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# Diangson, Domenica

Carole Hensley

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# Stockton Immigrant Women Oral History Collection

Interviewer: Domenica Diangson

Interviewee: Carole Hensley

Transcriber: James Lyons

Date: 1980

Carole: I would like to know your place of birth and when was your birthdate.

Domenica: May 27, 1910

Hensley: Where were you born?

Diangson: In the Philippines,

Hensley: And how long did you live there?

Diangson: In the Philippines?

Hensley: Uh huh.

Diangson: Fifteen years, fourteen years.

Hensley: Fourteen years?

Diangson: Uh huh.

Hensley: Right after those fourteen years did you come to the United States?

Diangson: Yes, I came to the United States.

Hensley: How did you get here? Did you come directly to the United States or...

Diangson: Directly to the United States.

Hensley: And where did you go to?

Diangson: San Francisco.

Hensley: San Francisco, How long were you there?

Diangson: For a couple of years. Then we moved to Concord, Calif.

Hensley: Did you bring any family with you over here to the United States?

Diangson: Yes.

Hensley: Did you bring any family with you over here to the United States?

Diangson: Yes.

Hensley: Did you come with your whole family. Who did you come with?

Diangson: No. I came with my sister and my father.

Hensley: Is your sister older or younger?

Diangson: Younger than me. Two brothers were already here.

Hensley: When you first got here did you move in with anyone or did you start your own household? Did your father and sister start their own household?

Diangson: No. We lived with my brother.

Hensley: Who did you live with when you first got here?

Diangson: My brothers.

Hensley: And they were living where?

Diangson: They were living in San Francisco...

Hensley: After your two years in San Francisco and then you moved to Concord, who did you live with?

Diangson: Oh, I was married.

Hensley: You were married by then?

Diangson: Uh huh. I was married when I was only fourteen.

Hensley: You were married when you were fourteen?

Diangson: Uh huh.

Hensley: Did you get married in this country?

Diangson: No. In the Philippines.

Hensley: Did you ever go to school here in the United States?

Diangson: Yes, to night school in Concord.

Hensley: Did you ever go to school in the Philippines?

Diangson: Yes. Uh huh.

Hensley: What was your parent's educational background? How much education had your parents had?

Diangson: I don't remember.

Hensley: How about your religion?

Diangson: It's always Catholic.

Hensley: Are you still a devout Catholic?

Diangson: Still.

Hensley: Have your religious views changed at all since you came here?

Diangson: No.

Hensley: Did your mother work outside of the home ever?

Diangson: No.

Hensley: How did you feel when leaving the Philippines?

Diangson: Well, it was exciting I think, because we are going to another country ,

Hensley: Did you have any anticipation about what the United States was going to be like? Had you ever been here before?

Diangson: No.

Hensley: What were you looking forward to in coming here? Was there anything at all that stands out? And did they?

Diangson: They did.

Hensley: Is this you and your sister or your brothers?

Diangson: Uh huh.

Hensley: All of them did?

Diangson: Uh huh.

Hensley: When did your family settle in Stockton? When did you finally come to this area, to live in Stockton?

Diangson: In 1955.

Hensley: What brought you here?

Diangson: My husband had a hotel business here in Stockton.

Hensley: Oh, is it a long established business? Does he still have it?

Diangson: No, because the Crosstown freeway take it all over.

Hensley: When did he start his hotel business?

Diangson: 1955

Hensley: Alone? Did he have a partner at all?

Diangson: No.

Hensley: Did you help him with the business?

Diangson: Of course. All of us.

Hensley: All of you? And the children as well?

Diangson: Uh huh. Each person helped.

Hensley: Did you live in a neighborhood mostly with persons from your old country?

Diangson: No.

Hensley: No?

Diangson: No. Nothing like. that.

Hensley: Nothing at all? What other groups were there? Was it just Americans or were there any other minority groups?

Diangson: There are. There are Filipinos here, there are Mexicans, there are Chinese, Japanese.

Hensley: In the neighborhoods where you were raising up your family? Were these groups present?

Diangson: This is still... This is where I raised my family. Here, this is the house.

Hensley: Oh, right here. Okay. Did your family encounter any problems when you got here?

Diangson: In Stockton?

Hensley: Uh huh.

Diangson: I don't think so.

Hensley: How about is San Francisco?

Diangson: Not as far as I know. Of course in Alameda County there is always some bad times. There is always discrimination there.

Hensley: And how did you deal with that?

Diangson: I don't think we have encountered any.

Hensley: None at all?

Diangson: No.

Hensley: And you've spoken English always at home?

Diangson: Yes, at home.

Hensley: Have there been any other languages spoken in your home?

Diangson: Sometimes. In every ethnic group when they met they sometimes spoke Filipino, but it's mixed up with English other times.

Hensley: Have you ever had anyone else besides your immediate family living in your home with you?

Diangson: No.

Hensley: You said that your children helped you with your hotel business? Did they do this for how long?

Diangson: Maybe in the summertime.

Hensley: Did you ever work outside of the home? While you were married?

Diangson: No.

Hensley: No? What kind of homes did you live in when you came to the United States? Was it an apartment or...

Diangson: No. We have our own home.

Hensley: In San Francisco Concord?

Diangson: Oh, when I came in this country, as you said, that mean in the Philippines.

Hensley: When you were in the United States?

Diangson: When I am in the United States? When we were here we always had our own home.

Hensley: What influence did your mother have in deciding things for the family?

Diangson: That I cannot tell you because my mother died before I came over here.

Hensley: Oh, I see. So your father raised you as a child?

Diangson: Yes. Uh huh.

Hensley: Did he have any help from a woman, like a grandmother maybe.

Diangson: Yes, a grandmother.

Hensley: And this was your father's mother or your mother's mother.

