

Densho Digital Repository
Naoko Wake Collection of Oral Histories of US Survivors of the Atomic Bombs Collection
Title: Yuriko Furubayashi Interview
Narrator: Yuriko Furubayashi
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
Location: Kailua, Hawai'i
Date: June 21, 2013
Densho ID: ddr-densho-1021-7-26

<Begin Segment 26>

NW: Now, I have this setup here that lets me make copies of your pictures and if you can just kind of remind me of those pictures, who they are and when they were taken, around what time it came from, that would be really great. Let me . . .

YF: This is a nice picture of my aunt and uncle, so, you can take that. This is the school that, you know, when I went to Japan, I had more, but, I don't know, the rest of it . . .

NW: Yeah, and there are some pictures of your aunt, uncle, working in Los Angeles? Yeah. I'd love to have a copy of them as well.

YF: This is the people in Los Angeles, I guess, you know, they are businesspeople or what, but when he was ins Los Angeles, see, this is the Soda Work that he had. The other one, maybe this one is better.

NW: Oh yeah, that one is really terrific, and there are some pictures over there, that one with the people on a ship, I think those are the ship that went between Japan and . . . That's really.

YF: Chichibu-maru or something. Chichibu-maru. All of these Japanese . . . He was a golfer, you know.

NW: He was a what?

YF: Golfer, my uncle.

NW: Oh, I see.

YF: And those are the Los Angeles.

NW: Oh, wow. Those are all Japanese people, right?

YF: They are all, you know, and . . . It must be gone, but they were.

NW: So, this is, remind me again, she is the sister of your mother, correct?

YF: Yes, older sister.

NW: Older sister of your mother, right,

YF: She's the one that took me.

NW: And those are the people who stayed at the hotel in Los Angeles? Yeah, that's great.

YF: They are, you know, and colonels and admirals, you know. You know, I used to have, olden days, used to have this actor, Charlie Chaplin.

NW: Uh-huh. Really?

YF: Do you know? Have you heard of him?

NW: Of course!! Who wouldn't, who wouldn't know Charlie Chaplin?

YF: Those days, they didn't have sound, huh?

NW: Yeah, it's an old silent movie. I guess you don't have a picture of Charlie Chaplin.

YF: Oh yeah,

NW: You do?

YF: Him and my uncle, they're golf buddies.

NW: No kidding.

YF: Yeah.

NW: This is Charlie Chaplin? He certainly looks like him. [chuckle]. That's funny.

YF: That's him.

NW: So, remind me. So your uncle was first working in this soda company, . . .

YF: He did, before that, something else, I'm sure. But he owned that soda company.

NW: He owned the soda company. And then he became the owner of the hotel. I see. Okay. And that was 1930s maybe, right?

YF: I think so, 30s, yeah. He was one of the most successful person in LA . . .

NW: Oh I bet.

YF: . . . in Japanese community and he did a lot of community work, you know?

NW: That's why he was considered to be dangerous before the war started out, right?

YF: Yeah, yeah, that's right. So, he had to go back to Japan, you know? But the government was nice enough to warn him. Because he knows all those, you know, top Navy and . . .

NW: So they wanted to make sure he's okay.

YF: Yeah. Those people really helped him to be safe, you know, although he didn't live that long.

NW: Do you have other pictures that you haven't shown me yet? I'm very curious about people's pictures, they are really wonderful.

YF: Yeah, you never know, that's their life, you know?

NW: Yes, exactly.

YF: Like this guy must have been a famous person in Japan, you know. But he's one of the success stories. And then success, successful all his life. And he was only around 50, I would say, his life became, he had to go back to Japan because of that war, you know? If it wasn't for the war, he would have been having a, you know, good life, right?

NW: Right, exactly.

YF: And someone that worked so hard and succeed and all of a sudden because of the war? It just, . . .

NW: May I see those as well?

YF: . . . they just disappeared, you know? This life.

NW: What did he do after he came back to Japan?

YF: He didn't have a job, he worked, he ran for the council of that area, small councilman, he did a lot of community work for Japan and he made a, it's still there, but you know, Kabe, he made this gym, a place where young kids can go and play, you know? It's like, that remind him as a YMCA and you know, . . .

