

**Virgil Andrada**  
**Narrator**

**Sarah Mason**  
**Interviewer**

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**Minnesota Historical Society**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota**

Sarah Mason            **-SM**  
Virgil Andrada        **-VA**

**SM:** I'm talking to Virgil Andrada on February 1, 1979 at the Minnesota Historical Society. The interviewer is Sarah Mason and this is an interview conducted under the auspices of the Minnesota Historical Society. A little repetition there. Do you want to start with your early life or maybe something about your mother and her background, how your parents met?

**VA:** Well, see, that I don't know. I don't remember.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Probably nobody does.

**VA:** I honestly don't remember how they met.

**SM:** You never heard them say?

**VA:** I've never heard them say. I assume that my mother was probably working as a waitress or something somewhere and . . . also Ann, her sister, older sister, was working as a waitress. My . . . I think it's somehow connected through that area that they met my father and also Henry.

**SM:** What were both of their names and your father's name? We can get this on the record then.

**VA:** My father's name?

**SM:** Well, Ben Andrada is your father.

**VA:** Benigno Untalasco Andrada.

**SM:** Benigno. Ah ha. What's his middle name?

**VA:** Untalasco. It's U-N-T . . . I'm not sure how you spell it. A-L-A-S-C-O.

**SM:** It starts with a U?

**VA:** Yes, it starts with a U.

**SM:** Mmmm. Untalasco. And your mother's name was . . . ?

**VA:** Thina.

**SM:** Is that T-H-I-N-A?

**VA:** Yes. Yes.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I don't know what her middle name was, if she had one.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**VA:** And Brothen [pronounces it 'bratten'] is the correct pronunciation, but the spelling is debatable.

**SM:** I see. Yes. And she was from a Norwegian immigrant family, is that right?

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Both her mother and father immigrated from Norway and they had children when they came over. And I don't know whether they had one or more children, but I know they had one, at least. And I believe [unclear], being the oldest, was . . . I believe she was the oldest, was the one that, at least, was born there.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** My mother is a twin.

**SM:** Ah ha. And what was her twin's name?

**VA:** Melvin. M-E-L-V-I-N.

**SM:** Okay. Melvin Brothen.

**VA:** Right.

**SM:** I see. And so . . . let's see, what year did your parents marry, do you know?

**VA:** No, I don't. [Chuckles]

**SM:** I guess that's in your father's interview anyway.

**VA:** Okay. I don't . . .

**SM:** Maybe 1930 or . . . ?

**VA:** Oh, yes. It must have been around there because in 1931, Blaine, my oldest brother, was born.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** 1933, I was born. And 1934 or 1935, Denny, my younger brother was born. So it must have been . . .

**SM:** So there were three boys.

**VA:** Originally, three boys. Right.

**SM:** I see. Well, where did your family live in the earliest period that you know of? [Chuckles] When you were a small child.

**VA:** The first place they lived, as I recall, was on Harmon Place.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** And it's the building that they just recently renovated. A beautiful building. Right at the end of Harmon Place there on . . . gee, I can't think. Is that . . . ?

**SM:** That's near downtown?

**VA:** Tenth. Yes, Tenth and Harmon.

**SM:** Tenth and Harmon. Hmm. Were there other Filipinos living around that area that you remember?

**VA:** I honestly don't . . . oh, Henry [unclear] lived there, too.

**SM:** Oh, I see. Yes.

**VA:** In fact, I think they lived in the same building.

**SM:** I see. It seems to me, Paul Borge mentioned living at least near there. He mentioned Harmon Place.

**VA:** Yes. We lived at another house, another apartment on Harmon. Gee, for years I knew the address and I can't think of it now. It's . . . 1118 Harmon. That was the second place.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** My father, I'm sure, will recall my older brother falling off the back steps and breaking his arm. I don't remember those things too well. I was very young.

**SM:** Sure. You remember the neighborhood at all or . . . ?

**VA:** Oh, very . . . yes. Because I've seen it, you know, since.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Many, many, many times.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Apparently, when I was very young, you know, two or three years old, I used to run away all the time. I'd run . . . where I'd go was Harmon.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** Ah . . . excuse me. Was a little park down there.

**SM:** Oh. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Where the Norwegian statue is.

**SM:** Oh. Well, we can look that up, where that is.

**VA:** Why can't I. . . ? I'll think of it before I leave.

**SM:** Okay.

**VA:** On the other side of that park, the Custodials lived.

**SM:** Oh. So there were other Filipino families then right in the area.

**VA:** Oh, yes. Oh, why I'm sure there were. That area, you see, was close to the . . . was close to a lot of the hotels.

**SM:** Oh, yes, where they worked often.

**VA:** Yes, as waiters.

**SM:** I see. Yes.

**VA:** My uncle Henry Runez in the islands was a teacher.

**SM:** Ah ha.

**VA:** But you see at that time because of the language barrier, you couldn't teach here.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** They didn't have Filipino teachers as they do now.

**SM:** Right. So he had to work as a . . .

**VA:** So he worked as a waiter.

**SM:** Yes. Had he come as a . . . to be a student or a marriage . . .?

**VA:** Nobody came here to be a student then. That's new, that's recent.

**SM:** Well, your father said he had. And his brother was a student at the high school.

**VA:** Is that right?

**SM:** But when your father came he was never able to start, he said, because of the Depression and the job situation and so on.

**VA:** Oh, I think my father was only about sixteen or seventeen when he came.

**SM:** Right. Yes, he was. He was *very* young.

**VA:** Sure.

**SM:** Yes, that's right.

**VA:** It's . . . it's not as if, you know, we think of a waiter as being a job that takes no intelligence and, you know. It isn't as if these people weren't intelligent when they came here.

**SM:** Oh, heavens, no. Right.

**VA:** It's just that we at that time had a *real* language barrier, which isn't prevalent now. You know, the people come from Taiwan and almost anyplace and boy, you've got interpreters and

you've got people who have studied the language and you have . . . you know.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Where we didn't have that before.

**SM:** Yes. Well, they did know some English though, didn't they?

**VA:** No.

**SM:** Hmmm.

**VA:** [Chuckles]

**SM:** They studied that in the schools there.

**VA:** Not then.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** In fact, as my father tells it, or tells me . . .

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** They used to eat at John's Place all the time.

**SM:** Oh. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Because they could point to what they wanted to eat.

**SM:** Oh. Hmmm. That's interesting. Did some of them work there?

**VA:** No. I don't think so. Not that I know of. My father has never . . .

**SM:** Yes. I think somebody used to work at the Nankin, but . . .

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** I haven't heard any say they worked at John's Place.

**VA:** My father has never worked at John's Place, I know.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Most of these people when they came over they . . . you have one job and pretty much stuck to it. You know, most of the Filipinos, the older Filipinos, they were twenty-five, thirty years at the Athletic Club or twenty-five, thirty years on the railroad, or twenty-five . . . you know.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** So they had many years in many places.

**SM:** Right. Well, they also seemed to have this strong idea of loyalty to someone they worked for.

**VA:** Oh, yes. Sure.

**SM:** Yes. But part of the reason, too, besides language, wasn't it, that there was simply a real discriminatory kind of situation with jobs?

**VA:** Oh, yes. Oh, certainly. At that time, very definitely.

**SM:** And these were the jobs open for them.

**VA:** Yes. And at that time, Orientals, which they were . . . you know, you look at them and everybody's a Chinese because they all look alike, see.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** Not that Chinese are bad, but that that was a word . . . most people probably didn't know where the Philippine islands were.

**SM:** Oh, I'm sure.

**VA:** But they'd heard of Chinese, see.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** So everybody was Chinese and . . .

**SM:** Oh, I see. Yes, thought they were Chinese.

**VA:** Yes. Everybody Oriental whether they were Japanese, Filipino, wherever they were, were Chinese. [Chuckles] Which, you know.

**SM:** I see. So they were the best known group, I take it. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Yes, and that's correct.

**SM:** Well . . .

**VA:** And we moved from there out to Sunset Hill. Do you know where that is?

**SM:** No, I don't.

**VA:** That's on Wayzata Boulevard. It's . . . Ridgedale is at Sunset Hill. Ridgedale is at Oak Knoll. The other side of the hill is what's Sunset Hill.

**SM:** Oh. Is this near Wayzata Boulevard?

**VA:** It's *on* Wayzata Boulevard.

**SM:** On Wayzata Boulevard. Okay. Well, how did you happen to move there, I wonder? Were there other . . .? Was it a place Filipinos could rent in or . . .?

**VA:** Oh, no. No, no.

**SM:** Because that was a problem, I guess.

**VA:** He . . . he had a job with the Morrisons.

**SM:** Oh, I see.

**VA:** Dr. Clinton Morrison out at Wayzata.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** And so in an attempt to move closer, they found this place. It was a shack, a rundown shack. A *huge* barn in the back. It was on a well-traveled highway. Certainly nowadays you wouldn't think of moving to somewhere like that with small children. And I think . . . I'm positive they were just renting.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** I don't think we lived there very long.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I'm not sure but I don't think we lived there more than a year, if that long.