Diangson: My mother's mother.

Hensley: Did she live with you when you were children?

Diangson: I can't remember. They have their own home also.

Hensley: What, if any, customs and practices from the old country did you observe at home?

Diangson: In here now?

Hensley: Yes. Here in Stockton.

Diangson: Can you repeat the question?

Hensley: What kind of rituals or customs from the Philippines do you and your family still celebrate now while you're here?

Diangson: Birthday parties.

Hensley: Birthday parties.

Diangson: I think so.

Hensley: Are they a special kind or are' they just normal birthday party celebrations?

Diangson: Just birthday parties \_\_\_\_\_ birthday parties where they have it in a Stockton hotel or whatever, so that we could invite their classmates in the school.

Hensley: Just a really big... When you were sending your children to school in the United States do you think they ever felt discriminated against at all?

Diangson: I don't think so. I don't think they have encountered that.

Hensley: Never at all? How many children do you have.

Diangson: I have four.

Hensley: Four?

Diangson: Uh huh.

Hensley: What are their ages? How old are they?

**(At this point she asks a son who is present how old the children are)**

Hensley: Bob, how are old are the children?

Bob: The oldest is 52 and then 50, 36 and 34.

Hensley: All boys?

B: Two boys and two girls.



- Hensley: Do your children have husbands and wives of the same background?
- Diangson: No.
- B: Do you mean educational background?
- Hensley: Uh, are they Filipinos?
- B: They're Americans. They're all second generations – They're Americans.
- Hensley: Think of the kinds of lives your children are now living and what are some of the best things you see in their lives. What are some of the things that you wish they would assimilate into their lives that was from the old country?
- Diangson: They have.....
- B: Well, one I think she has been working on is how to see the educational \_\_\_\_\_ so education is very important to her. The other is a concern and affiliation with the Filipino traditions, some of them, and respect for them. \_\_\_\_\_ to continue to keep the consciousness and that's why I am very involved in that right now.
- Hensley: What do your brothers and sisters do?
- B: My brother is an aerospace engineer. We are all geared .... The men are geared to technical careers. My older sister is a legal secretary and my younger sister works as airline executive.
- Hensley: Mrs. Diangson, Have you felt close to the Philippines? Do you still have bonds there? Do you still have family there', there that you go and see?
- Diangson: Yes.
- Hensley: What part of your family is there?
- Diangson: My two sisters. One of my sisters is the director of the Department of Social Work.
- Hensley: Have you gone back there?
- Diangson: Every year.
- Hensley: Every year. Okay. Do you feel affected by what happens? Obviously yes. I've seen your pictures. When you first got to the United States did you think of

yourself still as an immigrant or did you assimilate well into the United States fast?

Diangson: I have never think of that, as an immigrant.

B: You have to remember that during that period, although there was discrimination, the Philippines were a Commonwealth and were prior, for three hundred years with Spain and for several hundred with the Americans and the women were... if you go to the Philippines you will find women are more active than they are here.

Hensley: In the Philippines.

B: They hold a lot of ministerial jobs and a lot of women are doctors. These are women in then fifties and sixties so it's been going on for a while. The reason for this is that the Americans when they came in 1901 thought women, unlike the Spanish system, should be educated so they went to school and they did cdr,.tll.in jobs of significant leadership. It's a balance between what we face here in this country of women's rights. They have it, but \_\_\_\_\_ but it was really won by Mrs. Marcos example.

Hensley: That's interesting. So that's why you are so ambitious here? I've seen these albums and there's just so much that 3iou've done. Tell me about this organization that you founded, that you discovered?

Diangson: The Filipino community of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties?

Hensley: Uh huh.

Diangson: I was the first president That was during the Second World War and we organized a g:roup.CIXXXX We wanted to recognize that we should fom it all together because the war is in the Philippines.

B: I think it's significant that the first president was a woman in 1944. Single men from the Philippines were coming in by 1920 but organization of the community began in that area mainly by women, just to form a sense of community. Men came first and singles.

Hensley: Yes, See, that's what I don't understand, because I understood that a major Filipino problem was that so many men had first come here single and they were here for so long that... and it was years and years before...

B: It was very cultural. Even today young men are going to Libya, Saudi Arabia, and women are going to Hong Kong as domestics and doctors and elsewhere and the families split. [It's very Malaysian.] They can separate and work in different parts of the world and still have a sense of family identity, but it was a problem, but I think it's more of a problem from the American perspective.

Hensley: Right, because it led to so much more intensified prejudice and discrimination from what I've understood about it.

B: \_\_\_\_\_ American immigration policy, men but no women. They thought that much like the bracero program at first, that if you prevented families, then you could regulate it and not have them stay, but didn't work that way. As soon as you give them a job and they earn a place in society, American society, and they have a right to have their families. If you don't allow their families. \_\_\_\_\_ then there were rules.....

Hensley: Then that's what caused so much of the problems, the intermarriages and just concubineships. At least that's what I've understood.

B: But see, they were still sending money to the Philippines and still wishing for their families to be here. There were still the ties. It didn't cause a disintegration of the Filipino family.

Hensley: It just caused more prejudice here in the United States from the citizens.

B: Yes, from the Anglo point of view. And I think with most other cultures you'll find the same thing happening.

Hensley: What other kinds of organizations have you been involved in besides this one you discovered? (founded)

Diangson: That we have discovered, we have liked founded? Other organizaations?

Hensley: Uh huh.