NW: Oh, no kidding!

YF: . . . in America, you have YMCA and in Japan, they don't have those kind of place where the youth, the promised youth can go, you know?

NW: So, your uncle really wanted to make it in Japan as well, so that . . .

YF: Yeah. He donated the land, they built the building, a small one, you know, and he told the youth they could come and . . . have meetings and . . .

NW: That's very interesting that he would be inspired by American, you know, facilities. Yeah, educating kids, yeah.

YF: Yeah. And the baseball and stuff, you know? They have the team, baseball teams and stuff, yeah. I don't know who they are, you know, but these must be kinda important people.

NW: Right, right. How about this? Tell me about this picture.

YF: You know, I don't know what this is, I'm not too sure.

NW: It looks like it's, isn't it on a ship?

YF: Yeah, it's on a ship and why are these ladies in kimono, you know?

NW: Right. That's why I wonder, it looks like they are dressed up for a special occasion, you know?

YF: He's way in the back, here. But I don't know. This is some kind of . . .

NW: Who is he? Who do you see that you recognize?

YF: Uncle, this one, I think.

NW: Your uncle, from Los Angeles, you mean? Yeah, okay, may I see? May I see the picture?

YF: Way this side.

NW: I see, it definitely looks like a ship. I don't know.

YF: I don't know if these people stayed, but this is emperor's brother.

NW: Oh . . . oh yeah.

YF: Takamatsu no miya. And yeah, and the wife, when they were in Los Angeles, you know.

NW: So it was . . .

YF: I don't know if they stayed in the hotel or what.

NW: But, maybe they met, right?

YF: Oh yeah, definitely, had a dinner or something. He was a very interesting, I wouldn't say, interesting, but very wise gentleman, my uncle was.

NW: How about this picture, could you please tell me about this?

YF: Oh, this is a baseball team that came to play baseball, in LA, I think.

NW: So, was your uncle . . .

YF: He was a fan.

NW: Oh, he was a fan.

YF: When Japanese team comes, probably stayed in his hotel.

NW: Ahh, okay. So, that's a Japanese team that came to Los Angeles to fight against American team, I guess? Or . . .

YF: Play baseball.

NW: . . . play baseball. That's fascinating. I'm sorry, it takes for a while, it's making it into a really good quality picture, so that's the reason why it takes some time.

YF: I understand that ink is expensive.

NW: Yeah, well, this is all digital, but even with digital, um, making copies, it takes some time to make a good quality one. Those are really wonderful images.

YF: It was in an album and before, now that I'm older, I took all of the pictures and put them in a ziploc bag and sometimes my relatives, sometimes they get curious and want to see, want to know about uncle and stuff, then I, you know, just hand this to them because these pictures are . . . I tell them "You know how old these pictures are? Close to 100 years old." Then they say "Ooh, let me see!" [laugh]

NW: [laugh]. Yeah, yeah. Old pictures are really fascinating because, yeah, yeah, they can surprise you.

YF: Hm. Then I tell my grandchildren, you know, your granpa, no, grandma's sister was married to this Sawano, the uncle, he was really a famous guy in Los Angeles way back, 100, 80 years ago, you know. And they go nah.

NW: [laughter].

YF: So I say, yeah! He was very important, I'm telling you, look at him, He knew Charlie Chaplin, you know.

NW: I know, there's this picture. How about your picture from Hawai'i when you're a little girl. You know, this is taken in Hawai'i, correct?

YF: Yeah, yeah, in a studio.

NW: May I take this out and make a copy of this? This is a wonderful image. Do you think it's from, 1920s, right? 1920s?

YF: Yeah, it must be around 1920, I am four or five years old, so 1922.

NW: 22, yeah. Do you have pictures from Hawai'i, from that era as well?

YF: Not too many, not too many. You know, I don't think we had cameras, you know, we had to go to a studio to take pictures.

NW: Yeah, so this is one of the few that you have.

<End Segment 26> - Copyright © 2013 Densho and Naoko Wake. All Rights Reserved.