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Title: Keiko Shinmoto Interview
Narrator: Keiko Shinmoto
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 7>

NW: Okay. You have to tell me first what prompted you to come to the States, you said it first, it's 1960's. What brought you to the states, probably you can tell me.

KS: Actually, after high school graduate, I like to go to college too, but we did not have money.

NW: At that time you were in Japan.

KS: Yeah, Japan. My parents don't have enough money to send me to college. So I was working at a bank. Then my father's friend came back to Japan to see me, and of course, you know, family, and [I said] "Oh I like to go to school." I guess he remembered that. Then, he came back to this county, and meet my brother Roy. His name is Roy. Keiko want to come to here, this country, to go to school. So my brother said, "Well," he was married had one boy at that time, and okay, if she wants it, then we are gonna help her. Then, he said, you come to this country. And I got, luckily, I got three years passport [for] the school, usually one year or two years, but I got three years, so enough to go to school.

NW: Was it a student visa or . . .

KS: Student visa.

NW: How do you spell your brother's name? Roy is –

KS: Shigeru, Roy. Shigeru is Roy, this country's named him Roy.

NW: So he was already married in the States with one child. Okay, so he was able to be a sponsor of you as a student. Now, tell me a little about what might have been going on in your mind at the time because, you know, to me in a way, it's very striking that being in Hiroshima or nearby at the time of the bomb and you lost your sister and some of your family went through some injuries and then you decide to come to the States. What kind of image of the US as a country you think that you had at that time? Because in a way, it's a former enemy country.

KS: At that time I was not scared of anything. Because my brothers and sisters were here. So my mom, being in this country, before, you know what I mean? And my, his sister says, how could you, your youngest daughter, send America? Alone? You know. And my mom says, well, that's the way she wants to, and I know America. So it's not like a horrible place or something, you know that! Besides, his brothers and sisters there. So, mom [was] never against me. So, yeah, go,

if you want to. So I was so happy to. Of course, first, the school said it's okay to come, application to get the okay, that one had to come first. So, I have to wait until then, I was working after I graduate high school, I was working in a bank.

NW: So, do you think, in a way, the only way to get the college education is to come to the States? Because your family didn't have the money to send you to a Japanese college,

KS: Yeah, in that way, my brother, who sponsored. That's the reason I got the permit. I don't have no scholarship or anything because I don't have no . . .

NW: But your brother paid for that college education.

KS: Yeah, brother. You know, trip, you know, coming to this country, the trip, and school, guaranteed sponsor, Yeah.

NW: So he must have been very successful in his line of business.

KS: No, he was struggling, too. He went to that, we went to, drafted, too, after came to this country, drafted, yeah. Then after the army, he went to work that grocery store, Safeway. Safeway.

NW: Oh, yeah. It's a big market there.

KS: And at the time he said that I've got to go to college, too. So, he had a, I guess he got scholarship? No, we don't call it scholarship, you know, isn't that the army help going to school . . . I don't know.

NW: Oh yeah, it's G.I. Bill, right.

KS: G.I. Bill, yeah, that's the one he went to the college. Business school college, Los Angeles, and graduated. That's why, I think, when he heard that Keiko wants to come to this country to go school, oh, then I'd help.

NW: Now, you said Roy, Shigeru-san, came back to the States right after the war? Do you know around when?

KS: After the, I don't know what year he came to this country.

NW: I'm wondering if he actually went to the Korean War or . . .

KS: Yeah, yeah. Korean War.

NW: So it was early enough, yeah.

KS: But even himself, too! He was drafted, but he couldn't speak English. So he said "I don't know why I got drafted." But he survived it.

NW: He couldn't speak any? He could have, he must have been . . .

KS: Oh, I don't know, of course, first he went to Portland, so a little bit of everyday conversation, a little bit. But he himself was surprised.

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