B: Why don't you tell her about your experience with the Red Cross when they didn't give you your diploma. During the war, the \_\_\_\_\_ of Alameda County organized this Red Cross volunteer. I was invited by the Attorney General \_\_\_\_\_ that time in Alameda County to join the training from the Red Cross because there was a war in the Philippines and I could be helpful also. My oldest boy was also a member of the Boy Scouts and so attended the class \_\_\_\_\_ ----- When we have thirty-six weeks of school then Then

I attended the class because I was, as he said, the war is in the Philippines and I am also the president of the Filipino community in Alameda County and not only in Alameda but also in Contra Costa County. \_\_\_\_\_ that there are not many Filipinos in that area. Then the war came and our young men were also drafted, the men that come in here the same time with me or maybe earlier, they were also drafted so therefore we are not very many, so we organized. When I was going to school there was a graduation after thirty six weeks of Red Cross classes. Then I was also one of the graduates.

Hensley: One of the what?

Diangson: One of the graduates of the class. So when we had the graduation all were called to the stage to receive their diploma. Then after that our instructor called everyone on the stage and then, I wondered of the nursing, is Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ from Alameda. During the graduation they called everyone on stage and then I wondered if maybe I did not pass or I flunk or I don't know \_\_\_\_\_. So therefore after she had given out all of the diplomas to those called to the stage then she came down and then she handed me my diploma. I was one of the graduates but I was not called on the stage so when they delivered me the diploma and she said, "Here, take care of your own people only." I did not see him again but I was, of course, embarrassed and angry. Then he went 1l>qcXXX up to the stage and she said. "Is there any question?" So, of course I had a question. I said, "A few minutes ago I had a question." She said, "Yes, Mrs. Diangason." And then I said, "A few minutes ago you called all those graduates on the stage to receive their diplomas and then after that you came down and handed me this piece of pape." When you hand me this piece of paper" said, "then you told me to take care of my own people only." Then I said, " Is this class or this piece of paper is only to take care of my own people alone?" I said, "When I come in here and enroll in this classroom my intention is to unite with all of the people but now you tell me to take care of my own people. My own people did not send me to school here. They know that I do not need this education, You listen here. I was invited to attend this class. I fully accepted it as because you have said, the war is in the Philippines and the war in the Philippines is not our war. That is the war of this country because that is the \_\_\_\_\_ that you were \_\_\_\_\_ in the Philippines. It is not our war." And then I said, "Then you told me to take care of my own people. Right there you are proving that you are

discriminating against me because I am a Filipino. But I said. "You could discriminate me and you could have your diploma back," because I said, "If I help these people, my own people. I do not need this piece of paper. We are still involved in the war of your country because you took it there in the Philippines. We did not. The Japanese are not this smart. If they are they would have come into San Francisco instead of going back to the other side. Then they could finish it also in Pearl Harbor." That is the only time that I was angry, but I never stopped improving so I reorganized the Filipino community so that we could all work together in that war. We could show it to them that we are really with the people that are no supposed to be pushed aside. We fought for the American. We fought with the Japanese. Why? Because they bring it in the Philippines. It is not in the Philippines but still we fought. but that is not \_\_\_\_\_ to destroy the Philippines. So that is what the First Lady of the Philippines said, that we women are supposed to be also a model of our people that are here in this country. That is why I never stopped helping any organization or if it is for the improvement or betterment of this country and the people in it and also the Filipino people.

Hensley: I saw some pictures of you with Mrs. Marcos?

Diangson: Yes.

Hensley: What kind of... Are you friends with her or have you worked with her in any organizations?

Diangson: No. Well, the first lady, Mrs. Ferdinand Marcos, during the time of the first organization that we have in Alameda County, her aunt \_\_\_\_\_ is also my benefactress or something like that, in helping us what we can do in the community, what should be done in the community and that is the aim of the First Lady now. So it is not that you have to be a friend or a relative to her. If she knows that you are doing something that is for the good of your country she \_\_\_\_\_. And you should be very proud of her also. She is very nice. It is not only that she is nice but she is working very hard and she do things for the benefit of the country, the children mostly and the women.

Hensley: Do you think she has a lot of weight with any decisions of Mr. Marcos?

Diangson: No, no. Not really.

Hensley: No?

- Diangson: No, not really. They always, they are very good, politically, socially, or whatever. They are very good.
- Hensley: How would you compare a First Woman like her to a First Woman here in the United States, like to say Rosaline Carter or even more obvious maybe, I Don't know, maybe Better Ford. How do you think they compare, First Ladies of the United States and First Ladies of the Philippines.
- Diangson: I think Mrs. Carter also is doing the best she could. We cannot expect everything to be turned out just like, well just \_\_\_\_\_ and come out of a rabbit or something from the hat, but she is doing everything she could as a First Lady also. She is \_\_\_\_\_ but here it is also very hard, very hard for the First Lady this is a big country, a very big country, and with lots of people.
- Hensley: What do you think of the United States overall? Are you glad you're here? Would you rather be living in the Philippines?
- Diangson: Of course, some people will always think that wherever you may be or whatever you will do, you will... I will always be a Filipino, but then the main aim of my life is a... it's also my children, that will also represent the people, represent their people. As I told them also, I send them to... My husband and me send them to the best school, not only a very good one but the best school in the land. All of them had like well for example he went to \_\_\_\_\_ Brown Military Academy, that's the West Point of the West. My oldest boy, the same way. He was sent there as the, in the \_\_\_\_\_, that's in San Diego when the Brown Military Academy was there. First of all he was sent to san Raphael Academy, military Academy in San Raphael when we were in El dorado (Alvarado?). He was supposed to be sent to Brown Military Academy because most of my relatives are graduates of the West Point of the Philippines, so therefore...
- Hensley: Which is that?
- Diangson: That is a military academy in the Philippines. That's the \_\_\_\_\_ Military Academy. So at that time the discrimination of the Filipinos was very strong that they do not want to accept my son even though he has A+ average in school. They don't want to accept him in San Raphael because he is a Filipino and as they said, it's only the children of the Whites. We had contacted under our Common wealth from that time, the Doctor Imperial who was sent also. \_\_\_\_\_ who was sent also to England as the Minister of the

Philippines. And then we had also General, coming from the Philippines to this country with the recommendation that my son should be accepted into San Raphael Military Academy. So, they had the head of the San Raphael Academy suggest that ... to be frank with our Filipino Governor. \_\_\_\_\_ that they said that they would only accept the children of the Whites, even if they were born here in this country, even if you could afford it. It is not a question of money or it is not a question of what but it is because you are Filipino.

