

Benjamin G. Arriola
Narrator

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Interviewer

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Sarah Mason **-SM**
Benjamin G. Arriola **-BA**

SM: I'm talking to Benjamin Arriola in Richfield, Minnesota on January 13, 1979. This an interview conducted under the auspices of the Minnesota Historical Society. The interviewer is Sarah Mason. Ben, could you begin with your early life in the Philippines and just tell us something about your family [unclear].

BA: Yes. I was born in Manila, September 7, 1931. But I grew up in the city of Cebu. That is central part of the Philippines. I am one of eight children and my father was a businessman.

SM: What sort of business was he in?

BA: He was in the . . . well, at the start, as far as I can remember, he used to own a retail store. Then . . . after the war, he engaged in the lumber business.

SM: That's after World War II then?

BA: After World War II. He was . . . we were producing what we call the Philippine mahogany.

SM: Oh.

BA: It was Philippine logs and mostly we were selling it to the Japanese. My father was actually an accountant by occupation.

SM: I see.

BA: I have a sister who is also an accountant right now. She is a CPA.

SM: Is she in this country?

BA: No. She's over in the Philippines. I have two sisters who are both teachers. One of my brothers is in the life insurance business.

SM: And that's in the Philippines?

BA: That's all in the Philippines. I am the only one here in the United States.

SM: I see.

BA: I think the reason why we're here is when Ben and Belen Andrada visited the Philippines, oh, way back in 1959, they invited us over to come here and stay in the United States. Well, at the time, I was working with my father in his company. Well, I became interested. But the only way that I could come at that time was to be a student. I had already finished my education in the Philippines but then I applied to come here as a student.

SM: Is that because of the immigration law?

BA: Yes, because of the immigration law.

SM: That was the only way you could get into . . .

BA: That's the only way I could come here.

SM: Yes. The quotas were filled then, you said.

BA: That's right. That's right. Well, at the start, when I applied for a visa as a student, and I have to take along my wife, I was declined by the United States Embassy.

SM: They thought because you were taking your wife . . . ?

BA: Because I was taking my family along. They would allow me to come if it was just myself.

SM: They didn't believe you were really a student?

BA: They didn't believe that I was really a student.

SM: I see.

BA: So then I wrote to Ben Andrada here and told him, you know, the result of my interview with the . . . with the American Consul in Manila. So what they did, they seek the help of the late Senator Hubert Humphrey.

SM: I see. Hmmm.

BA: I personally received a letter from Senator Humphrey at that time. And I don't know what he did, but he must have done something big, because I had a personal letter from the American Consul General in Manila.

SM: Oh.

BA: So instead of going through the normal routine, I was able to go through the front door of the American Embassy and then without . . . without much, you know, conversation, they just gave me a visa.

SM: Oh. Yes.

BA: I lost all . . . you know, I'm sorry, but I lost all that letter from Senator Humphrey.

SM: Oh, that would have been nice to keep.

BA: Yes, that would have been nice, yes. But then the only thing I can remember is that one of the Consul said that how . . . how was I able to know Senator Humphrey? Now, he must have done *something* because they gave me a visa, me and my wife and we came here.

SM: I see. So Humphrey was, I suppose, willing to help other Minnesotan . . .

BA: He was . . . he was instrumental. He was really instrumental.

SM: I see. So Ben and Belen wrote a letter to Hubert Humphrey and . . .

BA: Yes, they asked for his help.

SM: I see. Just a minute, I'm going to . . .

[Recording interruption]

SM: What year was it that you came then?

BA: 1960. The summer of 1960.

SM: I see. Did you . . .? You didn't have children then?

BA: No. No.

SM: I see. And you stayed first with the Andradas?

BA: I stayed first with the Andradas. And I think after a couple of years, we bought this house.

SM: Did you enroll in a college here then?

BA: First, I went to the Minnesota School of Business to comply with immigration requirements that I had to be a student. And, you know, it's only two years. Then I enrolled at the College of Saint Thomas.

SM: I see. After two years of going to school at . . .

BA: After two years of the Minnesota School of Business. Well, by that time, I already have a son. So what I heard, that if you have a son born in this country, he's automatically a natural born American citizen.

