it was something my parents are working all the time. Um, my mother worked as a housekeeper in the hotel. My dad was a chef in the, um, uh, in the restaurant. They were busy all the time. Um, I, as soon as I was old enough, at, when I was 15, I babysat for one of the bosses and that soon as I turned 16, they let me work, I really enjoyed it. I, um, they let me work in the snack shop, you know serving hamburgers and ice cream cones and then they let me work in the coffee shop. And then when I came home from a, during vacations, I got to work banquets as a waitress. And then at that point we started to get other workers who were from Hawaii. They came there because they couldn't afford to go back to Hawaii during vacations. So they came there to work. Uh, they, they only got to work as dishwashers, but at least they were there. And we had a lot of fun on Wednesday nights, was employee nights at the great ballroom on the lake, you know, they had real orchestras and um, we used to go there dancing or we used to go have a picnics after work, like we would have a midnight picnic and they use to borrow food from the kitchen and we'd have a fire at along the lake. And those are really fun times that continued all through my college years.

AT: 01:14:44 And I'm so sorry, I was um asking about Glenview in the suburbs and how that compared to uh

LS: 01:14:54 Oh yeah, I'm sorry.

AT: 01:14:55 Here in Chicago?

LS: 01:14:57 Okay. Glenview,

AT: 01:15:01 Is that where you're living now? Where do you live now?

LS: 01:15:05 We live in Glenview. Um, so you're asking how living there was? Well, you know, as, as we get older and the kids tell stories. Actually I did not like exposing my kids to that, that type of environment, especially New Trier where it's upper class, you know, and we were sort of struggling when we got. Because you know, we're probably living beyond our means. But we did it for the kids' schooling and I couldn't, we couldn't afford the best clothes and so I sort of worried about it might've been tough for them and once in a while my sons would say something that indicated that life wasn't all that great for them. And plus they're small, they're just small build like us and, and these are, you know, I don't know, I just have a feeling high school wasn't the best, but they had good schooling, you know, it really got them. They became educated. So as I hear now other parents out there saying, you know, New Trier isn't all that great for our

kids and these are Caucasians saying that. So if it was tough for their kids, I thought, oh my god, what my kids went through. Um, as far as our neighbors, we lived in an, it's not the fanciest neighborhood, but it was nice, nice middle class neighbors. And when we got there they were all friendly. One family in particular, came from England and they knew what it was to come to a new neighborhood. So they were especially kind to us taking us shopping and inviting us over for parties and things and, and we, we were invited to all the neighborhood parties and we got to know everyone. But then as time went on, and the kids were not especially good friends of our neighbors, they had their friends from outside of the neighborhood, but they did okay. But um now the neighborhood has really changed and everyone is young and the children are young and now the homes in the area have gotten so expensive that only the professionals could live there. So it's a whole different place. We're one of two older families who are still there. Everyone else has gone.

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