Hensley: They said that?

Diangson: Yes. As they said, it was only the children of the whites. So then we did not stop then. As long as we find it out \_\_\_\_\_ that address it to the Philippine Commonwealth in San Francisco, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, and then they said they would reconsider and he could come in. My boy Bill has changed his mind already and said it was just like an army, that it was just like the military. "Instead of I will be going up or having a feeling that you are fully accepted in the school of the White race, then you will be demerit all the time because you will not really be accepted there. It's only the consideration of the commandant of the school. So then we will try again and then we send him to Brown Military Academy that was in \_\_\_\_\_ that was in San Diego. The commandant of this school at that time has been also an instructor in the military academy in \_\_\_\_\_, but is an American. So he has a chance to come in in there so that is where they all went. He was sent to Brown Military Academy and then he graduated from there. Because of the closeness of his sister and him, they are very close and we are also, and as the mother who also helped my husband in his business, and then has no time I think to raise my children at home, so we sent Barbara to the Brown School for Girls in Glendora, California. That was the school for boys \_\_\_\_\_.

Hensley: Barbara is your oldest daughter?

Diangson: My oldest daughter. She also graduated in Brown School for Girls. So then thirteen years later that then Walter also went ..... Walter first went to, started here in El Dorado School, then went to Daniel Webster, then St. Mary's for two years, then Delta College and then again he went to Brown Military

Academy for two years, so then my youngest daughter is the only one that did not go, but she went to school here in St. Mary's High. That's my youngest daughter, \_\_\_\_\_.

That's how the story of the discrimination. Bill is the one that was not accepted in San Raphael because he is Filipino.

Hensley: Did he ever try to go to any other school. You said Brown. Was there any problems getting into Brown Military Academy?

Diangson: Who? Walter? Oh, Bill?

Hensley: Uh huh.

Diangson: No, he had no problems because, not in Brown, that's why we sent Walter up there. We sent Walter also there. So that is... he had no problems. Brown has accepted him willingly.

Hensley: What is this? A yearbook?

### **Lapse of time on tape while they are probably looking at the yearbook**

Diangson: Because his brother has been there already also.

Hensley: Well Bill went there some time before Walter, didn't he?

Diangson: Yes. There is fifteen (or thirteen) years difference. It's a nice school. Brown is a wonderful school. Most of my ..... I just like the uniform of the military academy. Then they are very good disciplinarians I think.

Hensley: Wow. Commandants twenty one times. Lettermen two times, Purple Scholarship eight times, Yellow scholarship two times, Conduct Medal twice, Journalism Honor Company, Best Drilled, Outstanding Character. Favorite Hobby: Making Friends.

Diangson: Uh huh. Yeah. This is also... I have also received...

Hensley: Oh. From U.O.P. How long did they go to U.O.P. and when?

Diangson: How long did you go to U.O.P. Walter?

Walter: Two years.



Hensley: This is for the hotel. Tell me about the hotel. How long did you have it? When did you start it?

Diangson: Not only so long ago when the Crosstown Freeway...

Hensley: With the Crosstown Freeway? That's when it started?

Diangson: That's when they tore it down.

Hensley: They tore it down. And it was started in 1955? What had you been doing before that to have the money to build up a hotel and start...

Diangson: No, no. My husband just leased those hotels.

Hensley: So they were already hotels?

Diangson: They were already hotels.

Hensley: What did you have to do? You said you helped him. What did you have to do?

Diangson: We were from Alvarado, California. That is in Alameda. We have a business also up there. My husband used to own a nightclub.

Hensley: Did you have to help with that at all? With the nightclub.

Diangson: Oh, of course, because business to us is not very good at all unless the... We do as the Chinese do. The husband and wife always work together and then if the children want to help they are entirely welcome.

Hensley: But you don't hire anyone to help you?

Diangson: Oh yes.

Hensley: Oh you do. What did you do once it was torn down. Did you just...

Diangson: No, my husband retired then.

Hensley: He retired?

Diangson: Yes. In fact he passed away three years ago.

Hensley: Oh. I'm sorry to hear that. I'm supposed to ask you about your husband, some questions about your courtship, so... How did you meet your husband?

- Diangson: Well, my husband was working aboard a ship, you know? I just happened to meet him. I don't know.
- Hensley: Could you describe your courtship?
- Diangson: No, I can't remember. I can't.
- Hensley: Did your parents influence you at all?
- Diangson: No.
- Hensley: You married so young. Is that...
- Diangson: Yeah. I know. Thirteen or fourteen.
- Hensley: Is that normal in...
- Diangson: Oh yes you see... No, not really, but it's because that my father is also a business people you know? And then...

### **Good-byes to Walter and Mrs. Diangson's Grandchildren**

- Hensley: You have a nice family Mrs. Diangson. Very nice.
- Diangson: Thank you. That's what I always work so hard that it's not that when I die you want to inherit a million dollars or whatever or maybe a beautiful mansion or something like that, but I said, "no, you just keep on with your studies and that is only one gift that you inherit from your parents."
- Hensley: When you were raising up your kids...

