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Title: Jane Kaihatsu Interview
Narrator: Jane Kaihatsu
Interviewer: Anna Takada
Location:
Date: October 27, 2017
Densho ID: ddr-chi-1-9-5

<Begin Segment 5>

AT: 00:19:39 Um, what are some, some, are there any memories or stories of either hers or your father's that kind of stick out to you or you know, when you think about, um, Kaihatsu, like your, uh um, I guess collective camp experiences. Are there any like?

JK: 00:20:02 Well, certainly. Things that, um, I've been told, um, by some people, but my mom told a lot of these stories too. Uh, Omar Kaihatsu was notorious. He was larger than life and uh, apparently and the long train ride to Heart Mountain, um, where the shades were drawn and it was very uncomfortable. Uh, there was an Issei man that kept picking on him for some reason in, in what manner, I'm not sure. But apparently when they got to fart, Heart Mountain, Omar got in a fight with this Issei man and punched him out. And this man fell and hit his head on a rock. And, uh, got Omar arrested for attempted murder. So they had to hire an attorney. Um, um, Issei man by the name of Mr. Fuji, who I believe resettled in Chicago too. But other people who I've met, like when I used to live in, in San Francisco and, or visit California and even, and even in Japan, I met a man that knew my dad in camp. And they used to call Omar the gangster. When he walk in the dining hall with his gang, he kicked open the door. Um, just things like that. He ended up in the Army boxing and, um, was just an, and then when he got out of the Army too and came to the Chicago before he was drafted, he was a, um, boxer at the Golden Gloves Gym and boxed in the Catholic Youth League. And we found, I found a little article where he actually won a, um, an award. We had, have the little medal, and he was written up in the Tribune about it. So that's, um, Omar Kahaitu's reputation in camp. Uh, he didn't really talk about any of the times there except it was boring. Uh, my Aunt Martha spoke a little bit more. She just said she remembers Congressman Norman Mineta who became Secretary Norman Mineta at Heart Mountain is a little boy and they would call him little Normy running around all over the place. Um, as far as the Kahaistu's

his life in camp, I mean, I have pictures of my Uncle Gordon who was the Omar's youngest brother. He was a Boy Scout. And he had learned to play the bugle and he actually loved jazz music and, and that followed him the rest of his life. Oh, my mom, Rose, she was in middle school when she was at Gila River and she thought it was, it was really hot. Uh, there, there was a lot of sand. They did try and see if they could fry an egg on the board. But, um, she doesn't have any unpleasant memories except for it being very hard to make friends. But she did make some friends and she's still talks about some friends from Gila River even today. Uh, coming to Chicago, oh, neither one of them really talked about what that experience was. And when I think about it now, out of all the relatives I had, you know, no one ever talked about what it was like, that transition, they just somehow they were in Chicago. Ah my father, I know, after the service, um, found some interesting artifacts in his drawer. He came home from Italy via Egypt via, so he was in Cairo, then he went to Sao Paulo, Brazil and then landed in New York and then went to Chicago via that way. And that was kind of interesting. He said if it weren't for the Army, he would've never seen the rest of the world at that young age. Um, so Omar was not really in camp very long. Um, I him, why didn't you resist, once, like the No-No Boys said and he said, because I didn't want to go to prison. I said, okay, that's a good answer. And my mother, um, yeah, again, she just, as a young teenager, she just, and a female, I guess just did what she was told and, and really didn't have to worry about anything. That was her older siblings concerns.

AT: 00:24:11 Well,

JK: 00:24:11 Oh, I, there is one story I do remember about my grandmother, which is kind of interesting. Um, my grandmother when she came to Chicago, ended up working as a maid at the Edgewater Beach Hotel cleaning and housekeeping. And this is a person that I mentioned was part Samurai, had had a servant, didn't want to be in the U.S. in the first place, right? And now is ended up working as hotel maid. Well, at one point during the early 1950s, I think just after my brother was born in 51', um, she had a psychotic episode. Where, um, she was brandishing a knife and she had locked my grandfather, uh, I believe he was also working in the Edgewater Beach Hotel in the kitchen as a chef. Um, she locked him out of the apartment and then finally, um, they had to, they called the doctor and in those days, men in white coats came to take you away, which was a stereotype. And she had to be taken away in a straight jacket. And she was hospitalized in inpatient psychiatric for by the week. And my mom said that she was very quiet when she saw the men in the

white coats. Um, my mom felt that she felt profound, embarrassment, my grandmother. So she became very docile at that point. And after which she was fine. The doctor felt that she was just tired, tired from the war, tired from the Evacuation, the camp, to moving the Chicago, the harsh winter, working as a maid in the hotel and she just collapsed. And ever since then she's never, you know, had any incidents. But I kinda think, you know, looking back of it, it's a wonder that more people didn't really, you know, crack up. When you think about it.

AT: 00:26:10 I think, I would argue that a lot of people have. But you know, It's just not really talked about.

JK: 00:26:17 Right. I do remember my mom saying that someone did. I said, when she told me that story about her grandma, her mother having a psychotic episode, I said, um, were there anything else she said? One man hung himself in Lincoln Park. And I don't know if it was an Issei or Nisei, but there was that notorious incident. But then she said, but everybody else was in the same situation. Everybody that we knew, you didn't have time to go crazy, you know, you just had to get back on your feet and keep going.

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