

Densho Digital Repository
Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and
Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS)
Oral History Project Collection
Title: Jane Kaihatsu Interview
Narrator: Jane Kaihatsu
Interviewer: Anna Takada
Location:
Date: October 27, 2017
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-9-3

<Begin Segment 3>

AT: 00:08:06 So your, your mother's family?

JK: 00:08:08 Yes, my mother is from the San Francisco Bay Area. She's from a town called Alameda, which is across the Bay, near Oakland. And her parents, Jiro Yano is her father, and he came to the United States probably about the same time as my Masajiro did in 1906. Uh, Jiro had been in the Japanese Navy during the Russo-Japanese war as a sailor. Um, he was kind of a, I don't want to say ne'er-do-well cause it's a little bit too strong. But in the prefecture Fukuoka where he's from, he came from a well to do family. They had um, they owned land and, and people farmed the land for them. So he didn't really have much to do. And so he joined the Navy. Uh, he was actually in battle during the Russo-Japanese War. And then after the war was over, he joined the British Merchant Marines and sailed around the world. And when they came to San Francisco and the ship docked up, uh, I was told that he tested the tides and I think about it, they're supposedly shark infested waters, but somehow he figured that out and he jumped ship and swam to shore. And that's how he got to San Francisco and met up with some friends and then eventually, um, was working in, in, uh, as a domestic, I understand, and then, um, wanted to get married and wrote back to his village and Fukuoka. So my grandmother was from the same, uh, town or in the same area as he was versus the Kaihatsu's were from completely different areas. And my grandmother was one of um seven girls, I believe. And she was part samurai. She had, uh, her own servant and, but she was chosen to go to America and marry this guy. And it did not go over very well. And for the rest of her life, she vowed she would never return to Japan because she felt so betrayed. But nonetheless, she did go over and marry him. And then they had three children, three daughters. And my mother, Rose is the youngest and the um family ran a grocers in Berkeley for awhile. Um, my grandfather Jiro also worked as a cook and the chef. And so they're, I guess involved with food. And then at the time

of the Evacuation, they had a, um, grocery store in Berkeley, which they had to unload, but they decided that to try and evade the evacuation, they went to the Sacramento Area. And, uh, of course that doesn't work because the Exclusion Zone became the entire state of California. So my mother always told me that as she hated that aspect of, or that decision that her parents made because it meant that she was not evacuated with her friends and other people that she knew well from the Buddhist Temple, she was evacuated with strangers and she was very shy person. But they, so they ended up um, going to Tanforan Assembly Center and then she went to Gila River, Arizona, Assembly Center. And you know, made, made friends there. I'm not sure come to think of where the Alameda people did end up. I think they might've ended up at Topaz from the Bay Area, but in any case, she went to Gila River. And in her case, uh, the first one to leave camp was her middle sister, Yuri, who got a job in Chicago in, uh, Winnetka, actually for a wealthy family working as a domestic. And when Yuri had saved enough money to get her own apartment on the North Side in Uptown, she sent for my mother and her parents and in, an already married elder sister who had two children, actually two of my cousins were born in camp. And they all came to Chicago, probably around 1945 and lived in Uptown. And my mother was in her senior year of high school and she belongs the fact that she couldn't finish, um, high school in camp. She came to Sun High School on the North Side, again with complete strangers. Everybody knew each other by the time they're seniors. And so she always felt very alone. But she graduated. And then, uh, she and my dad met at a party and I can't recall right now whose party it was, but my dad took the L from the South Side up to the North Side. So it's, um, now the red line they call it. At that time it was the Dan Ryan and the Howard L, to visit her. And they were married in 1948. Um, initially they lived, um, at that address where I was born in North Park Avenue and North Avenue. And um, should mention it was a housing project at the time. It was public, public housing and there were other displaced persons from Europe. They called them DP refugees from Europe. And they were also African Americans. So it was a very interesting mixed area for my older brother to grow up in. I think he lived there until he was about seven or eight years old.

- AT: 00:13:26 And you said you were about two years old?
- JK: 00:13:28 Right when I moved. I, so I don't have any memory of North Park, you know, I just remember Jefferson Park.
- AT: 00:13:36 Um, thank you. That's quite a comprehensive family history.

<End Segment 3> - Copyright © 2017 Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) and Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (CJAHS). All Rights Reserved.