SM: Yes.

BA: And that would help us changing our status from student to a permanent resident.

SM: Oh, yes. Was that difficult to bring about or was it just a matter of . . .?

BA: No, no. Just a question of presenting a birth certificate of a child born in this country.

SM: I see. So you changed it to immigrant status.

BA: The immigrant status. Then from an immigrant status, you know, how you have to wait for another five years to apply as an American citizen.

SM: Oh, you have . . . I see. You don't even take out first papers or . . .? Or you take out first papers and then it is five years before it's complete?

BA: Yes. After they changed the status from a student to an immigrant permanent resident visa.

SM: Yes.

BA: Then you have to wait five years to apply as a citizen.

SM: I see.

BA: Well, since I became a citizen, I was already called twice for jury duty. And that's exceptional.

SM: Oh. Yes.

BA: That's exceptional because . . .

SM: What year did you become a citizen?

BA: I became a citizen, I think, in 1970. I think 1970.

SM: Yes. And since then you've been on jury duty twice already.

BA: Yes, I was called twice. Well, they told me it's really exception because they normally, you know, it would . . . there's a lot of people that I know have never been on jury duty.

SM: Yes.

BA: Well, what I understand, they take it from your . . . they take it from your voter's registration.

SM: Oh, I see.

BA: See, but if you haven't voted, you'll never be able to . . . called for jury duty.

SM: I see. So you've voted several times.

BA: Yes. Yes. Yes.

SM: Yes. Are there any voting patterns among the Filipinos? Are they more Democrats or more Republicans or are they all different?

BA: Well, it used to be there were two parties.

SM: Yes.

BA: They called it the Liberal Party and the Nationalist Party.

SM: This is in the Philippines.

BA: And it's in the Philippines, see.

SM: What about here in the United States among the immigrants that are citizens? Do more of them tend to be Democrats or more Republicans? Or is there any pattern to it?

BA: I . . . I . . . I don't know. I don't think there's any pattern, see. Because what I understand, you know, I'm only . . . Filipinos my age, mostly they're all professionals and, you know, the professionals, the oldest try to lean towards the Independent Republican Party.

SM: Oh, do they?

BA: Yes. Because they want to be associated with these supposedly wealthy people, see.

SM: I see. Well, what about Hubert Humphrey? Is he popular with the . . . or was he popular?

BA: He is . . . no, he is . . . for those who had . . . you know, he helped. But I'm sure he helped a lot.

SM: Oh, do you think he helped in a number of cases?

BA: He helped a lot of Filipinos to come here.

SM: Oh. I see.

BA: Or to stay here permanently.

SM: I see. That's interesting.

BA: What I admired with that man, because when we . . . when we arrived here, he was then a Senator.

SM: Yes.

BA: And we went and visited in Washington, D.C.

SM: Yes.

BA: And you know that he remembers my name . . .

SM: Oh!

BA: And he gave us a tour in his office, and the capitol.

SM: Oh, did he invite you to come to Washington or you happened to be there so you went to see him?

BA: We happened to be there.

SM: Oh.

BA: And then another occasion, I was walking down Hennepin Avenue, and I met him. And do you know that remembers my name!?

SM: Did he really? That is fantastic!

BA: And I . . . you know, I really admire that guy.

SM: Well, I think he was very much interested in immigration law and in the change that came about in 1965, and he was interested in immigrants, I guess I should say.

BA: Well, yes. Yes. Well, you know, during that time, too, it was during the civil rights, you know, discussion.

SM: Yes. Yes, it was in the 1960s.

BA: Yes, in the 1960s.

SM: Or a little before the 1960s.

BA: Yes.

SM: Yes, he was very much interested in that kind of issue, actually. What about [Congressman] Donald Fraser, was he interested in that?

BA: Oh, I never heard of him. I mean, you know . . .

SM: Yes. He may not have been in that field so much.

BA: I know . . . I know some people, some Filipinos seek the help of [chuckles] Senator Mondale.

SM: Oh, did they?

BA: Yes, but . . .

SM: Didn't get any help?