**SM:** I see. Well, was this a service job for this Clinton Morrison or what was . . .?

**VA:** Well, he was the chauffeur, the butler, that kind of thing.

**SM:** Yes. Who was Clinton Morrison. [Chuckles] Was he a big businessman or . . . ?

**VA:** You know, I may have to take that back. Dr. Morrison, I'm not sure his name was Clinton.

**SM:** Oh. Yes. But it was a Dr. Morrison?

**VA:** Dr. Morrison. His son's name is Clinton.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Dr. Angus Morrison.

**SM:** Angus. Okay.

**VA:** Yes. Yes. Angus Morrison, I'm sorry.

**SM:** And he was a medical doctor?

**VA:** Yes, I think he was.

**SM:** Oh, I see. But he didn't provide housing then for the family.

**VA:** No, he did not.

**SM:** I guess often they did.

**VA:** Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** The caretaker, who's still alive . . .

**SM:** Oh, he did have a house.

**VA:** He had a house, yes. Caretaker of the property.

**SM:** Was he Filipino?

**VA:** No, he was not.

**SM:** Hmmm.

**VA:** What the heck is he? Hmmm. Through marriage, we're related to him now.

**SM:** Oh. That's interesting.

**VA:** I don't know why I can't . . . I'm at a loss for words. I can't think of the guy's name. And that also will come to me.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** [Sighs] Gee. But he did not provide the housing for us. We were there a short period of time and we moved from there to Grays Bay.

**SM:** Where is that?

**VA:** That's out by Wayzata. It's on Highway 101 and Minnetonka Boulevard is the area.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Wayzata . . . between Wayzata and Deephaven, there's a little spot called Grays Bay. There's a Grays Bay Dam, which is the head of the Minnehaha Creek.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Okay. That's just to locate it for you kind of.

**SM:** Yes. Hmmm. And what were . . . was he working another job there?

**VA:** No, he was still working at Morrison's.

**SM:** Oh, I see. It's just a different place to live.

**VA:** Just a different place to live. Closer.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Now we're within . . . oh, we're within a mile or a mile and a half of the Morrison's now.

**SM:** I see. Yes.

**VA:** And he would go . . . in wintertime he'd go down to Florida with them and leave us . . . and we'd be there alone.

**SM:** Oh. And they didn't have him bring his family.

**VA:** No. No. We stayed there. I don't know what the situation was, you know, whether he had an option to or not. We're still pretty young, remember.

**SM:** Yes. The Runez's have talked about bringing the family to Florida because it's somewhat of a problem even [unclear] to change schools all the time.

**VA:** Yes. Right. I do know that . . . Arcadio [unclear] worked for a guy who headed up Honeywell. Sweatt.

**SM:** Oh, yes. C.B. Sweatt.

**VA:** They had housing.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** C.B. Sweatt, right.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** They had housing. And he always went to Florida with them. But the family *never* went.

**SM:** Oh, so that was a pattern then.

**VA:** Yes. But anyhow, we lived there. And here again, I think we were renting.

**SM:** Yes. I remember your father said in the early days it was really hard to rent as a Filipino. They often rented from Chinese or something who owned the building. But the discrimination in housing was really very severe.

**VA:** Yes. Oh! Very much so, yes. In fact, I don't know how he got the loan to buy the house that he eventually bought.

**SM:** Oh. Not the one he's in now? Or is that the one . . . ?

**VA:** No.

**SM:** But before that he bought a house.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** And I think it was with the help of the Morrisons.

**SM:** Oh. Well, that's what Rudy Runez said, that somebody he worked for in White Bear bought the house for him and then he paid it back to him.

**VA:** Right. Yes. Morrisons didn't do that.

**SM:** Because bank loans would be hard to obtain.

**VA:** Yes. Yes, they were. Especially at that time, just having gone through a Depression.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** From that house there we moved down about two blocks and rented another house on the other side of the street, in which we lived approximately . . . oh, I'd say no more than two years. And I was in Kindergarten in that house.

**SM:** I see. So you're beginning to remember this better now [chuckles] as you get to this . . .

**VA:** Right. Right.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Back to the first house at Grays Bay.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I can remember having difficulty because we didn't have any money.

**SM:** Oh, you can remember that.

**VA:** And my father was down in Florida.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** With the Morrisons. And we had no fuel oil and our pilot light went out. And our . . . we ran out of fuel in the middle of winter when I can remember what she finally did was call Florida. And the Morrisons had to call Dickie over in Wayzata and tell him to put it on their bill.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Dickie is . . . ?

**SM:** Well, the times were pretty hard.

**VA:** Yes. Well, and we didn't get paid . . . we. My father didn't get paid a lot.

**SM:** I'm sure.

**VA:** Even at that time.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** You know. But it was steady work and the people were good to him. At Christmas we'd get some presents and he'd always bring home something.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** And I think that . . . that through a combination of the . . . I'm sure he won't ever say this, but I think that . . . you know, when they would have parties, he'd be able to bring part of the food home and things like that.

**SM:** Yes. But the pay itself was not so much.

**VA:** No.

**SM:** It would be interesting to know what they were paid, but I suppose it would be really hard to dig up that information.

**VA:** I don't . . . I don't even know if my father remembers.

**SM:** If he remembers, yes.

**VA:** I know he remembers being paid at the Curtis Hotel . . .

**SM:** Yes, he said like twenty-six cents an hour.

**VA:** Yes. He remembers that.

**SM:** But see, even in the context of what money was worth then [chuckles] that wasn't much.

**VA:** He used to work . . . I'm sure he also told you he worked two jobs.

**SM:** Yes. Two and three sometimes, to survive.

**VA:** During the war, when the war broke out . . . let me get to the final house.

**SM:** Yes, okay. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Okay. The one I remember, two blocks down on the other side of the street was where I was in Kindergarten.

**SM:** That's still Grays Bay, though, right?

**VA:** That's still Grays Bay. Yes. And I can remember taking the bus, going to Kindergarten, crying, wetting my pants . . . you know, a lot of things.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** And it was a summer house.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** And we lived in it in the winter.

**SM:** In the winter.

**VA:** These were *not* winterized at all. Most of it was summer porch.

**SM:** Oh, that must have been sort of grim.

**VA:** We were renting there also. Then they finally bought a house. And here it. . . I must have been in the second grade.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** And it's about four blocks down. Sixteenth . . . and now it has an address. It never did until I came home from service, okay.

**SM:** It didn't have an address?

**VA:** There were no addresses. Route Three, and the mailman knew everybody.

**SM:** Oh. This is still at Grays Bay, right?

**VA:** This is three blocks down on the same road.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** And my brother, my younger brother still owns the house.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** It's at 16924 Cottage Grove Avenue. Wayzata, Minnesota.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Which is at Grays Bay.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** And that house they bought.

**SM:** Hmm. Well that must have been pretty much of an accomplishment to buy a house at that point, even if it were not an expensive house.

**VA:** I think he only paid two thousand, maybe twenty-five hundred dollars for it.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** And of course that was not . . . you know, it doesn't sound like much to us.

**SM:** Well, in those days it was . . .

**VA:** But you could have . . . for four thousand dollars you could have probably bought the best house around at that time.

**SM:** Yes. So you think he got the loan for it from the person he worked for then.

**VA:** I think he got it through a bank, but I think that he was vouched for by the Morrisons.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Yes, we should ask him about that sometime. Because I'm interested in the whole thing of how immigrant groups accumulated any capital to start businesses and so on. And I guess there were rather few among the Filipinos.

**VA:** At that time there were *very* few.

**SM:** Right. It would be very hard.

**VA:** Yes. Now many of the Filipinos coming over are professional people.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** And are coming from rich families.

**SM:** Right, it's a whole different ballgame now.

**VA:** Yes. When they came over, their family didn't have a nickel.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** Which was one of the reasons for them to immigrate.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** You know, you leave one spot to go to the land of plenty and milk and honey or whatever it was. [Chuckles]

**SM:** Did Filipinos ever send . . . or you know, the Chinese have this tradition of always sending back money to their home. Was that part of the pattern with Filipinos, too?

**VA:** I don't think it was.

**SM:** Or were they having such a tough time just surviving that . . . ?

**VA:** I think that they had such a real problem surviving themselves that there was no money to send home.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** I think that after the war, I recall a niece or nephew of my father's . . .

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Was running for . . . some title. For the city or for the . . .

**SM:** In the Philippines?

**VA:** Yes, in the Philippines.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**VA:** And they wrote and asked my father for money and a dress for her to wear.

**SM:** Hmmm.

**VA:** This was after the war now.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** So I think that they were still . . . poor people over there and thought that we were all millionaires over here.

**SM:** Yes, there's always that image, of course. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Right.

**SM:** Yes. And was he able to send it then? [Unclear]

**VA:** I don't know, to tell you the truth. I honestly don't know.

**SM:** I take it that, you know, during the war the Filipinos were able to get factory jobs, war jobs.

**VA:** Oh ho. A *heyday*, sure.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** First of all, many Filipinos . . . there was a whole battalion. And I'm trying to remember how many were in . . . you know, like two hundred Filipinos.

**SM:** Right. What was the name of that? Do you remember?

**VA:** I don't know.

**SM:** I remember reading some reference to it and wondering where I could find out some more, myself.

**VA:** Where to find more out about it?

**SM:** Yes. The people in it, I suppose. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Sure. Pictures and everything.

[Rustling sounds of pages turning]

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** All kinds of it. [Sighs]

**SM:** Hmmm. And this was all Filipinos in the battalion, right?

**VA:** Yes. Quinzon. Milton Quinzon. That's how you'll find out about it.

**SM:** Oh, Milton Quinzon?

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** How do you spell that?