### **End of side one**

- Hensley: What events since you have been here in Stockton have changed your life more than anything? Like, what was a really big turning point for you? Was it when you were given your graduation diploma or was it with your hotel or seeing your children graduate? What has been a big turning point?

- Diangson: Nothing changed me. No, I just continue my everyday routine, whatever I want, whatever it is that I ... I feel much better if I go to Santa Barbara.
- Hensley: When your children were small were you a room mother? Did you work with them during their school, like did you help out with school functions? Or was it mostly the hotel?
- Diangson: I helped them if they ask me. You see, we do not really live in the hotel. We live here in this house, so it is my husband that is most of the time in the hotel. So we stay in our house. I see to it that the children are all right. That is our understanding also.
- Hensley: Do you have any grandchildren Mrs. Diangson?
- Diangson: That is my grandson, Scott.
- Hensley: Is that your only one?
- Diangson: No, I have five grandchildren. Three is... Scott has two sisters. In fact, one of his sisters is the princess of one of our celebrations here, our Lady of Antipola \_\_\_\_\_ St. Mary, on June 1. Her sisters is one of the princesses.
- Hensley: Could you tell me about this celebration?
- Diangson: We have the festival here every year.
- Hensley: You have a what?
- Diangson: A festival, you know this celebration. We have the celebration here every year of Our Lady of Antipola just like the Mexicans have our Lady of Fatima. We have that every year in St. Mary's Church and we have a queen. During the nine nights we have a novena and it's at that Novena that we have a queen from the Filipino children. So there are nine nights during the novena that we go from one house to another, from one Filipino house to another. So than on every night we gather from one house to another as far as Linden. From Stockton we go out to Lodi, to Manteca, and to Linden and like that, as long as we are welcome at that house. You see we have also a big Filipino Catholic Association in Stockton.
- Hensley: Sometimes in catholic churches different groups seem different because I know within the Mexicans it's different than an Irish-Catholic would see the church, it is very much different with the Filipinos too?

- Diangson: It's no different between the Mexican and the Filipino. In fact the Mexican and the Filipino they get along fine in every religion I think. Like as I said our Lady of Fatima is also celebrated by the Mexicans. And when they celebrate also Our Lady of Fatima we always go, like in St. Mary's Church, St. Judes, St. Linus, and then here also in the north \_\_\_\_\_. If it is Our Lady of Fatima celebration and it is in St. Judes the Filipino Catholic Association also supports it.
- Hensley: During these festivals are you saying that every night it moves from house to house?
- Diangson: During the festival, in the month of May we have at the end of the nine days we have also the coronation of the princesses. Then that is really just to keep up with the religion and also with the culture of the Filipino.
- Hensley: What happens during the celebration? Is there food and drink or...
- Diangson: It is also at the time of the festival that we give donations to pay the people.
- Hensley: Does the donation go to the church or to the Filipino organization?
- Diangson: It goes to the church.
- Hensley: What about Filipino foods. Do you make Filipino foods since you've been here in the United States?
- Diangson: I do.
- Hensley: You do?
- Diangson: Uh huh. In fact, it's nice for you to witness also some of our celebrations. That is why very many of my friends also... I'm also a member of the democratic Women's Club. I'm also a member of the Pan-Pacific Asiatic Women's Club.
- Hensley: And what is that?
- Diangson: It's organized by Marian Pease. She used to be a professor also, the only lady professor in the University of the Pacific, Marian Pease. It was organized by her. Pan-Pacific is the women's organization of Pacific Asiatic Women's Club. It's run by the University of the Pacific and then second to that is Delta... I'm also a member of the American Business Women's Association. I'm also the president of the Filipino Women's Association. This is the only organization

that is affiliated with the Women's Federated... all over the world. So we have also a member club in Pakistan and we have also a member club in... It's a very expensive hobby but it is also very educational. I always told my children that I', only rich in being a very good member of all organizations to which I belong, because if you belong to an organization and you don't pay any attention to it why should you belong?

Hensley: What do you think about women in the United States and their involvement in organizations? Do you think they're not as involved or not as aware or maybe not as conscientious as perhaps the Filipino women are?

Diangson: No. Every organization is always good, every organization. It depends upon how they conduct whatever they have to do.

Hensley: What about the women here in the United States in general? Do you think that they are not as likely to belong to organizations as maybe Filipino women would be?

Diangson: They are also. In fact women can start at home. As long as you have children also you can become a member of the PTA and then that is also an organization. It helps the children and then it helps also for the children to look up to their parents. So I think that is also... Everyone of us here in the United States, we cannot say that we are not a member of any organization because like here at home it's also an organization. That's how I teach my children to do is "You do not need to be afraid of this woman in here or don't go to school because you are a Filipino or a Mexican or you are Chinese or you are Japanese. The only thing \_\_\_\_\_ So, if you know how to mix up with the people it's all the same because here at home is also an organization, is it not?

Hensley: Are you saying home life is an organization?

Diangson: Of course! We ask one another what we are supposed to do.

Hensley: Uh huh, and you have a president of your home.

Diangson: That's it! And then I think it is always nice... that it is not only your home that you should look, but in let's say your neighborhood.

Hensley: What do you think about the Women's Movement in the United States?

Diangson: Well, every organization as I said also has also a platform of their own. I watch and then if I think it is okay then I will consider it, that maybe I will join the group or whatever it is. But if it is, just like the Women's Movement, they have their own \_\_\_\_\_.

Hensley: You were here during the Great Depression of the 1930's. How did that affect you and your husband's business and maybe other Filipinos throughout this area?