BA: Didn't get any help but he would suggest to them that, why don't you just go home and help your country?

SM: Oh, he did?

BA: Yes.

SM: So he was a different . . . quite different response from Humphrey.

BA: Right, right. Not like the late Senator Humphrey.

SM: This would be some that came as students and were maybe trying to change their status.

BA: Right. Tried to change the status, see.

SM: Yes. I see. Well, that's pretty interesting about Hubert Humphrey that . . . do you think he did help a number of [unclear]?

BA: He did a *lot* of help for those Filipinos.

SM: That's very interesting. Well, had you planned to go into the insurance field before you . . . ?

BA: No.

SM: Or were you already in that field before you came?

BA: No. No, I never . . . see, when I was . . . when I was a student at Saint Thomas, I worked part time at the Minneapolis Athletic Club.

SM: Oh, you did?

BA: Yes. I was a bar boy up there.

SM: That's where many old timers were.

BA: Yes. Yes. And I met this manager at the time of the Continental Insurance Companies.

SM: I see.

BA: So he talked to me and, you know, and he said, "Why don't you work for me?"

SM: I see.

BA: "We have an opening as a supply man. Mail and supply."

SM: Oh.

BA: So I said, "Why not?" So I took the job. I stayed in the supply room for, oh, I would say about six months. Well, probably they think that I could do better than just working in the supply department. They promoted me to the automobile department as a rater, rate and code clerk.

SM: Oh.

BA: From that time on, every six months I got my promotion.

SM: I see.

BA: From the rate and code I was an underwriter trainee. From an underwriter trainee I became an assistant underwriter. And finally I became an underwriter.

SM: I see. So you moved up pretty quickly. How many years was this maybe, a couple years?

BA: I would say a couple of years, yes.

SM: Oh, I see. And so now you're an underwriter.

BA: I'm an underwriter.

SM: Are there any other Filipinos in the company or other Asian people?

BA: No. No, we have one right now but she's just a typist. I'm not sure. She's probably from Vietnam.

SM: Oh, I see.

BA: Oh, yes. There's another girl in there, I think she's from India.

SM: I see. Is she the secretarial staff or other . . . ?

BA: No, just like . . . she's only a typist, I think.

SM: I see.

BA: I'm the only Filipino with their company.

SM: So you feel you've had a pretty good experience there? You haven't had any problems with discrimination or . . . ?

BA: No, I wouldn't say I have any problem with discrimination. You know, I always tell them that I belong to the minority, but, you know, most of my friends, they said, [unclear] the heck. You know, they don't really consider me as a minority, see.

SM: Well, that's good.

BA: They don't.

SM: This is your colleagues at work.

BA: Yes, yes.

SM: Or your other friends.

BA: Yes. Yes. See, but I . . . you know, as a joke I always tell them, you know, "I'm the only minority in this company, you know."

SM: [Chuckles] Right. So they should be lucky to have one.

BA: Probably. I told them, “You know, probably that’s why they’re keeping me here, because I’m the only minority.”

SM: [Chuckles]

BA: But, you know, they don’t believe me. They don’t even consider me as a minority.

SM: That’s good. So you feel pretty at home.

BA: Oh, yes. Yes.

SM: What about in the country, generally, or your social life and so on? Do you feel homesick or do you feel pretty adapted to this country?

BA: Well, I’m . . . I think I’ve already been adapted here, but, you know, I don’t really . . . I would probably want to go home for a *visit*.

SM: Your family are still there.

BA: Yes. Yes. But I don’t think I can, you know, live over there now after I’ve been here for eighteen years or nineteen years.

SM: Oh, have you? Oh, yes. Well, one advantage for Filipinos, of course, is there isn’t a real language problem to start with.

BA: Yes, maybe so. But, you know, we have this . . . you know, our pronunciation or . . . they always have this . . . you know, we can’t speak as well as say the natural born citizens here.

SM: Well, you first started speaking English when you started school, was that the case?

BA: Well, I learned English when I was in the Philippines.

SM: Yes. I mean when you started first grade in school in the Philippines, would that be when you began to learn English?

BA: Yes. Yes, that my time, yes. Yes.