**VA:** Milton Quinzon. Q . . . Alfredo and Ann . . . here. No. Here. Milton Quinzon. Pictures, the whole works.

**SM:** Oh, okay.

**VA:** You bet.

**SM:** I'll have to get in touch with him.

**VA:** My father, I think, was too old.

**SM:** Yes, I think that's what he said, but he . . .

**VA:** They wouldn't take him. So he went to work for TCOP.

**SM:** Wasn't there a question at some point about whether they were eligible for the draft? And then there was . . . because they weren't citizens. And then they created this whole battalion of them or something like that.

**VA:** That I'm not sure of.

**SM:** It was something strange [unclear] about that.

**VA:** Yes, that I honestly couldn't tell you because I . . .

**SM:** Probably your father would know. Or this guy here.

**VA:** He might. He might remember.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** My father went to work at TCOP, which made bullets. Twin City Ordnance Plant. It's now called . . . I can't think of what it's called now. It's out in White Bear area.

**SM:** Oh, I see.

**VA:** Still in existence. He went to work down there and oh, he . . . he sold bonds. He was an inspector, I believe, after a while at least.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** He worked . . . they would leave at five, four-thirty or five in the morning, and he'd drive from Wayzata to Twin City Ordnance Plant.

**SM:** Oh. [Sighs]

**VA:** He had an A gasoline sticker.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** He had riders. And then when he would get done after working ten hours, he'd go to work at Minneapolis Athletic Club.

**SM:** Oh!

**VA:** And then when he . . . and on any days that he had free, he would work for the Morrisons.

**SM:** Oh . . .

**VA:** He took out one bond, an 1875 dollar bond, every payday. *Every* payday. He used to get up in front of them at lunch hours and at bond rallies and he'd *sing*. And I can't . . .

**SM:** Did he really?

**VA:** Yes sir, he would. And I can't remember the song. And, once again, it just fails my memory. But he'd sing a song, a specific song. And I can't remember what it was now, and I'm sure he would. And sell bonds and . . .

**SM:** Oh. [sighs]

**VA:** And that ended.

**SM:** Oh, he also worked for the Red Cross, getting people to donate blood or something.

**VA:** Oh, he did everything. He was energetic.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** Young . . . young punk on his way up. [Laughter]

**SM:** Well, was he . . . he must have been still very young when he married then? Like eighteen, nineteen, twenty maybe.

**VA:** Oh, let's see.

**SM:** He came in 1928, right?

**VA:** He couldn't have been more than . . . twenty-three, I'm guessing.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** Well, he may have . . .

**SM:** [Unclear]

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** If he married in 1930. I'm not sure he married in 1930 though. But he came in 1928 and he was only sixteen then.

**VA:** Yes, he may have been younger. Yes, you're right.

**SM:** Hmm. Well, it sounds as though, you know, he was really busy and you were . . . you were probably with your mother much more. And so I would assume that maybe you absorbed values from her. Were they Norwegian values or had she entered into the Filipino community so much that they were kind of a combination?

**VA:** No. Most of the entering into a Filipino community would be going to meetings. And normally the children weren't there.

**SM:** Oh. So you didn't, as a child, take part in a lot of the Filipino organizational parties or . . .

**VA:** Not really, no. No. Not really. Although there were, you know, certain times. I can remember like my younger brother reciting a . . . a Rizal Day poem.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** I can, you know . . .

**SM:** So there were some that were family events.

**VA:** Yes. They would have a pig roast.

**SM:** Ah.

**VA:** You know, on a Saturday or a Sunday or whatever it was. And yes, I can remember some of them, not all of them. So there were times when they got together. They played a lot of poker, the Filipinos did.

**SM:** Oh, did they?

**VA:** Yes. I can remember Filipinos coming over to the house and playing poker.

**SM:** So there were quite a lot of Filipinos around?

**VA:** Oh, yes. Oh yes, it wasn't as if we didn't know any.

**SM:** [Chuckles] They would come over for meals and so on, too?

**VA:** Yes, they'd have parties. We lived pretty far out.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** If somebody wanted to go fishing, they'd always stop in.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**VA:** There were a few Filipinos out Wayzata way but they were few and far between, you know, getting less and less people moved into the city and . . .

**SM:** Yes. Seems like a lot of them really liked fishing, they did mention that quite a bit.

**VA:** Ah . . .

**SM:** Some of the old timers still go fishing a lot.

**VA:** They eat fish. They like fish, first of all.

**SM:** Yes. Right. [Chuckles] That [unclear].

**VA:** And to like fish, and to like fishing . . . you put them together and yes, you're going to go fishing.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** You know, I enjoy fishing and I just can't stand eating fish, you know. But my father likes to fish and likes to eat fish.

**SM:** Yes. Well, did you eat Filipino food in your family or did your mother fix Norwegian food or just regular American food? [Chuckles]

**VA:** I don't know.

**SM:** Was she pretty tied in to Norwegian culture or not?

**VA:** Not really.

**SM:** Not too much.

**VA:** No. Although she spoke Norwegian, read and write it.

**SM:** I see. Oh, she had gone to school in it then?

**VA:** I don't know. I'm not sure. I know she didn't go to school in Norway, and I . . . I'm sorry I can't . . .

**SM:** Oh, so she learned it here.

**VA:** Yes. Learned from the family. It's like, you know, where did you learn your Polish, and German, and . . .? You know.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** The people who settled here spoke whatever language wherever they came from.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** And therefore the kids learned it.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** That's why kids don't learn it now. Nobody speaks . . .

**SM:** Oh, yes. Right.

**VA:** Nobody speaks Norwegian or Filipino in the house.

**SM:** Yes, so they don't . . .

**VA:** So you don't learn it.

**SM:** Right. Well, so did she grow up in a town that was largely Norwegian then?

**VA:** Oh, yes. Clearbrook-Bagley area, yes.

**SM:** Yes. Yes, so she learned it there. I see.

**VA:** My grandfather, see, was a stonemason.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Herman, I think his name was. And to this day they have buildings and bridges that are standing in Clearbrook, that they're still using that he built out of stone.

**SM:** Ah. That's interesting.

**VA:** At least one church that I know of and one bridge.

**SM:** Hmm. That's interesting. Well, those Norwegians were really good craftsmen, I guess. Hmm. Well, what I'm interested in . . . I mean, it's such a hazy kind of thing to get at but [chuckles] for instance, Tita, especially, seemed to have really absorbed the Filipino values from her . . . from Belen and Ben.

**VA:** Oh, certainly.

**SM:** I wondered if, you know, it might have been quite different in your childhood [unclear]?

**VA:** Very, very much so. Keep in mind that with Cristy and Tita they've even been back to the islands.

**SM:** Right. You've never . . . have you ever been to the Philippines?

**VA:** We've never been there.

**SM:** Ah ha. So that's quite a big difference.

**VA:** My father had never been back to the islands for forty years.

**SM:** Yes. And largely, I suppose, because of money.

**VA:** Ah, yes. Right.

**SM:** Yes, so it would be an expensive trip to go back.

**VA:** So until he remarried, he'd never been back to the islands himself.

**SM:** Yes. I see.

**VA:** When he got there, he didn't recognize his brother and sister.

**SM:** Oh, can you imagine leaving at sixteen and then for forty years . . .?

**VA:** Oh! I can't imagine leaving home at sixteen and making it on my own!

**SM:** [Chuckles] I know. That's an amazing thing in itself.

**VA:** [Chuckles] You know, to go to a foreign country where they spoke a different language and survive.

**SM:** Yes. Yes, it takes . . . something.

**VA:** Where they're then . . . take a . . . well, I was going to say send someone to Iran, but that . . . you know, I don't know. You probably can't find a spot. But a dark complected person, send them into a light complected community where they're going to, in many cases, hate you.

**SM:** Yes. Right. And then try to survive.

**VA:** And not be able to speak their language [chuckles] and then try to get a job from somebody and . . . it's difficult. I'm sure it was. I don't think . . . I don't think I could measure up to it.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** If I had to do it. I . . . I really think that these people had to be really extra special just to be able to do it.

**SM:** Oh, I'm sure they were. How did he get the money to come over here? Did his father help him with that?

**VA:** I don't know.

**SM:** Sell an animal or . . . ?

**VA:** I honestly don't know.

**SM:** Oh, I think he said maybe that his brother sent money for him.

**VA:** Older brother, probably.

**SM:** Yes, could have been, I'm not sure now. Well, so as you look back, was your childhood more Norwegian than Filipino or a mixture?

**VA:** Neither. Neither. I think that . . . as I look back, my childhood was very, very similar to anybody else's.

**SM:** Was it? Similar to anyone around . . . ?

**VA:** Yes. I'm not saying it wasn't without incidents, you know. Once again, being darker than most of them, there *have* to be, I think. If nothing else, the question, you know, "What are you?" Or when someone's mad at you, "Hey, darkie," or something. You know, there's always going to be that.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** I don't care whether you're German and you happen to be dark or . . . You know, it happens.