Diangson: No, I don't... I was young also at that time when I first came in here and then second to that is that my husband is the assistant manager of the Baldwin Hotel in Cowell, California. That was the... Cowell is the one that donated the Cowell Hospital at the University of California. And my husband speak English and Spanish so therefore Mr. Baldwin, the owner of the hotel, hired lots of workers, especially Mexicans on the Cowell \_\_\_\_\_. There is a hotel in the Cowell \_\_\_\_\_ that most of the people there that are working are Mexicans. And my husband speaks Spanish so therefore he was the assistant manager of the hotel. So that's why everybody thought that it was a Filipino hotel, but it is not. It is the Baldwin and it is owned by Mr. Baldwin, So that is where we get friendly with the Mexican people.

Hensley: Was that security for you then during the Depression, just having...

Diangson: We didn't notice the depression.

Hensley: You didn't at all, really?

Diangson: No, we didn't because...

Hensley: Why?

Diangson: My husband is the manager I said of the Baldwin Hotel.

Hensley: So you were financially secure?

Diangson: Uh huh. We had the hotel and then we worked also. I worked with in the business.

Hensley: Did you ever know any poor Filipinos who might have been terribly affected by it?

Diangson: Of course there are lots because at that time also is discrimination of races.

- Hensley: Did you ever see them or talk to them? Did they ever tell you how they felt?
- Diangson: No, not really. Filipinos, even if they are hungry, they are afraid or ashamed to go on the breadline.
- Hensley: Oh really? A proud people.
- Diangson: Yeah, they are. They don't want just a handover that they give it to you that way. Some of them doesn't care very much of that. That is that in Walter's article you have read it, when he went to the Philippines, that it's a... it's not really that the people just... we have no... there are also lots of people but it seems you cannot find the poor people. Why they are ashamed to come in a line that I am poor or something like that, they have their pride I think. I don't know.
- Hensley: Did you find anything in your scrapbook and your photo album that you want to show me Mrs. Diangson?
- Diangson: To show you? Or what is it to show you what?
- Hensley: I don't know. You were just going to see if there was anything in there that you wanted to...
- Diangson: For what? This is all new. This is a new album. Every year I go to the Philippines, This is the White House in \_\_\_\_\_
- Hensley: You go every year to the Philippines?
- Diangson: Yes, I go every year to the Philippines. That's in \_\_\_\_\_
- Hensley: Uh huh. How much of your family do you still have in the Philippines?
- Diangson: My two sisters. My brother-in-law, my youngest sister's husband is the Civil Service Commissioner in the Philippines.
- Hensley: Now what is it that your sister does? You said she is some kind of social worker, director of social work there?
- Diangson: She is the Director of Social Work.
- Hensley: Is this a government job that she has?
- Diangson: That is in the government, yeah. When we went to the Philippines in the 1966 we brought the... Stockton become the sister city of the Philippines

\_\_\_\_\_ and the mayor so we took him to the Philippines, This is where \_\_\_\_\_ you could read it there, in the Philippines. We have visited that also. Then my sister...

Hensley: Oh, how pretty.

Diangson: That is the director now of Social Work. She was also going to school here at the College of Holy Names in Oakland. She graduated and during that time she was a candidate of the Philippines to the United Nations \_\_\_\_\_.

Hensley: Did you go to college here in the United States?

Diangson: No, I didn't. This is when our organization donated the library or some books to the library in the Department of Social Work in the Philippines.

Hensley: This is your organization, the Filipino community organization?

Diangson: Uh huh.

Hensley: What kinds of drives do you have to make money for things like this, for these books?

Diangson: No, it's donated by the people. The money is donated by the people to help purchase those books. This is taken here in Stockton. There is \_\_\_\_\_ this is \_\_\_\_\_ and then this is Canlis, you know the sheriff? This is taken during the United Nations. Among the three beauties we have to select one only and my sister is the one.

Hensley: Is this a traditional Filipino gown or...?

Diangson: Yes, this is a traditional Filipino gown.

Hensley: It's beautiful. What is it made of?

Diangson: Oh, that is... you have not seen yet?

Hensley: No.

Diangson: Oh, well some of these days I will invite you, okay?

Hensley: Sure, I'd love it.

Diangson: My niece who is now in Vancouver (she is also a Filipino doctor).

Hensley: Oh, I see.



- Diangson: This is \_\_\_\_\_. Could you remember?
- Hensley: With the group that you belonged to?
- Diangson: That is the Filipino Women's Club. During the installation of the Filipino Women's Club.
- Hensley: What is this? What is happening here?
- Diangson: Uh, that is in the Philippines when my sister was received by the Department of Social Work. She was then the director. This was taken here also in Stockton. The wife of the city manager and then the \_\_\_\_\_ wife, the wife of the president of the Filipino community, \_\_\_\_\_ and then members of the community. We introduced the moving picture here, moving picture of one of our, moving picture of the Philippines and this is the (director) here in Stockton.
- Hensley: A moving picture of the Philippines?
- Diangson: Of the Philippines, uh huh. The actresses were also here.
- Hensley: What was it, a documentary?
- Diangson: No, it's a... Uou want to see the picture of the Filipino...
- Hensley: Sure.
- Diangson: Well someday I will invite you. This is my house in the Philippines. During the time I first went there for the Sister City we went \_\_\_\_\_ sister city. We delivered \_\_\_\_\_ of Stockton to \_\_\_\_\_. This is a picture of the officers of the Filipino community.
- Hensley: This is here in Stockton?
- Diangson: That is here in Stockton. The installing officer is \_\_\_\_\_. The birthday of my children in the Stockton hotel. That is their birthday also so they could invite their friends. My daughter's anniversary. That is my brother in that. That is my sister. That is my daughter. That's her husband and then that is the sister of her husbad and this is her children. That's their anniversary. When I was the matron of \_\_\_\_\_ Filipino Auxillary \_\_\_\_\_.
- Hensley: Mrs. Diangson, you seem to be politically aware, very much so. What do you think about the coming election in the United States?