SM: So for that reason it isn’t too difficult, I suppose, to . . .

BA: No, no. Especially in letter writing, see.

SM: Yes.

BA: I could write better than I could speak.

SM: I see. Because your education was in English.

BA: Yes.

SM: Was it completely or . . . ?

BA: Completely in college, if you have to go to college.

SM: Oh, but in the lower grades it's partly in Tagalog?

BA: It's partly in . . . well, where I came from it was the Visayan dialect, see, the vernacular.

SM: And there's a written language for that, that's used in the schools.

BA: Yes. Yes. There are books.

SM: I see. And then English would be just learned as a foreign language.

BA: Yes.

SM: But then in college it was . . .

BA: Yes, well, it's all in English.

SM: Why is that? Is that a leftover from the American occupation?

BA: Well, yes. Yes. Yes. And mostly, you know, we use . . . supposedly our textbook is all American authors.

SM: I see. Is there some protest about that or . . . ?

BA: Not during my time, I don't think so.

SM: Yes.

BA: But, you know, we used to study United States history, I don't know what . . .

SM: [Chuckles]

BA: Economics here in the United States, you know. And I learned all those when I was in the Philippines. I used to memorize all these five state, you know . . . Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, wheat producing states.

SM: Oh, so you already had all this background.

BA: Yes.

SM: I see. But wouldn't anybody . . . didn't you have some Philippines history, too, or . . . ?

BA: Well, in the lower grades. But not in college, see, because there's no Filipino authors that would write a book about Philippines' economy.

SM: So do you see that as something that should be changed?

BA: I think so. I mean, they should.

SM: [Chuckles]

BA: They should more or less write for their own country.

SM: Yes. Well, there must be some by now.

BA: Oh, probably so.

SM: Maybe it's a matter of changing over [unclear].

BA: Yes, probably so by now, yes. But during my time it's all in English and we have to learn all this U.S. history, U.S. economics.

SM: Literature, too?

BA: Yes.

SM: Do you see that as somewhat of a problem in . . . feeling bound to your cultural roots or doesn't it bother you too much?

BA: It doesn't bother me at that time, you know.

SM: What about now when you're in America? How do you identify yourself? Do you think of yourself as completely an American?

BA: No.

SM: Or do you still have ties with your background?

BA: Yes. Well, I could still bill myself as, you know, like a Filipino, you know.

SM: You feel more like a Filipino then?

BA: Right.

SM: And I'm sure that most of your Filipino values or what you think is important in life are not going to change.

BA: Still with me, yes. Still with me. But I don't know, my children probably think different.

SM: Well, I'm sure that . . . I've, you know, heard many Filipinos say that the family is very important in your culture. Although this may be true of many cultures, of course, but it seems to be a very important value. And do you think that's being passed on to your children equally strong or . . . ?

BA: I . . . I . . . no, I doubt it.

SM: [Chuckles] Does that concern you or worry you or do you accept that as part of the . . . ?

BA: I accept it as part of probably . . . well . . .

SM: Part of moving here, I guess. [Chuckles]

BA: Yes, our new life.

SM: Well, I suppose it helps that you have Filipino relatives . . . or relatives nearby you. Does that strengthen the Filipino ties somewhat?

BA: Not to a great extent, no.

SM: Okay. Yes. Well, what about . . . do your children like to go travel back to the Philippines or have they had a chance?

BA: No. They have been there three times.

SM: Oh, have they?

BA: Yes.

SM: You've . . . the whole family has gone back?

BA: The whole family have. We have been there three times. But I don't think they would like to go back.

SM: You *don't* think they would?

BA: No, I don't think so.

SM: Oh, I mean, do you mean they wouldn't like to go back to live?

BA: No. Or even for a visit.

SM: Oh. Of course, they've always lived in this country.

BA: Well, the thing is . . . they're like total strangers over there. Even, you know, meeting their cousins, you know. They don't speak the same language, see.

SM: Yes. The cousins don't know English?

BA: They don't know English. The new generations . . .

SM: I see. Because it's not used in the schools now.

BA: That's right.

SM: I see. So that makes communicating a little harder.