**SM:** Right. So you remember instances from your school days, or as a child, or . . . ?

**VA:** Oh, I think that maybe I was more prejudiced than other people, and not necessarily to race but to religion.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Even though my father was Catholic, we were brought up as Lutherans.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**VA:** And I think that maybe because of the fact that I had seen some prejudice against myself, maybe therefore I, you know, I . . . am I supposed to analyze myself? [Chuckles]

**SM:** If you want to! [Chuckles]

**VA:** Therefore maybe I thought, well, I should get back at somebody. And of course . . .

**SM:** Oh, yes. That's normal, I guess. Yes.

**VA:** The Catholicers were the ones, you know.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** My best friends were Catholics! [Laughter]

**SM:** [Laughing] So did you say things to children about being Catholic?

**VA:** Oh, a couple of times. I can remember . . .

**SM:** That's interesting. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Calling a kid by the name of . . . his name was Ness. John Ness. I must have been mad at him for something. He was a little younger than me. Probably four or five years. Lived across the street. My brother lives in their house right now.

**SM:** Oh! [Chuckles]

**VA:** And for some reason I called him a dirty Catholic.

**SM:** [Chuckles] That's interesting.

**VA:** Well, it just so happens, John now is a priest. No, excuse me, he's a brother.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** John is a brother. Big guy, too. Oh!

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** Boy, I'm glad he wasn't big . . .

**SM:** Maybe that was his inspiration! [Chuckles]

**VA:** I'm glad . . . I tell you, I'm glad he wasn't big then! [Chuckles] But so, you know.

**SM:** That's interesting.

**VA:** But as I say, most of my friends were Catholic. Why, I used to . . . I used to go up with the kids some nights, we'd walk up to the parish and go up and see Father Shea and sit there and . . . you know, just blow off steam as . . . you know, this was when I was in high school.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** And, you know, at that time it . . .

**SM:** Most of your friends were Catholic then, right?

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** I see. Well, what . . . ethnic background were they? Your friends all mixed or . . .?

**VA:** Well, let's see. LaHaye is French.

**SM:** Oh, yes, that would be . . .

**VA:** Genie Schmidt was German. Peter Hansen is Danish. He is the brother-in-law to my brother.

**SM:** Oh. Brother-in-law to your brother. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** His wife . . .

**SM:** So it was a real mixed neighborhood then?

**VA:** Well, they weren't all from the neighborhood.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Dick Tuthill was . . . I don't know what he was. Bob Ray is . . . I'm not even sure. I'd have to ask Mrs. Ray.

**SM:** Yes. [Chuckles] Yes, well, that's interesting.

**VA:** I think they're French though.

**SM:** So you were brought up pretty much like all the rest of them then.

**VA:** Yes. See . . . we were a little darker than others, but still very light.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Compared to Connie Custodio, Ted Epperly, because, see, some of these are from . . . even Ted Epperly's darker than I am.

**SM:** Oh, and he is from a mixed marriage, too.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** And of course Connie's not but . . . Let's see, [unclear] are darker. No, they're about the same. Oh, gee . . .

**SM:** Well, that's what Belen said, that most of the Filipinos had said that the children of the mixed marriages had an easier time.

**VA:** Oh hell, yes. My son . . . my son's darker than I am.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**VA:** Has had more difficulty than I had.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Oh, sure.

**SM:** Hmmm.

**VA:** Even into . . . even [unclear].

**SM:** You'd think towns would have changed a little.

**VA:** No, no. The . . . some change but there is always that group that . . .

**SM:** Yes, there will always be some.

**VA:** Yes. I can remember the first girl I went steady with.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I can remember her telling me that—and she was Catholic—her telling me that her parents really didn't want her to go steady with me. They didn't want her to get too involved because I was too dark.

**SM:** I'm sure that's a common . . .

**VA:** Well, that was a little bit of a blow.

**SM:** Oh, sure.

**VA:** We were . . . we had always been good friends. We still are. They were German.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** They emigrated from Germany. They didn't know my family and we didn't know theirs, you know, at that time, because I didn't meet her until I was a freshman, until we were in high school.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** So . . . but, you know, so, oh, once in a while . . .

**SM:** Well, I guess that kind of thing does still go on.

**VA:** Oh, yes. Even now. Even the people I work with. They kid me a lot. And I don't mind.

**SM:** Do they?

**VA:** Yes, I don't mind.

**SM:** Where do you work now? [Chuckles]

**VA:** Oh! I used to work at American National.

**SM:** Oh, I see.

**VA:** Down here. And people I fish with and everything, they always kid me about . . . oh, hey, well, we'll go fishing. I become an Indian. Because I'm the Indian guide. You know, things like that.

**SM:** Yes, they think that's real funny and . . .

**VA:** Well, they . . . they . . . maybe they're uneasy. I'm not, you know. They may be uneasy. I don't think they are. We kid around.

**SM:** It isn't something that worries you too much, I take it. [Chuckles]

**VA:** It really doesn't bother me, no. I don't know. Maybe years ago it might have.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** You know, when I was younger. I can . . . I think I can tell from a person whether they . . . they mean it or whether they're . . . you know, whether they're really my friends or not.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I guess is what I'm saying. And I know people who have said it . . . and I kind of feel sorry for them because, you know, I think of myself way back when, thinking, yes, there's got to be somebody I can get back at, you know.

**SM:** [Chuckles] [Unclear].

**VA:** [Chuckles] You know, and I feel like that's what they're doing. Once in a while. You know, people I don't know well and . . . and oh, I get . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles] Well, what did your parents tell you to do when people would say things? Or did you ever talk to them about it?

**VA:** Never . . . never talked to them about it, because we really didn't have that many incidences when we were kids. I'm sure Blaine would have said the same thing. And I don't think Denny did either. We didn't have many incidences, racial incidences.

**SM:** Do you think Tita and Marietta . . . Tita and Cristy have had more?

**VA:** I would guess they do. Sure.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Very definitely. They're darker. Darker complected.

**SM:** Well, Tita especially said that, you know, the things she thought were important were things like family, mutual help in a family, family closeness, education, religion, the things she had learned from her parents as Filipino cultural values, really. And how would you compare yourself now with her . . . of course, she's pretty young and so on. But this probably will stick with her through life, I imagine. I wondered how you would compare your own . . . well, how you identify yourself, in a way. You don't *feel* Filipino, I don't suppose. But maybe you do in a sense.

**VA:** I really don't, I guess. I guess I don't feel Filipino, I don't feel Norwegian, I . . .

**SM:** You just feel American?

**VA:** Yes. Here I am, a second generation . . . to . . . a product of two people virtually coming from opposite ends of the world, you know.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Right. Right.

**VA:** No, I . . . I would like to know more about *both* sides. Not just one.

**SM:** Yes. So you're interested in the cultures of both of them? Or not?

**VA:** I can't imagine that a person *can't* be interested in background.

**SM:** Well, [unclear] just reject it, you know. And try to be real . . . completely American, or . . .

**VA:** Well, I think that . . .

**SM:** But [unclear] still have a vague interest . . . yes.

**VA:** But I think that being real American is looking back to your roots, to tell you the truth. I really believe that.

**SM:** Right. Right. Everyone came from somewhere.

**VA:** Oh, sure.

**SM:** Yes. So you are interested in . . . both cultures.

**VA:** Oh, yes. Yes. I don't know . . . how do you express interest? I asked my father just the other day to write down what he remembered of his family.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**VA:** You know.

**SM:** That would be real interesting if you did.

**VA:** Yes, who knows? Maybe I'll go to the islands.

**SM:** Would you like to?

**VA:** Oh, well, sure. Who . . . you know.

**SM:** Who wouldn't? Yes. [Chuckles]

**VA:** I know when my father went back, gee, they killed a fatted calf for him. Oh, they had quite a deal when they went back. Of course, it had been a long time, too.

**SM:** Sure. None of the . . .

**VA:** Yes, I'd like to go and see my relatives. I'd like to see them on both sides, to tell you the truth.

**SM:** Yes. Yes. Yes, it seems as though you were close to the Norwegian culture in some ways, too. Would it be more for just . . . I guess you can't measure that kind of thing. [Chuckles]

**VA:** It's tough to. I think that there's a Scandinavian culture here in the Twin Cities.

**SM:** Oh, yes. So that reinforces whatever feeling you have here. Yes.

**VA:** Right. Yes. So I think that . . . I think that if somebody coming from another area were to come up here, they'd say, boy, there's a lot of Scandinavian things around here, isn't there?

**SM:** Yes, that's for sure.

**VA:** Well, you know there is.

**SM:** Right. Yes.

**VA:** And of course my wife is Swedish, and that doesn't . . .

**SM:** Oh, so that reinforces it, too. [Chuckles]

**VA:** You know, that reinforces it again. Right.

**SM:** Yes. What about your children? Are they interested in Filipino culture at all?

**VA:** Oh, sure. Oh, sure. Now my son is very . . . extremely dark. I don't know that he's interested in anything.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** And I . . . [chuckles] I have . . . I also feel that he probably has been hit a lot with prejudices.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Well, that could make kids not want to [unclear] I guess.

**VA:** I don't think my children have . . . My children have been going to school. My daughter has dropped out now, my oldest daughter. But the other two are in school and are on MLK scholarships right now, which is Martin Luther King.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Which does not necessarily mean that you have to be black, but that you have to be minority. And I think they've also changed it from Martin Luther King to Asian American or minority or something of that nature now.

**SM:** Is that at the university?

**VA:** Yes. And it's only at the university. And so they've participated in being part Filipino. The Norwegian didn't do a thing for them, or the Swede. Only the fact that they are part Filipino.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** That they were able to get *this* particular scholarship.

**SM:** I see. So that would make sort of a difference to them, I guess. Or does it? That they have to claim some sort of Asian American [unclear].

