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Title: Lois Shikami Interview
Narrator: Lois Shikami
Interviewer: Anna Takada
Location:
Date: October 25, 2017
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-8-3

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- AT: 00:09:12 And so do you remember the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked?
- LS: 00:09:23 Oh yeah, very clearly, although now that I think of it, it was a Sunday and I can't remember if I heard it at church or my sister and I went to a neighbor's house which was sort of across the street from church because I remember my little friend and her mother talked about it and she got hysterical and my sister and I were on the quiet side and we just listened. But we became really worried because her mother, well, the little girl wanted to know what, what happens in a war? And her mother said, well, they'll be fighting each other and there might be bombs and, and saying things that really scared the three of us. So my sister and I thought we'd better hurry home. So then when we got home, my family was, was there and they were very worried, very, very worried because my mother and father had a lot of relatives, sisters and brothers and parents and back in Japan. And you know, the thought of that really worried.
- AT: 00:10:45 The family that you were with when you got the news, were they Japanese Americans?
- LS: 00:10:52 Yes, they were fellow church members and very close friends of my parents. Yeah.
- AT: 00:11:01 And do you remember any of the, the conversation, were there conversations in your family about it or
- LS: 00:11:11 Yeah, they worried a lot. And that first day, they only were really worried about their relatives. What would happen in the whole idea of fighting against your own family members, you know, that are worried them a lot. But in the days that came after, there were so many rumors that were swirling around the community and the friends and they would always sort of be

whispering about what things are happening. And one thing that happened started almost immediately was that the FBI came to all our friends homes to investigate. And they were looking for people who had men, fathers who had connections with Japan and um, they were uh, searching homes for any, anything that had to do with Japanese relations and they, they took them away. Um, the men, the fathers and the husbands, they took them away and they never said where they were taking them to. So the families were deathly afraid of what was going to become of all the rest of us and my fath, my sister, my older sister happened to mention just last week or so, how my father had a suitcase ready to go in case they took him away and I don't remember when they came, but my sister remembers that they asked him a lot of questions, but they decided that he was not one that they were interested in. So we were relieved. Yeah.

- AT: 00:13:09 Did your father, um, have any kind of um affiliations with any organizations besides the church or was that
- LS: 00:13:21 I think it was basically the church. As I described his job and his part time jobs. He never had time except for friends gathering with them, but he never joined any, any, uh, clubs. I don't think.
- AT: 00:13:46 And you described that there were a lot of rumors going around about what was going to happen. Do you remember what any of those words did you hear about them as a 10 year-old?
- LS: 00:13:56 You know, I don't think anyone at first thought of that we would ever be gathered up and put into camps. But little by little it came out that yes, we were going to be put somewhere and they started to give us shots, inoculation. I remember typhoid and um, I mean I was deathly afraid of shots and so I was very afraid and sure enough, can't remember where we got them. Um, maybe at church or wherever there were groups of Japanese we started to be inoculated so we knew something was going to happen to us. But as a kid, um, you know, just so I was with my family, I guess it didn't scare me as much, but it wasn't long before we were told that, yes, indeed you are going to be taken away and you have two weeks or I forgot what time it was. Pack up, uh, you know, clothing, bedding, um a cook, eating utensils. No, well, you could take radios. Don't take knives or cameras, you know. So we knew about all of that. As a kid I worried about could I take any of my toys? And I believe I took one, what I call dy dee doll, one of my favorite dolls that I received at Christmas that drank a, you could drip feed of water, you could change the diapers. I managed to put that into my suitcase. Yeah.

AT: 00:15:59 And as far as the shots, was that um, was that something that the government had ordered or

LS: 00:16:07 Oh yes. All of it was coming down from the government. And um, it was frightening because, I mean...We were told, well, it-- what, it actually happened, they had a curfew and every night at 8:00 we all had to be home and I believe we had to pull the shades down and wherever you were, well you couldn't go anywhere because you had to be home by 8. And my sister and I and a neighbor who lived two doors away, a little girl, we'd be jump roping outside and then when the siren went off, you know, we'd run for home. I remember my older brother, he was like, maybe he was about like 18 years old. He had a girlfriend that lived two doors away and he would sneak out the back and climb two fences to get to her place and spend the evening, but us little ones were scared to death.

AT: 00:17:17 Do you remember any other ways that your life as a 10 year old had a change?

LS: 00:17:23 Yeah. Um, we had friends in school who were Chinese and, and suddenly they started to wear little signs, you know, on their lapels that said I am Chinese. And I remember feeling really hurt that, you know, our friends would do such a thing but that they didn't want to be mistaken for you know, the enemy. So that really hurt. But my, my best friends were Japanese, so we were all sharing the same problems.

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