BA: Right. And also the food that they are being served, you know, they don't really like it.

SM: Oh. But they've tasted here, haven't they?

BA: Well, not very much, because they don't eat what my wife and I eat.

SM: [Chuckles] Yes. Well, this is what happens with many immigrants, I'm sure, the change in foods and customs and so on. But this isn't something you're terribly worried about, right?

BA: No. No, it doesn't bother me at all.

SM: They get compensated maybe by other things that are desirable, education and so on. Or how do you look at it? [Chuckles]

BA: Yes, well, I think they will be better off here, you know. Their educational opportunity is greater.

SM: Yes.

BA: And they have a better school system here. I'm not so worried about my kids. I think they'll be alright.

SM: They seem to be doing very well.

BA: Yes.

SM: Yes. What about your wife? Does she find it difficult to adapt? Or I guess she has her sister nearby; that might help some.

BA: I don't think it's difficult for her to adapt.

SM: Yes. Does she work, too?

BA: Yes.

SM: Oh, yes. Where does she work?

BA: She works over at Montgomery Ward [department store] as a clerk.

SM: I see.

BA: And, you know, doing what she's doing now with her college education.

SM: Yes.

BA: She's really doing great.

SM: Yes.

BA: As a matter of fact, you know, I mean, if she is . . . if she would be more aggressive, you know, she could probably be the superintendent of her department now.

SM: Yes.

BA: But she's just satisfied with what she's doing. But she practically knows everything that has to be done.

SM: Oh. I see. So do you think she will be able to move up?

BA: I don't think she's interested. But, you know, she has . . . she has a degree in business.

SM: Oh.

BA: And for the type of work she's doing, you know, she's . . .

SM: She's overqualified.

BA: I think she is overqualified. But I don't think the company *knows* that she's got a degree.

SM: Oh.

BA: But, you know, her appraisal has always been excellent.

SM: I see. Yes. Well, I would imagine that might be a problem for [unclear] Filipino, I suppose both men and women that they are professionally trained and it might be hard to get a job commensurate with their training. It didn't seem to be true of you though.

BA: Well, yes. Well, it depends, you know. I mean, because coming in from a foreign country, even if you have a degree back home, and I mean . . . then you are new in this country, you know. You just have to start from the bottom.

SM: Yes.

BA: And you have to prove yourself that you know, you know. I mean, that's what I did.

SM: Right. Yes.

BA: I had to start from the supply room and had to prove myself.

SM: Yes. Right.

BA: That I'm capable of learning the job. And, you know, I'm . . . well, the company is good to me and maybe they think that I know . . . they just moved me up.

SM: Yes. You seem to have succeeded very fast. Do you think you've moved up faster than the average—average Filipino immigrant—or have they all been pretty successful?

BA: Well, I think so. Yes. I think so. Because I know a lot of . . . a lot of people here that, you know, only they can't get a job and so they have to work in some type of a service job.

SM: Yes. Are these people with college educations?

BA: Yes. I think so. Yes. Well, this is what I . . . you know, for those that I've met, it's a lot like an engineer, see.

SM: Yes.

BA: Well, you can never be an engineer if you are a foreign graduate here.

SM: Yes. You have to get another degree?

BA: Yes. So I told them, you know, an engineer probably back home could be a good draftsman in this country.

SM: Yes.

BA: Drafting. But I told them that you have to prove yourself what you do.

SM: Yes.

BA: Because you can never be an engineer unless you're a graduate here.

SM: Yes. What about doctors and nurses? Do they get relicensed or . . . ?

BA: Well, they have to take . . . they have to take these examinations for doctors and for nurses.

SM: Yes.

BA: Before they can be certified by the state, I think.

SM: I see. They don't have to go through their training again or something like that.

BA: No. No, I don't think so.

SM: Do they have trouble getting the licensing? I mean . . .

BA: Some do, yes. Some do. They have to take some refresher courses.

SM: Oh, I see. What about the Filipino organizations? Are you active in all of those?

BA: I'm . . . I've been a member but I . . . you know, I just go to parties.

SM: [Chuckles]

BA: [Chuckles] I don't really participate in meetings, you know.