**VA:** Well . . . to be honest with, and two of my daughters came in asking for help. The people told them they were in the wrong place.

**SM:** Oh. Yes. Because they don't look Asian enough.

**VA:** Oh, not at all. In fact, they're probably lighter than you. [Chuckles]

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** But it's . . . you know. Just . . .

**SM:** But they weren't disqualified by that?

**VA:** Oh, no. Well, this daughter spoke Spanish to them because she'd had it in high school.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** [Chuckles]

**SM:** It's interesting when you said your father didn't speak English when he came.

**VA:** I don't believe he did. In fact, I don't think many of the Filipinos did.

**SM:** Hmmm.

**VA:** I remember them talking about it, going to John's Place because . . . .

[Recording interruption]

**VA:** Today they teach English in schools over there. I don't think they did then.

**SM:** Yes. Well, some of them have told me though that as soon as the Americans occupied the Philippines in 1900, around there, they did start all this public school system.

**VA:** Yes. [Unclear] yes.

**SM:** It probably wasn't completely, you know . . .

**VA:** Sure.

**SM:** Everywhere. But . . . hmmm. Well . . .

**VA:** See, part of the problem would have been dialects. Certainly there are probably two major dialects.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** But there are also . . .

**SM:** There are forty or so all in all.

**VA:** More than that. I think it's seventy-eight or seventy-nine or something like that, dialects.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**VA:** My father sometimes can't speak to people from across the island because of that.

**SM:** Right. Well, he and your mother always spoke English, I suppose, to each other.

**VA:** Well, I'm sure that he learned English rather than she learned Filipino, first of all.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** And I think that, you know, as a son, it's probably difficult . . . or as a child it's difficult to imagine that there was that universal language that . . .

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** As I grew up, I understood when you meet a woman. But . . . [Chuckles]

**SM:** Yes, well, I mean, it must have . . . they must have, you know, communicated pretty well by the time you could remember.

**VA:** Oh, yes. Most certainly. My father has mellowed much since then. He . . . he had a strict hand with the children.

**SM:** Oh. Well, that was one thing I was going to ask about the childrearing. Well, Norwegians are usually . . . traditionally were rather strict, too, weren't they?

**VA:** Oh, that I'm not sure.

**SM:** Or not in your family though?

**VA:** My mother wasn't.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, so your father was more strict.

**VA:** Oh, yes. Very strict. Very strict.

**SM:** Hmmm. Were there any other sort of differences that stand out, you know?

**VA:** We were poor.

**SM:** What each parent wanted of you. [Chuckles] You were poor, that's the first thing.

**VA:** Yes. We were very poor. [Sighs] Until the war, there wasn't much money at all.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Even during the war, you know, to begin with, as they started to accumulate, so to speak, more money, which wasn't much, but . . . [sighs] I know that I got free lunches when I was in school.

**SM:** Yes. I wonder when they started those free lunches. Quite a long time ago, I guess.

**VA:** Yes. I used to get tickets. I don't . . . and, you know, nowadays everybody gets tickets, okay.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Whether they're free or not, you've got to buy tickets.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** And the reason for that is so that you can't tell one from the other.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** And I don't recall that it made any difference to me or anybody else, to be honest with you.

**SM:** Yes. It's more important to get a lunch, I suppose.

**VA:** You know, I stop and think. I *know* I got milk and I think I got lunch, too.

**SM:** Yes, I see. Yes.

**VA:** Part of the milk program. So even way back there . . .

**SM:** Yes. Well, it's going even now.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes. Well, that was what? In the late 1930s?

**VA:** Well, yes, it must have been in 1938, 1939.

**SM:** Yes. Hmm. Did you ever remember any Filipino newspapers around your house?

**VA:** Never. Never had any.

**SM:** There was one published . . .

**VA:** Did my dad say we did?

**SM:** He didn't say you did, but he mentioned there was one here published for a couple years, Andrew [unclear], and I haven't been able to find anyone with a copy, is the unfortunate thing. It would be real nice to have one.

**VA:** Way back then, hmmm?

**SM:** Yes. It just didn't last very long because the Depression came, and they would also send copies to the Philippines. It was to tell the people in the Philippines about the Filipino community here, and also to bring news from the Philippines to this community.

**VA:** I know that now he gets a Filipino paper from the Philippines. Plus also there are . . .

**SM:** Yes. And from Chicago I think there are papers, too, yes.

**VA:** Yes, there are also newsletters here that go over there now that he gets.

**SM:** Yes. Yes, right.

**VA:** Obviously, now, things have . . . number one, there's, I think, proportionately those days to these days, there's more money available to them.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** Whether it's because they've been here a long time or whether things have loosened up or whether . . . you know, whatever the reason, there is more money. And so consequently there is more going between the two countries now.

**SM:** Oh, yes. And all those special rates, too, that America has set up.

**VA:** Oh, well, also these . . . now the professional people here.

**SM:** Well, they're real affluent, too, of course.

**VA:** Oh, yes. They'll take a whole plane. And of course that brings the price down, sure.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** And they'll go over and they'll be gone for six weeks.

**SM:** Sure.

**VA:** So if you can't afford to be gone for six weeks, you can't go.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Well, most of them can, I take it. The doctors and all of them.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes, it's a whole different thing now with [unclear]. Do you take part in any Filipino organizations now?

**VA:** I do not. I think I belong to one, basically, because my father asked me to join or something. But, you know, things my father asks me to do, I usually do. We don't go to Rizal banquets. We used to go to some of the functions with my father. We used to . . . you know.

**SM:** Oh yes, or some of those special programs.

**VA:** Right.

**SM:** [Unclear] say you had a pretty good Filipinaña a while back. I missed that. Well, let me see if there's anything we should . . .

[Loud shuffling noises]

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** I didn't even read this yet. So . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles] Well, I just jotted down, you know, a few things that came to mind. What about that? That's just something I'm trying to ask everyone I talk to from the Filipino community. I think . . .

**VA:** Term Pilipino, Filipino?

**SM:** Pilipino and Filipino. The new immigrants, I guess, are using Pilipino more.

**VA:** Oh, is that right?

**SM:** Yes. I think it comes from the Tagalog.

**VA:** Oh, okay, I . . .

**SM:** But it also seems to have a little implication of getting away from what was imposed by the Spanish. There's no 'F' sound in the Tagalog language. That's what I've been told. But, well, if you haven't heard of it, that's something to note.

**VA:** No, I haven't.

**SM:** In the old community it isn't even . . .

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** I think it's a new phenomenon.

**VA:** Philippines being spelled with a 'PH' and the Filipino being spelled with an 'F'.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I don't know whether that was something that was derived when they came here and because of the 'PH' being an 'F' we . . . they just started spelling it with an 'F' for the Filipino, and the Philippines, of course, was a proper name and would never be changed.

**SM:** Yes. I don't know why there is that difference. It was always that way, I think.

**VA:** As long as I can remember, it was Philippines and Filipino.

**SM:** Yes. Is there anything else on there we should have mentioned, that looks interesting to you?

**VA:** Active . . . I'm not active. Although many . . . I know a lot of people that are.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I get all their newsletters and those things.

**SM:** Oh, you do get the newsletters then?

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Even if you didn't ask for them. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Well, I think that . . .

**SM:** Or you must have your name on those things, but . . .

**VA:** Yes, I joined, see. It cost a couple of bucks to join one time and I joined.

**SM:** Oh. I see.

**VA:** Now whether that was a forever joining or . . . for that two bucks or it was for one year or what, I'm not absolutely sure.

**SM:** Yes. Well, once you get on the mailing list, you know . . . [Chuckles]

**VA:** Right. See, there's advertising in the particular paper I get.

**SM:** Sure. Right. Well, so you're sort of loosely connected with the organizations and [unclear].

**VA:** They know I exist.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** [Chuckles] And of course with my parents being as active as they are . . .

**SM:** Through your parents they certainly would.

**VA:** I always get things.

**SM:** Right. Yes.

**VA:** Never been to the Philippines.

**SM:** Well, something about the politics might be interesting. I mean, they all [unclear] vote, but I wondered if you were ever aware of your parents talking about the Democrats or the Republicans or any particular issues or . . .? Your mother voted, I suppose.

**VA:** My father . . . both of them voted.

**SM:** Oh. Well, your father didn't get his citizenship until after the war though, right?

**VA:** Right.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** During the war.

**SM:** During the war.

**VA:** I think. Did he tell you what year it was? He was working at the Morrisons.

**SM:** Oh. Hmmm.

**VA:** And also at the defense plant, I think, so it must . . . I get the feeling it was during the war. Because he would go to school and he got the books . . . some of the books for some of his courses he got from Angus Morrison.

**SM:** Oh. Yes. So he had to take a class or something for it.

**VA:** Yes. Yes, he did. And he was very, very proud of that. And yes, he always voted.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** He wouldn't miss an election, I don't think.

**SM:** He's a pretty political guy then, hmmm?

**VA:** Well, no.

**SM:** Not really?

**VA:** He was given something that not everybody had.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** And he felt obligated to vote.

**SM:** Yes, he seems very patriotic [unclear].

**VA:** Yes. Oh, yes. But he . . . that was an obligation given to him and he was going to do his part.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** I have to feel that he had always been a Democrat, but, you see, he worked for people who were Republicans.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** Okay. I think that . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles] That puts you in a tight spot, doesn't it?

