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Title: Keiko Shinmoto Interview
Narrator: Keiko Shinmoto
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
Location: Stockton, California
Date: July 25, 2011
Densho ID: ddr-densho-1021-3-5

<Begin Segment 5>

NW: Now, going back to when the war was still going on, you know you were in the countryside, but some of your family members were in the city limit. I think you mentioned your sister was probably . . . , yeah. Could you please tell me a little more about that?

KS: Well, I didn't see her, because I was, um, already [on] the other side of the countryside, but my mother was in city, you know, to take care of my sisters. Half body burned, the sister, yeah. I mean, she died. I understand it, August 15th.

NW: Uh-hm. So, you mean, let us get the story clear. So, your sister was the only person who was in the city at the time?

KS: Oh, my brother too.

NW: Okay, and are you saying that your parents went to look for them after . . . ?

KS: No, I don't think so. You know that's a situation like that, every family had an agree- or make a setup. If something happened, everybody gonna work around and go school, that's one way. So something happened, everybody go meet my aunt's house. That's the way.

NW: Which is where?

KS: That's just. Before, I told you, that's, she had a little farm, maybe three and half miles away from the city.

NW: Uh-hm. So, it was outside the city.

KS: So everybody meet there. That's the way they agree.

NW: But your sister and brother, your sister obviously didn't come back, did she?

KS: I think she came back. Yeah, I think. And then my mom and aunty took care. But half died, half burned body. Yeah, that's what I heard.

NW: So, you didn't see her.

KS: I didn't see her. After everything, after my sister died, [we] cremate. And I think that's my brother over there inside. I remember whether my mother carried a white, you know, box. And that's my sister.

NW: So at that time you were not at that aunt's house? Was that the reason for?

KS: I was in the countryside, the other side of, my sister and another brother [were] there because they were transferred to their job, that somebody moved to another side.

NW: I see, okay.

KS: So Momma, my father, mother lived this long. I live in this country[side], and my other sister, brother, this side of the city, on the other side of the countryside, so but, something happened and so we gonna meet at my aunty house. They agreed.

NW: That's the thing to do. Right.

KS: Yeah. Then my sister, I guess, how she got there, I don't know, I don't know. Everybody same situation that's, uh, [inaudible] Anyway, my mom and father took care of her, and at that time, my sister wanted to drink water because, but you know, . . .

NW: She's burned.

KS: But they say don't give her water, don't give it. I don't know why they say that. But my mom said that if she is going to die, I want to give her water. But at the time, doctor, whatever, that's a nurse that helped her, [said] don't give her water. So, but anyway, she died, on the 15th.

NW: So it was pretty soon after.

KS: Yeah. At the day was, the war ended, right. That's my, this person, Hiro. That's the time, I was already moved to this way. Because that one said after the bomb dropped, 3, or 4 days after, my father said that we have to go after Keiko, the family have to be together so brother and sisters came, too, after me. That's the time when I went through the city to go that way. That's why . . .

NW: Yeah. You were exposed because it's pretty much right after!

KS: Yeah, radiation. But still, I could see that edge of the city still burning, yeah. They say that three day, three nights, it's burning hot. That's what I heard. But I didn't see that at night time, because that was, according to . . . you know.

NW: So, which day was it, that you traveled through the city of Hiroshima, then? A few days ago, you said . . .

KS: I think August the 12th? According to that one say, it was the 12th, 13th, something. I had a copy, so I could loan, you could read that one, too.

NW: How about your brother? You said that he was also exposed to the bomb?

KS: Yeah, but he was lucky to . . . um, Of course, this is the sister and my brother, they were going to school, high school. But that wasn't studying, they were all helping the city. Something, clean up or something. My brother was up the second floor of the building, so the whole thing was blasted up, but he was lucky to.

NW: So he survived.

KS: Yeah, he survived. No burn or no glass or anything. But anyway.

NW: Did he suffer from the radiation sickness?

KS: No.

NW: He didn't.

KS: No. He came to this country, I don't know when, what year. Because he had kept his citizenship.

NW: Oh, right. So he was the one who had a . . .

KS: He said, you know, right now, it was tough to live there, Hiroshima. So I guess he lived a little bit, some company, he wanted to come back to this country, so he came back, I think so. But when my mom, at that time, she still had glasses in her face, yeah. And hand, too. Yeah.

NW: Okay. How about your father?

KS: No. He was just to go to a walk from the city to the, the edge of the city, in a street car. So he survived that radiation. And no burning. But my mom was, it was eight in the morning, everybody sent out to work or school, and then she was cleaning windows. Then right there the window blasted. Glass to the face. That's what I heard.

NW: Ah-ha, so, she was cleaning the windows, so of course she was nearby. Oh, wow. Now, of course, your sister died because of the bomb and your brother was also in the city and your father was in the street car, your mother got injured, did your family talk about the A-bomb, or anything that's related to it after it is over, war was over. I just wondered what kind of conversation that you might have had.

KS: Well . . . Anybody, relative, neighbor, and friend, all in the same situation. They just don't [have] too much to say. I lost all my relatives, too. Uncles and aunties, everyone in the city. Only auntie lived, that one is a little bit away from the city; we borrowed the rental house, that's the one, only. But my mom, she doesn't want to go see the atomic bomb that's . . . you know, we call it the Peace Park, over there, yeah. When I go back to Japan I took my grandkids, too. But [my mother said] you guys go inside, I don't want to go see it. So she doesn't want to remember. She doesn't want to talk about it, probably, such a horrible . . . yeah.

NW: What, you know, kind of puzzles me is that, okay. you say, everybody went through the same thing, so they don't want to talk about it, but in a different environment, different situation, it could be a reason why everybody wants to talk about it. I just wonder why Japanese people,

Hiroshima people at that time went to the direction of silence, as opposed to, you know, talking about it. Because, in a way, you can assume, that because everybody in this room went through a similar situation, we can probably talk about it. What do you think was at work for people to be silent?

KS: Ah, I don't know why. Of course, I was not ages. Maybe I didn't go through all the horrible situation.

NW: But later on, you were in the city.

KS: Yeah, now [at] my age, I think about it, I have time to think about it back, you know what I mean? At that time, I came to this country, everyday, and before coming [to] this country, everyday, we were busy to survive, and work, and go school. And, I know that even when I came to this country, I got married, I had kids, and send them to school, I was kind of busy, and . . . Yeah, I don't know. Japanese people just kept it inside? Or, I don't know. *Shikatakagani*? That's the way? We say it, right? Can't help it. Everybody's through. Just go look, forward, you know, at that time.

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