SM: Oh. Which clubs are you a member of?

BA: I don't think I'm a member. The Philippine Minnesota and then . . . there's two of them. Filipino Minnesotans and the Fil-American Association.

SM: You're a member of both of those?

BA: Both, yes. Yes.

SM: What do you want from these organizations or how do you think they serve the Filipino people? More than social or . . . ?

BA: To me, personally, I think it's all social, you know, activities. I don't think there's anything else that could be doing. Not that I know of.

SM: Doesn't the Cultural Society [Cultural Society of Filipino Americans] try to bridge the gap?

BA: Oh, yes. The Cultural Society. Yes. Yes, they're trying to promote, you know. Well, they're trying to preserve, actually, the Filipino culture among the younger generation.

SM: Yes. Is that their main purpose?

BA: I think so. So these young, young Filipinos have at least, you know, an idea of how it is.

SM: Yes.

BA: In the old country.

SM: Yes. Do you think they're succeeding in that? Or at least partially?

BA: Oh, it's too early to tell, because I think these were just formed about two or three years ago.

SM: Yes, it is really new.

BA: Yes.

SM: Well, doesn't the Fil-Minnesotan have a branch for the children . . . or not the children but the high school students, too?

BA: Well, what I understand, they're trying to have some type of a scholarship right now.

SM: Oh, that's a good idea.

BA: Right now.

SM: Yes. That's good. Are your kids active in these clubs?

BA: No.

SM: [Chuckles] [Unclear]

BA: So they say no. No.

SM: But your wife, is she . . . ?

BA: No, she isn't either. [Chuckles]

SM: So none of you are *real* active in [unclear]?

BA: No. As I said, we just go to these parties where they have invitation and meet, you know, there's a few Filipinos, say hi to them and, you know, a few greetings and that's about it.

SM: [Chuckles] Well, is most of your social life with the Filipino Americans or with . . . ?

BA: Well, most is . . . we probably with . . . for our company functions here.

SM: I see. Is that quite active? I mean, is that frequent or . . . ?

BA: No, not . . . not frequent but, you know, once in a while we have some parties or some invitations from a friend or . . .

SM: I see. Oh, yes. Yes. I see. What about the use of the word Filipino instead of Pilipino? Is that common among the people that have come since the 1960s, 1970s, or is it not common? I don't hear too many Minnesota Filipinos using that term but in publications it seems to be more common. What do you think about it?

BA: The what now?

SM: Well, often the Pilopino, using a 'P' instead of an 'F' Filipino.

BA: *Oh.* Oh. No. See, this came about, I think, just in the few years with the . . . when the Philippine government tried to promote the Filipino language. And see, I think the spelling, you know, Pilipino, instead of an 'F' which is derived from Spanish, you know, it used to be Spanish pronunciation, Filipino. Now, Filipino dialect, they used a 'P', see.

SM: Yes. So that's a more natural sound for the Filipino to use.

BA: Yes. Yes. Yes. That's actually the correct spelling, you know, Pilipino.

SM: I see.

BA: Using the Pilipino language.

SM: I see. Do people in Minnesota use that?

BA: I don't think so. But I think in official publications, as you said, the papers, you know, they use the 'P'.

SM: Yes.

BA: Instead of an 'F'.

SM: In your newsletters you saw of these organizations?

BA: Yes, they use the 'P'.

SM: Yes. So that's preferred maybe.

BA: I think so. Well, probably that's the correct spelling of the word, Pilipino.

SM: I see, or the Filipino government would condone that as . . .

BA: Yes. Yes.

SM: But then the term Philippines has not changed, is that right?

BA: No, it hasn't changed.

SM: I see. So when you're speaking of the country, it would still be the Philippines.

BA: Philippines.

SM: Has the role of the church been important since you came? Has that . . .? I don't know if you're religious or not.

BA: Yes. Yes. Well, you know, generally, you know, Filipino people are more or less . . . well, the majority are Catholic people.

SM: Yes. Right.