**VA:** I know that he liked many Republicans for many favors but . . .

**SM:** For many favors, you said?

**VA:** Well . . . maybe to community . . . Filipino community or maybe for a job, you know. He used to cater some nights.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** And he knew of many people who were politicians. But I think that . . .

**SM:** He knew many politicians, you said?

**VA:** I think he did, yes. Through the . . . where he worked.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Through his employer.

**VA:** Sure. And they *liked* him because he did do a good job.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Right. They were always really industrious it seems and really faithful and . . .

**VA:** Well, even over and above that. He was good at his work.

**SM:** Oh yes, that too.

**VA:** Can you imagine . . .? I worked with him. I went out, catered with him at Pillsbury, Senior.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Who has a place out on [Lake] Minnetonka.

**SM:** You did this when you were growing up?

**VA:** Oh, I suppose I was twenty-four, twenty-five.

**SM:** Oh, you were already an adult.

**VA:** Yes. I was married. But . . . so I must have been twenty-five or twenty-six. But anyhow, the place was big enough, the ballroom was big enough to have a band at each end, okay. To describe the place. Here's my father, he'll go out and get fifteen drink orders from people who are milling around. Come back, mix them, and go out and find the people who aren't standing in the same place.

**SM:** Oh! Well . . .

**VA:** You've got to be good.

**SM:** I think he's an extremely intelligent person.

**VA:** Oh, you bet.

**SM:** At his age, it's amazing how completely . . . you know, his memory is good and . . .

**VA:** What age did he say he was?

**SM:** Well . . . I guess I'm just kind of guessing on that.

**VA:** [Laughter]

**SM:** Or maybe he did say his age. I don't know. I should have brought my notes on him.  
[Chuckles]

**VA:** Yes. I think there's a little discrepancy in his age.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** On his social security and birth certificate and . . .

**SM:** Well, see, if he was sixteen when he came . . . well, he's not exactly young [chuckles] in any case.

**VA:** Well, no, but . . . Yes, but I think there's about a three-year discrepancy between his birth certificate and his social security certificate.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** And there . . . I don't think you could prove one either way.

**SM:** You mean he was trying to be older to get the social security or . . .?

**VA:** No. Because you don't have to be any age to get a social security number.

**SM:** Right. That's right. You can get that at any age.

**VA:** But I think that he honestly didn't know his birth date.

**SM:** Oh, yes, that could easily be . . .

**VA:** The year.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** And of course the records are destroyed.

**SM:** Yes. Right. That . . . yes, that could easily be. And he didn't have a lot of contact with his family. Did he write to them a lot, do you remember ever getting letters or . . .?

**VA:** I don't think he did. I don't remember ever getting a letter before the war.

**SM:** Oh. Yes. Hmmm. Well, anyway, I do have the impression that he was a very, extremely intelligent person.

**VA:** Oh, I think he is.

**SM:** And that's the way these old-timers survived. [Chuckles] They all seem to be very intelligent. I guess the others didn't make it [unclear] but . . .

**VA:** I think maybe even an instinct to survive.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Persistence [unclear] [chuckles] an instinct to survive, yes.

**VA:** I don't know. I don't know whether my mother voted or not. To be honest with you, I don't remember.

**SM:** Yes. Well, she was a citizen, maybe from birth. You don't know for sure . . .

**VA:** Oh, yes. I'm sure. Yes, I'm sure she was.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Right. Yes. Okay.

**VA:** I'm sure she was a citizen, it's just that I don't recall her ever voting.

**SM:** So she didn't talk about it much, I suppose.

**VA:** No. I can remember her taking the bus downtown to pay the insurance policies at the Metropolitan Life Insurance.

**SM:** Hmmm.

**VA:** For years, they used to come around and collect your quarter. You're not old enough to remember that.

**SM:** No. Oh! [Chuckles] I'm old enough, but I don't remember.

**VA:** They used to come around, and the guy would collect the ten cents or the twenty-five cents depending on how large your policy was every week.

**SM:** Oh, gosh. [Chuckles] [Unclear] miss out.

**VA:** Okay. They discontinued that after the war.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Or maybe it was even during the war because of gas rationing and so forth, you know.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Oh, yes. It's just too much traveling around.

**VA:** Right. So *you* had to go down and bring your money. You'd go down and pay a month at a time instead of a week at a time, see.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I really . . . I'm being honest with you, it was a quarter a week. And they paid for [unclear].

**SM:** So she sort of handled the purse strings, would you say?

**VA:** Yes. I would say that she did.

**SM:** Yes. But you remember your father voting and that was a big thing for him.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes. Hmm. Well, he did say once when I was talking to him that he was kind of opposed to the Philippines' independence in terms of what it did to the immigrants here. That it, you know, stopped the immigration, and you couldn't bring relatives easily and . . .

**VA:** Sure, because then they had to have a . . . they had to immigrate through immigration.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** Through a . . .

**SM:** Through a tiny quota.

**VA:** Quota, yes. Whereas as a . . . it's like, you know, see, Puerto Rico was one of ours.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** You know, they can . . .

**SM:** I'm sure it was unrestricted.

**VA:** Right, they can pretty much come and go as they want.

**SM:** Right. Yes. What do they think about Philippines' politics now or what do you think?

**VA:** I don't discuss it. I . . . I see a lot in the papers and I know that Belen is close to most of it, or at least was.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Because her father was a very . . . [sighs] Very caught up in the politics of the land.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, yes. He was an official, wasn't he? A government official or something.

**VA:** Yes. Right. And I honestly have never discussed it, I don't think, accidentally or on purpose with either one of them.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** So I really don't know much about it.

**SM:** Well, would your guess be that the Filipino community here . . .? Probably not the new immigrants, they're probably more caught up in Filipino politics since they came so recently.

**VA:** Oh, sure.

**SM:** But would the old timers be more . . . sort of hands off kind of Filipino politics? Or are they . . . I mean, have they been away from it so long, or are they really interested in it?

**VA:** I think that their politics are here now.

**SM:** Yes. That would seem like it would be logically . . .

**VA:** Yes. The older ones.

**SM:** Yes. Are they pretty caught up in politics here or . . .?

**VA:** [Sighs] Some are, some aren't. It's like anybody.

**SM:** [Chuckles] That's true.

**VA:** You know. I can't say that more are than other ethnic groups or . . . because I don't believe they are. And I think that's just . . .

**SM:** Well, you would think that, you know, if they lived here twenty-five years without being able to vote, it would somehow have some effect. But maybe it would make them *more* interested in politics, I don't know.

**VA:** Who can't vote? [Chuckles]

**SM:** Well, I mean, when they came they couldn't vote until after the war.

**VA:** Oh, right.

**SM:** They all vote now, of course.

**VA:** Right.

**SM:** Yes. But . . . and it was not only voting, I would assume that deprived them of certain rights of citizenship. I don't know if there were jobs they couldn't get. I know some did work for the post office and some took civil service.

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** So I guess it wasn't . . .

**VA:** I don't think you had . . . I think that a lot of them worked for the railroads, post office.

**SM:** Yes, a lot of them worked for the railroad.

**VA:** You know. And I . . .

**SM:** Yes. Maybe it didn't affect their job status. I don't know.

**VA:** I'm sure that there were jobs that they were not able to get, and not because they were not citizens, but because they were Oriental.

**SM:** Yes. Right. So the citizenship probably wasn't that big a problem as far as their survival.

**VA:** Yes. I think that the war was a . . . for the old Filipino, the war was a . . . I hate to . . . an asset.

**SM:** [Chuckles] I know what you mean. Right.

**VA:** You know, because many through the war, whether it was because they worked at defense plants, whether it was because they became more involved, or whether it was because they were in the army and therefore got their citizenship automatically.

**SM:** Right. Yes.

**VA:** I think that all of them, in general, benefited from the war because of that.

**SM:** Yes, it was a watershed, really.

**VA:** Yes. And also, I think, in my opinion, raised their standards of living.

**SM:** Yes, they got good pay for a change.

**VA:** You bet.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** They got the same pay as anybody else.

**SM:** They all say, too, that discrimination was a lot less after World War II.

**VA:** I think it was.

**SM:** Partly because of Bataan and the Americans fighting with the Filipinos and the big publicity of the Philippines.

**VA:** Yes. Right. It . . . I think that discrimination against the *Japanese* picked up at that time, you see.

**SM:** Yes. It was worse for them.

**VA:** Oh . . . hey. If you were . . . you'd better go around with a sign saying you weren't Japanese almost. You know.

**SM:** Right. But for the Filipinos it was a . . . a help. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Oh, heavens, yes.

**SM:** Too bad it had to be a war. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Yes. You hate to say that. But that is true.

**SM:** Right. It really got better for them after that.

**VA:** Education, work, marriage, family. Brothers, marriages.

**SM:** Oh, yes. We didn't talk about that. Did all of your brothers marry Americans, all three of you marry Americans? Or did some marry . . . ?

**VA:** Right. We are Americans, too.

**SM:** [Chuckles] I know you are. And that term is a very . . .

**VA:** WASP? [Laughter]

**SM:** I only use that term because the Filipinos use it themselves. [Chuckles]

**VA:** [Chuckles] Okay.

**SM:** I don't know what would be a good term.

**VA:** My older brother married a . . . Blaine married a girl who was from Chicago. They met at college in Iowa, at Iowa State, at that time Iowa State Teachers College. She is German.