- Diangson: The coming election let us look for the best whatever is. I think the people would not, will... it will be all right if they have also... They could elect whoever they want. Of course I am a member of the Democratic Party.
- Hensley: Yes, I was going to say, what do you think of Ronald Reagan? I've been listening to a lot of Ronald Reagan's...
- Diangson: Well, if the party in which our party stands think that the Republican party is all right with them, I as only one of the voters will string along with it, but I will still vote for my party. It doesn't matter what. You did not read my son's \_\_\_\_\_ in the Philippines. That lady there that I showed you she is the one. She is the director of \_\_\_\_\_ Japan is very advanced to to us now in every other way, very advanced because like as you will read they are sending the students as an exchange to the Philippines. Bill's article is only on the right. That is when we went just last year.
- Hensley: I don't understand why he wanted Japanese initiated projects. What were they trying to do, coordinate Japanese and Filipino projects all in one or what?
- Diangson: No, just like the project... the project is that a... it's a volunteer. It's a volunteer \_\_\_\_\_. Then if Japan wanted to have our students come into Japan to study or to contribute some of their knowledge also in Japan then Japan will accept that also. So is the Philippine. The Philippine will accept Japanese exchanges also.
- Hensley: Would you like us to see what happens more or less here, between the United States and the Philippines?
- Diangson: Whether we like it or not I think in the United States it is happening also already here, like how many of the younger groups now is doing nothing because you could read that in the paper. They are looking for a job. Nobody likes them for what it is, just like for example some of these young boys who also want to look for an extra job or for work maybe when they school closes. They cannot find them.
- Hensley: Oh, I know. It's really hard to get a job.
- Diangson: So if we have that the government will also sacrifice it's time to send him to another country you know? And foreign exchange, just like Mexico is very close. Mexico is very close to California. Then why don't we get these young

groups there who like to work \_\_\_\_\_ whatever field you want to do, like farmers, like what if they want to be a truck driver or whatever is they want, this should be an exchange that the government should look into. I don't know what they are doing with... instead of getting, what is it now, getting some of the refugees from one country and then giving them allowances here or something like that and then take away the job of those young people that pay their income tax here, they pay their share also in here. And also if you borrow those volunteers from Mexico they have only the limitation of the state, two years at least, but at least it's two years is long enough to help. Of course your neighboring country is always the first one that whatever consequences would come later on then your neighbor is the first one that will respond to your call. So at least you should also know that the children of Mexico is also given a chance to learn more in here and to open what they can do. In fact it is a exchange. We could send also some of our younger groups to Mexico and maybe it's much nicer because for me I really like to go to Mexico so that's why I would really like to see the children go to Mexico because they will also learn the culture of another country, not only the Philippines.

Hensley: Right. It could be a learning experience, but then again it could be hard to in trying to find work for people who go there because I think that would be another reason that would draw... like if you're talking about a summertime program I think that students here, the young people here would want to go there and work whatever time they were there, and it's just really hard.

Diangson: No, but if we could do something like Japan. If Japan could do this exchange service why can't another do it? America is rich. Mexico also is rich among themselves, but then as you think it also like this, the Philippines the government had advised that they will pay their exchange students to come into the United States and then what I cannot understand is this way. Why is it that the Philippines has a quota to come in, you know what I mean, a quota?

Hensley: A quota?

Diangson: Uh huh. A quota to come into to the United States and yet other countries are much higher to come into the United States and yet America could send in millions of Americans into the Philippines without counting people. Then that's what I cannot really understand. And yet when America is involved in

war the Philippines come first. That is also the promise of the President of the Philippines and the first lady when the President came to Hawaii and the First Lady came to San Francisco.

Hensley: What is the quota for the Filipinos?

Diangson: Before it was only 25. Can you imagine that? That the commonwealth is only 25?

Hensley: Twenty-five?

Diangson: 25 persons a year. Then they move up to 50 persons a year. Now it's a hundred. What is a hundred? Our tourists go back and forth and yet there comes those refugees that everyone is so many and yet I don't know.

Hensley: All the Vietnamese refugees and all the Cubans just recently?

Diangson: Yes.

Hensley: What is this, dried fruit?

Diangson: Yes, that is Filipino dried fruit. You would like that. And this is banana brittle.

Hensley: This is good. What is it?

Diangson: This is a fruit from Mexico, a tropical one that is sour.

Hensley: It's sweet.

Diangson: A tamarind. That is tamarind.

### **A break in the conversation**

Hensley: You think so?

Diangson: Well it may be more popular that they divorce and they marry and they divorce.

Hensley: Yeah.

Diangson: Your father is an American?

Hensley: Yes.

Diangson: Hensely?

Hensley: Hensely, yes.

Diangson: Oh, you live right here in Stockton, is that right?

Hensley: Yes, right across from the school.

Diangson: My brother-in-law was a doctor here in Stockton and then he moved on.

Hensley: A medical doctor?

Diangson: A medical doctor. Mr. David \_\_\_\_\_, my sister's husband.

Hensley: He lived in Stockton?

Diangson: They lived in Stockton before, but they moved to Antioch.

Hensley: Oh, up in the bay area kind of?

Diangson: Near Pittsburg. It's not very far from here.

Hensley: Well Mrs. Diangson, I think we're about done, so I have another interview scheduled for later on in the day.

Diangson: Why don't you drink your tea. Would you like some more?

Hensley: I just had some.

Diangson: Do you live alone or your mother is here?

Hensley: I have a roommate. Have you traveled a lot?

Diangson: My youngest daughter Diana is married to General Whitney's son, David, who is stationed in Heigelburg Germany, so I toured Europe from France to Germany and from Germany to Austria, and from Austria to Italy, venice, that's in Italy, and then we traveled to Switzerland.