BA: Well, since we've been here, you know, we try to go to church every Sunday and we try to let our children take catechism in school and get them all the . . . you know, the things that the church requires, like you've got to have communion and you've got to have confirmation, and my kids . . . well, my son has had his communion and confirmation and now my daughter is . . . is I think every month she has to take some classes for her confirmation this summer.

SM: I see. Did the church play any role in welcoming you here or making you feel more comfortable here?

BA: No.

SM: They haven't done anything along that line.

BA: No, they haven't. I don't think they . . . they ever think of us as an immigrant in the first place.

SM: Yes.

BA: They probably think that [chuckles] we have been here all our lives. [Laughter]

SM: I see. And there isn't any ethnic church, right? I mean, there isn't any church that more Filipinos have gone to or . . .?

BA: No, I don't think so. Not that I know of.

SM: Are there any Filipino American priests or sisters or . . .?

BA: Yes. Yes. Yes. As a matter of fact, one of the, you know, second generation, that Father [unclear].

SM: Ah.

BA: Yes, he's one. And . . . there's another one. I don't know his name but, you know, sons of Filipino immigrants.

SM: So you think there are two then.

BA: Yes.

SM: I see. Is there much connection between the Filipinos in Minnesota and those in Chicago or Illinois or . . . or are they pretty separate communities?

BA: Well, probably they're more separate except for probably some type of professional association, you know, like the nurses.

SM: Oh, yes.

BA: Like the doctors. Other than that, I don't know of anything else.

SM: I see. Well, I think you made a good choice to come to Minnesota?

BA: [Laughter] I think so, too!

SM: You don't regret it, hmmm? [Chuckles]

BA: No.

SM: You think there are any advantages to Minnesota in particular for Asian immigrants or is there any less discrimination than the West Coast or is all about the same now or . . .?

BA: Well, from what I understand, I think Minnesota is a more or less better place than, you know, on the West Coast. Because in the West there's already a lot of Filipinos over there and most of the immigrants in the West Coast, mostly, they were all farmers or . . . or farmhands.

SM: I see.

BA: And, you know, I mean, if a white guy would see a Filipino, he would almost think of him as another farmhand.

SM: I see. So here they're thought of more as professionals?

BA: Here, mostly, especially the young, the younger people. Most of the younger people here, mostly they're all professional.

SM: Yes.

BA: So, you know, they have a better job than, you know, the older generations.

SM: Yes.

BA: As far as I know, that's . . . the one that I know, they've got . . . they most have a better job.

SM: Yes. They seem to be doing very well. You think there's a little less discrimination or is that hard to measure?

BA: I think it's more or less *less*, because this came about, the influx of the Filipinos here came about in the 1960s, see.

SM: Yes.

BA: When, you know, that was the time that discrimination was already a law.

SM: Right. There was a lot of protest against it, unfair . . .

BA: Yes.

SM: Well, are quite a few of the new immigrants in insurance or are you one of the very few?

BA: I think I'm just one of the very few.

SM: There are some fields that are many in, such as the medical field.

BA: Yes.

SM: There seem to be quite a few accountants, too.

BA: Yes, that's another thing, and engineers.

SM: And engineers, too. But not too many insurance . . .

BA: Nobody . . . nobody's in insurance.

SM: What about travel agents? Is that also a common . . . ?

BA: Not in the Twin Cities. But I'm sure, you know, in Chicago there's a lot of travel agencies, or San Francisco.

SM: I see. Well, is there anything else we should discuss in this? Something that I haven't asked you that you'd like to add to this interview?

BA: No, but I think I have the right choice of coming here because, you know, I mean . . . I can see, you know . . . Well, since I've been here, and that's a matter of nineteen years ago, I was able to buy a house, you know. It's practically now fully paid.

SM: That's wonderful.

BA: And, you know, I mean, I'm not that . . . but there, I think, you know, I've got two cars and whatever the kids, you know, want, I can afford to give it to them.

SM: Yes.

BA: They go skiing, they go all kinds of . . . But I don't think I could do it if I were in the Philippines.

SM: Yes. So economically it's been very good.

BA: It's . . . it's been great.

SM: Well, thank you very much.

BA: You're welcome.

SM: I think this interview will be a great addition to our archives.

BA: Oh, you're welcome.