**SM:** Yes. You mean *really* German or German background? [Chuckles]

**VA:** I think her mother and father came from Germany.

**SM:** I see. So she was like second generation of a German immigrant family.

**VA:** Right. He was a minister, a Lutheran Missouri Synod minister. He retired in 1975 . . . excuse me.

**SM:** This is her father?

**VA:** This is her father. He retired in 1974, which meant that he only gave two services a Sunday.

**SM:** Ah ha.

**VA:** One in German and one in English.

**SM:** Oh, he preached in German.

**VA:** Yes, sir.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** That's my older brother.

**SM:** And in English, hmmm?

**VA:** Yes. My brother . . . I don't believe . . . my brother did not graduate from high school.

**SM:** The youngest one?

**VA:** No, the oldest one.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, he just went straight into college?

**VA:** No, he went into service. Took the GED.

**SM:** Oh, he didn't . . . I see.

**VA:** And graduated from the Iowa State Teachers College.

**SM:** Oh. I see. Yes.

**VA:** And became a teacher.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Arta, his wife, I think only had two years of college.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** And she did teach with her two-year certificate, which at that time, you could.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** But not long after that you had to . . . things changed.

**SM:** Right.

**VA:** You couldn't teach anymore with it.

**SM:** Hmmm. And then you're the middle one, is that right?

**VA:** I'm the middle one, yes. I have two years at . . . a two-year degree at the University of Minnesota.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Haven't worked for thirteen months. [Chuckles]

**SM:** [Chuckles] Okay.

**VA:** Don't put that down. I'm just . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** Yes, that's another story.

**SM:** Well, that's a very common dilemma in these days.

**VA:** Well, really, I was fired. Released, whatever the term is. It was not a derogatory thing, just a cutback, and they did very well by me by paying me for six months until I had my ten years of service and so I'd get everything I . . .

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** When I retire at sixty-five I get a hundred sixty-two dollars a month from them. You know, I have all benefits.

**SM:** This is from American . . .

**VA:** It's American National.

**SM:** American National Bank. Why didn't they just keep you on if they were going to pay you? [Chuckles] I mean, I don't know why, it just came to mind.

**VA:** Well, because they had to change the management staff, you see, they released everybody in my area called bank operations including the cashier. That was seven of us. And then they dispersed the work into other areas, you know, under other managers, you know. If I'm still there, it's pretty tough to disperse my work, is the reason.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** And since then they've cut back a hundred and four people.

**SM:** Oh, boy.

**VA:** In a year. In less than a year. So, you see, it was a . . .

**SM:** That's really bad.

**VA:** Well, the reason it was bad . . .

**SM:** I mean in terms of employment.

**VA:** Well, it was bad that they did what they did in building up that far.

**SM:** Oh, I see. They went too far in [unclear].

**VA:** See. Yes. Anyhow, I . . . at that time I was going to buy a grocery store and up through August or October of this year, I thought . . . in fact, I've got a thousand dollars in coin held.

**SM:** Really?

**VA:** Yes, because I . . . in October I gave the guy a purchase agreement and I had the money, I had thirty-three thousand dollars, and he was going to carry my . . . carry the building, and I gave him a purchase agreement and he came back and said, "Oh, my attorney wants twenty thousand more." Well . . . I didn't have it. No way could I get it. So I said, "Okay." Went out and looked for a job. And I just got one yesterday.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** I was supposed to start today but I told them I couldn't.

**SM:** Oh, I hope I didn't mess you up there.

**VA:** Yes, you did.

**SM:** [Laughter] Where is it you're going to work?

**VA:** NCSC, I think it is.

**SM:** NCS . . .

**VA:** Northliner Computer Service Corporation.

**SM:** Northliner Computer Service . . . what is your training? And I mean it must something that's financial kind of . . .

**VA:** Seat of the pants.

**SM:** [Laughing] Seat of the pants.

**VA:** All on the job.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Computers. Northliner Computer Services . . . I see. Hmmm. And so you're starting there tomorrow?

**VA:** Yes. I'm married to a Swede.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Of all the grandchildren, my father's grandchildren, obviously . . .

**SM:** Yes. [Chuckles]

**VA:** I have the darkest . . . who is a boy, and . . . who I've mentioned before. Terry, I believe, has had difficulty with prejudices. He's the darkest in the family of the three boys.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Then my younger brother, Dennis, is married to a Dane. Hansen, with an E-N.

**SM:** Hmm.

**VA:** And he . . . he has a . . . he spent some time at the university but he never got two years in so he couldn't get a degree. But he does have some kind of a degree from . . . or certificate or whatever from Minnesota Business College.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** On Seventh downtown.

**SM:** Yes. And what does he do?

**VA:** He works for Control Data Corporation. I don't . . . I'm not positive of what his position is.

**SM:** I see. Well, so two of you married Scandinavians, moving more towards that [chuckles] side of the . . . That's real interesting.

[Rustling paper]

**VA:** Okay, let's see . . . experience at school, Filipino [unclear], mother's background [unclear], differences in childbearing . . .

**SM:** Rearing.

**VA:** Childrearing, I'm sorry, of mother and father. Father was stricter.

**SM:** Yes, that's what you said. That's interesting.

**VA:** Values they taught. [Sighs] What foods? Whatever was available.

**SM:** Yes. You didn't eat any . . .

**VA:** We ate a lot of fish, I'll tell you right now.

**SM:** Did you? Oh.

**VA:** Number one, my father liked fish.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Number two, we liked to fish.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** Number three, it was free.

**SM:** Oh . . . so it was partly an economical . . .

**VA:** Yes. Of course . . . and Christmas. Christmas was traditional Norwegian.

**SM:** Oh, was it? [Chuckles] They have a *big* Christmas, too, don't they?

**VA:** Yes. And the lefse and the lutefisk. Oh, god, how we hated lutefisk.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** I don't think any of the boys, to this day, will eat lutefisk. My dad *loves* it.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Your father likes it? Oh, well, it is fish.

**VA:** Just loves it. Sure.

**SM:** Oh. [Laughter]

**VA:** My grandmother used to bake lefse on her stove. She had a wood stove up there. And she had her lefse pans. And she would bake lefse and send down a *big* box, you know.

**SM:** Oh! For Christmas.

**VA:** Maybe as big . . . maybe not quite, but almost as big as this box here. Yes.

**SM:** Oh, my gosh!

**VA:** Of lefse. Oh, sure.

**SM:** Well, did you go up there to visit a lot as children?

**VA:** Summer. During the summer.

**SM:** Oh, during the summer. Every summer you went there?

**VA:** [Sighs] I'm not sure.

**SM:** Yes. But anyway, you remember summers there.

**VA:** Oh, yes. I have pictures of the house.

**SM:** This was in Clearbrook?

**VA:** That was in Bagley.

**SM:** Bagley. She moved to Bagley?

**VA:** Yes, they'd moved to Bagley.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** My grandparents were divorced.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Incompatibility.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** I think there were thirteen live births, you know. And what else . . .? My grandfather was . . . a tobacco chewing, whiskey drinking, woman chasing . . .

**SM:** Oh. So it wasn't a real close family there then.

**VA:** No.

**SM:** But you did go up to see this grandmother and family?

**VA:** Oh, yes. Oh, we'd always go up and see grandpa, too.

**SM:** Oh, your grandpa, too.

**VA:** Yes. He was usually up somewhere near International Falls.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** We'd find him.

**SM:** I see. Well, I suppose being closer to your mother's family, for one . . . I mean, closer geographically, made it easier to get a little more of the Norwegian side.

**VA:** Oh, yes. Grandma would usually come down at Christmas.

**SM:** Did she come down visiting . . .?

**VA:** Yes, very often. And my uncles would always come out. Uncle Melvin was always on welfare. Cy was usually screwing him out of his money that he got from welfare.

**SM:** So other relatives came down, too.

**VA:** Yes. My uncles. And of course Ann and Henry, my aunt and uncle, would always . . .

**SM:** Oh, yes. So you did have Filipino relatives around, too.

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** Well, did your father have relatives here?

**VA:** No.

**SM:** No. His brother was here but he went back, I guess. The one the studied at the ag school.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes. I've forgotten now how these were relatives . . . oh, through your mother's sister.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** Ann was . . .

**SM:** That's right. Oh, yes. It's interesting you had Filipino relatives on your mother's side.  
[Chuckles]

**VA:** Yes. [Chuckles] Oh . . .

**SM:** So she was pretty tied into the Filipino community then in some ways. Except you lived out kind of . . .

**VA:** Yes. I remember them always going to Filipino . . . see . . .

**SM:** Oh, yes. So your parents did . . .

**VA:** At that time they have a similar circumstance now to that time, maybe not as agitated, but . . . They had three clubs. They had a Filipino American club, a Cabeñan club, and a . . . I don't remember the other one.

**SM:** Filipino Minnesotan or . . .?

**VA:** Filipino . . . well . . .

**SM:** Fil-Minnesotan . . . well, those two that are big now seem to have predecessors way back that disbanded and then reorganized.

**VA:** Yes. The reason they went to hell was because they were always at one another's throats, so to speak.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** They were *competitors*.

