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Title: Jun Dairiki Interview
Narrator: Jun Dairiki
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 18>

JD: I did not like working on the farm, because we had to get up, like when it was potato season time, harvest time, we had to get up two o'clock in the morning, have a breakfast and had to be on the field by 3:30 or so. Even at that time of the hour in the morning, you could see the potato even though it was kinda dark but it was kind of getting light. Here I was only eleven, twelve, at the time we were doing all this, I hated farmwork, I hated farm work. It's very backbreaking, very hot in the sun, and you worked like twelve, thirteen hours a day, oh yeah. Potato you picked only from about 3:30 or 4:00 in the morning till about eleven in the morning, because you could not leave the exposed potatoes out in the sun otherwise they would bake. So that's why I had to get up so early. And you take a lunch break, and you go to someone else's onion field, and you start doing what we call weeding, that's separating the weeds away from the onions so the onion can grow without interference. So you did that after lunch hour, so by the time you came back home it was like 6:00 at night five, six o'clock at night. Then you have to make dinner, wash the dishes, go to sleep, get up next morning, at two o'clock in the morning, and you start all over.

NW: That's early. So it's from two to eleven all for potatoes?

JD: Pretty much.

NW: That's how many hours? It's . . .

JD: Well, you got up at two, you might have started picking the potatoes around four, but that's still seven hours, four to eleven is seven hours, but you're up much earlier than that because you have to get breakfast and all.

NW: Get breakfast and eat it. Oh, God.

JD: So in my junior year, or maybe in the year before I became a senior, I said, I go to downtown and see if I can get me a job. I didn't tell my mother I was going, I just told her that I was going downtown. She said okay, that's fine. I didn't tell her why I was going downtown. And in those days we had Montgomery Ward and JC Penny. And they were both geared for farm workers. Okay, you know, they had the tractor tires and they had the overall bibs for farming, and stuff like that. Plus, they carried, the regular stuff, dresses and stuff, too. But I went to Montgomery Ward, and the Montgomery Ward and JC Penny were across from each other, but I went to Montgomery Ward, and I said, I want like to know if I can get a job here, you know, and they hired me.

NW: Oh they did. Huh.

JD: So I went to work for them part time, in the summertime I went to work everyday almost, of course during school, I went after school and worked on the weekends as well, but I brought home some money during winter months for our family, because we didn't have any money then, you know. So I brought home a little bit. So in summer months when my mom and dad are out in the field I was working in the store.

NW: What do you think your parents thought about it?

JD: Well, I went home and I told my mom and dad, they said: You did what? [laugh]

NW: [laugh]

JD: And I said, well, I went downtown to get me a job and they said well, okay.

NW: It was good, good for them.

JD: And I was the first Japanese to be working in any kind of store because everybody else was helping their parents out on the farm.

NW: Right. Well, so you were the first one. You know, the store, it was probably a first for them as well, right? Yeah, yeah. But do you remember any co-workers at the time?

JD: Oh, I don't remember their names, it was a gal by the name of Twila, she was really a nice lady. I was a Jack of all trades in the store. Wherever they needed help is where I went. I used to do inventory, I would go down to the stock room, help with putting the prices on the goods that came in, I would go and take up the boxes of whatever to whatever department needed them and stuff like that. So I did wherever I was needed. I was a sales clerk, yeah, I just did everything and helped out with the inventory when the inventory time came.

NW: You liked it probably better than the farm work. [laugh]

JD: Absolutely. That's why I went to the store to find me a job.

NW: And it's nice to be able to bring in some income in winter too, right? So it must have been pretty snowy in severe weather in winter in Idaho.

JD: It was, it was. Very, very. Yeah.

NW: Well, thank you very much, Jun.

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