**SM:** Isn't that funny?

**VA:** For the Filipinos.

**SM:** Did you mention the Cabeñan club?

**VA:** Cabeñan club.

**SM:** Yes. Well, see, but your father wasn't a Cabeñan, was he?

**VA:** Oh, yes. But I think they belonged to any Filipino organization.

**SM:** Oh. Because I heard that that one was exclusive and so it got a lot of criticism from other Filipinos.

**VA:** Yes. There were three clubs. I'm positive there were three.

**SM:** There were three clubs, okay.

**VA:** You'd have to ask my dad, because I . . . you know.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** But three factions there. And they were at one another's throats. They were real competitors. Nowadays, they've got . . . I think there are two clubs now.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** And I think that they kind of get together so that they don't run into each other socially.

**SM:** Yes. I think they seem . . .

**VA:** Like Rizal Day, things like that.

**SM:** Right. One of them takes that, and one takes . . .

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes. And like that Filipino American Cultural Society is a little different emphasis. They seem to have a little different emphasis [unclear].

**VA:** Yes, but you see, they're still taking Filipinos. And they are also . . . if they were to schedule events, for instance.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** All on the same day. Well . . .

**SM:** It would [unclear]. Some of them go to all of them, I guess.

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** But the doctors sort of predominate in one and the old timers in another.

**VA:** Right.

**SM:** But they go to all of them.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Well, you know, maybe your father did go to the Cabeñan club because he came from La Union and I think he came from near Caba. Maybe they . . .

**VA:** It was close to Caba, yes.

**SM:** Yes. Maybe he did belong to that Cabeñan club.

**VA:** He was from Bauang.

**SM:** Right. Maybe that was considered close enough, hmmm? [Chuckles]

**VA:** Could have been.

**SM:** Yes. I bet he did go to that.

**VA:** Oh . . . foods. Hot cereals for breakfast.

**SM:** That sounds Norwegian. [Chuckles]

**VA:** [Chuckles] I don't recall other than fish and hot cereals for breakfast, I honestly *don't* recall.

**SM:** Oh. Did you eat much rice at all? Because so many of the Filipinos, they eat . . .

**VA:** Oh, I'm sorry. Sure.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** You see, I don't even . . . yes. We always eat rice.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** Very seldom did we have potatoes.

**SM:** Oh. So your mother made that concession, hmmm? [Chuckles] Or maybe Norwegians like rice, too.

**VA:** We very seldom have potatoes now at my house.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** I think, in fact, all of the boys, in the marriages, they probably have more rice than potatoes.

**SM:** Oh. So that has persisted. That's kind of interesting.

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** Because that seemed to be something that *really* bothered Filipinos when they came over was that they have to change foods. They *had* to have rice, they said, I know.

**VA:** Yes. I know I . . . working at this grocery store, I buy my father hundred pound sacks of rice.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** Because I can get it cheaper.

**SM:** Sure.

**VA:** And I used to buy it for Blaine and Denny and . . .

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** I probably eat the least amount of rice of all the three boys.

**SM:** Oh, I see. Yes.

**VA:** Now, of course, my father does a lot of cooking and . . .

**SM:** Yes, right.

**VA:** And he cooks for all of the graduations. And it's always beef and pea pods, you know, which is really not Filipino.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, Chinese. [Chuckles]

**VA:** That's . . . yes.

**SM:** Yes. Well, Chinese food is similar to what . . .

**VA:** Yes.

**SM:** But a little different. [Chuckles]

**VA:** Right. It's . . . but he kind of cooks that stuff.

**SM:** I see. For all the graduations of the various children and grandchildren.

**VA:** Grandchildren.

**SM:** Grandchildren.

**VA:** Yes, sir.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** And my daughter's wedding.

**SM:** Ah.

**VA:** And we fed two hundred and fifty at a sit-down dinner [unclear].

**SM:** Did Ben make all that food?

**VA:** Yes, sirree.

**SM:** Oh, my gosh! That's amazing! Hmmm. So rice was something that . . .

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** All of the wives have decided to cook. [Chuckles]

**VA:** That's continued. Even my kids have rice at home.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** I mean, rice in their apartment.

**SM:** Ah ha.

**VA:** My daughter, Ruth, who's married.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** She was cooking rice for her husband's breakfast. And he liked it.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**VA:** She quit that though.

**SM:** Well, Cristy was saying that they have rice for breakfast and she was telling her friends who would come over, "Well, we have rice for breakfast. But you could have something else if you want." [Chuckles]

**VA:** That's right.

**SM:** Oh, so to the third generation then, this rice has been a big staple.

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Let's see, Filipino, American, Norwegian . . . early life, birth date, parents.

**SM:** Oh, I didn't get your middle initial. That's one thing that . . .

**VA:** T, Terrence. T-E-R-R-A-N-C-E.

**SM:** Oh, so you have all American names, right? Except Andrada—which is American, too.

**VA:** My son's name is Terrance Ben.

**SM:** Ah ha.

**VA:** Not Benigno, Ben.

**SM:** I see. It's been modified.

**VA:** [Chuckles] Ah . . . parents. Where lived in childhood, I think I told you where we lived too in detail, didn't I?

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**VA:** Participation in family life. Languages spoken. My mother would speak Norwegian to her mother and father.

**SM:** I see. Did you pick up a little on that?

**VA:** We . . . when my grandmother was in the nursing home and we would go up and visit her, she would only speak in Norwegian and we could understand what she was talking about.

**SM:** Ah. But before that, she talked English to you?

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** Was it just when she was in the nursing home she talked in Norwegian?

**VA:** No, she was senile, you see. And she only spoke Norwegian when she became senile.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** And my mother had passed away at that time and she'd always ask, "How's Tina?" And, you know, first couple of times we'd say, "Grandmother, she died." You know. Well, after that, you know, we'd say, "Oh, she's fine." "Oh, good." And we'd keep right on going.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** [Chuckles] Just . . .

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** And my father would very often speak in Tagalog or whatever . . .

**SM:** With his friends?

**VA:** Yes. When there were Filipinos around and they were . . . you know. And only Filipinos talking, like at a card game.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Did your mother play?

**VA:** No. Oh, no.

**SM:** Oh, did none of the women play?

**VA:** Yes, there . . . well, I shouldn't say no. Because we used to have the [unclear] and the . . . oh, there were a couple of regular card people that would come over and play at our house. I can remember getting up early in the morning while they were still sleeping to go look for pennies on the floor.

**SM:** [Chuckles] And these were either Filipinos or mixed marriages?

**VA:** They were mixed.

**SM:** They were mixed marriages.

**VA:** Okay. [unclear], Gene and Avis. They didn't come out, but Avis's sister, Evelyn . . . Richard and Evelyn [unclear]. That doesn't . . . that's not them.

**SM:** Hmmm.

**VA:** Okay. Her sister was married . . . was not married to a Filipino.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Okay.

**SM:** This is whose sister now?

**VA:** Okay, Gene and Avis [unclear].

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** Gene and Avis played at my daughter's wedding at my house. We had live music.

**SM:** Oh, I see.

**VA:** Her sister and her husband Bob Sheldrup[sp?]. It was Sheldrup [unclear] probably are not in here.

[Rustling paper noises]

**VA:** No. Sheldrups are not in there. Because neither one are Norwegian. So her sister and her husband Bob, they'd come out early and they'd go fishing. And then they'd come in and they'd play poker.

**SM:** I see. [Chuckles]

**VA:** And with their mother.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** Who was married to a Filipino. The children were not of that marriage but she had . . . I don't know whether she'd divorced or the guy died or what, but she married a Filipino.

**SM:** I see.

**VA:** And they are . . . you know, I can't think. They are an uncle and aunt to Belen.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** That's where my father met . . .

**SM:** Oh, I see.

**VA:** And Gene and Avis [unclear], Bob and Evelyn Sheldrup, and I can't think of the mother's name now. And I visited her in the hospital probably four or five times just in the last two years.

**SM:** Oh.

**VA:** And I don't know why I can't think of her name now.

**SM:** Oh, it will come to you.

**VA:** Just a bad . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**VA:** But I'm sure they're in here by, you know, where to look through it.

[Rustling paper noises]

**SM:** Yes. Hmm.

**VA:** So they'd come out and they'd fish first.

**SM:** Did women fish, too?

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** Yes. And they also played . . .

**VA:** And they also played cards, yes. So my mother did play poker, and a pretty good hand, too.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Well, the women have a pretty independent role in the Filipino society, don't they?

**VA:** I think so.

**SM:** Yes, it seems that way.

**VA:** Ah . . . degree of identity with Filipino community culture. I guess I have *none*, really.

**SM:** Oh, okay.

**VA:** So to speak. I . . . you know, I know all of the people, I run into them every once in a while. I'll always talk to them. But . . . I don't see any of the Filipinos that I can think of, socially, other than my brothers.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Yes, or and my father.

**SM:** But you think of them as your, you know . . .

**VA:** Oh, yes.

**SM:** Your roots or something.

**VA:** Oh, yes. I always talk to, you know, there's a couple that work down at the First, I always talk to them.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**VA:** Even though they work for the First. [Laughter] I worked for the American across the street. We were competitors.

**SM:** Yes.

**VA:** Well, I think I've covered all of the questions on there.

**SM:** I think you did. Yes, is there anything else you can think of that should be covered? [Chuckles] Or have I worn you out entirely?

**VA:** I really can't.

**SM:** Okay.

**VA:** I can't think of any.

**SM:** Well, I really appreciate your coming down here to do this.

**VA:** Buy me a cup of coffee.

**SM:** Okay. Thanks very much.

**VA:** You're welcome.

Asians in Minnesota Oral History Project  
Minnesota Historical Society