Hensley: When was this?

Diangson: It was five years ago.

Hensley: How nice.

- Diangson: So my son's father, General and Mrs. Whitney, retired and then they came back to San Francisco.  
\_\_\_\_\_. Then as David is the oldest of the general so they came back also to the United States and now they are stationed in Fort Lenard wood, until today they are still there.
- Hensley: Have you traveled around the United States at all?
- Diangson: Me?
- Hensley: Uh huh.
- Diangson: Yes. I have been also in Mexico. I have been in Acapulco, Mexico, and \_\_\_\_\_. But at least the only country that I have not been is England and Russia I think.
- Hensley: Would you like to go there?
- Diangson: I have been in China. I have been in Japan. I have been in China this year. \_\_\_\_\_ I think I would like to go.
- Hensley: I think Russia would be interesting to go to visit.
- Diangson: It is nice to travel Europe also. It's a beautiful country. And the people in Europe will treat you as if you had been there all the time. Germany is not a bad country as we read in the paper or we see it in the show, what we saw, the gestapos or something like that, that they mistreat the people and I said, "no, it is not that way." I also have been in Mexico. I have been in Acapulco. Because my girl friend is also the daughter of doctor, his brother is also a doctor in Mexico, and then he... It's nice to be in Mexico. Look like the people doesn't sleep there. They keep playing the guitar and they keep on singing all through the night and all the day. It's a very lovely country.
- Hensley: Do you see a lot of similarities between Filipinos and Mexicans?
- Diangson: In Mexico, uh huh.
- Hensley: Oh really?
- Diangson: The food and everything is very similar.
- Hensley: The food is similar?

- Diangson: Uh huh. They eat hot food also. Right now in the Philippines the food there is similar to Mexico's food, most everything seems to be hot.
- Hensley: Spicy.
- Diangson: Yes. Everything, like the adobo. Adobo is Spanish. Or what else, the pansit is Spanish. You see these \_\_\_\_\_. That is Spanish also. So they have the house where they cook that or the restaurant is called the Pansiteria. That is Spanish. In the Philippines it is... As you know for three hundred years we are under the regime of the Spanish people and as we said before that our festival here Our Lady of Antipoli, who bring that statue to the Philippines? IT's the Spanish ship but it is from Mexico. That virgin is from Mexico, and then they took it to the Philippines. On the way to the Philippines the ship was caught fire and that is why the virgin is dark, because it caught fire. So that is why the shrine now it stays in the Philippines. And that is the shrine that we celebrate here in Stockton every year. And for almost nine days we have a every night fiesta because that shrine will visit one family and then another, they move it to another one. The whole group will come in from this house and then take the shrine to another house and can you imagine how many people is there and then you have to... see they have the novena they say it on the house before they.
- Hensley: What is the novena?
- Diangson: That is the prayers. SO that is how it is being done. It is just like the Mexican's Our lady of Fatima. It is the same thing, but only Our Lady of Fatima they do not celebrate it the way we do it, it's from one house, who opens the house for this thing of the shrine that we do.
- Hensley: What is this thing that is going to be on Aug. 9 that you are going to?
- Diangson: That is the Bario Fiesta. It's a town festival they call it.
- Hensley: What happens then?
- Diangson: That is the integrated, that's the \_\_\_\_\_ integration of the Filipinos here in town. That is every year and the Filipino Center works that all out together that we will have this Filipino festival, once a year in the Center.
- Hensley: Did you work with the establishment of the Filipino Center?
- Diangson: Not really.

Hensley: Not really?

Diangson: Not really.

Hensley: There are no Filipino organizations working together to make money for it at all?

Diangson: \_\_\_\_\_. No. NO.

**End of First Tape. Beginning of Second tape.**

Diangson: You remember that in the \_\_\_\_\_ there are booths for some organization, like the Labor Union, like the Democratic Women's Club, like the registration of \_\_\_\_\_? So they have the booths and then they have some also that they have the concessions.

Hensley: Oh, so this town fair, it's just going to be like...

Diangson: Like a county fair, That they have these concessions of every organization. Like Walter said, that they have also the booths of the multi organization in which Morris Artiaga is the director.

Hensley: Does Walter work with Morris Artiaga?

Diangson: Yes. Walter is the president of the Multi, of all the organizaions that Morris is the director of.

Hensley: I see.

Diangson: There are thirty organizations that are members of the Multi.

Hensley: Thirty?

Diangson: Yes. Thirty organizations.

Hensley: These are all Filipino organizations?

Diangson: All Filipino organizations.

Hensley: There are that many in Stockton?



- Diangson: We have many, many, many organizations.
- Hensley: Are there very many Filipino youth organizations?
- Diangson: We have youth organizations. This is represented by Delta College. It's \_\_\_\_\_. Then there is also I think, Delta and Pacific are represented together, the youth. That's what the First Lady in the Philippines is interested in is our young \_\_\_\_\_ that go back and see the country in which...
- Hensley: Do you think that very many younger Filipinos here in this country, the second and third generation, like Walter, do you think it would be beneficial to them to go back to the Philippines and raise their family there? What do you think of that? A return to the...
- Diangson: No, no. It is not that. It is up to the individual also. Because their ancestors came here already in the country in which they were educated or they were working that you cannot compare here also, that if you are making twenty or thirty thousand dollars a year in the Philippines that is still a very high salary there. Just like in Mexico. Also in Mexico your money there is 12 plus now for one dollar here. One dollar is twelve plus in Mexico I think, twelve pesos and something. In the Philippines it is only eight, so our money is lower than the Mexican exchange. But it is nice you know. I do not advise them to stay in the country in which you are not so used to already, but to see it I think it's worthwhile. Just like Bill, my oldest son, he went there and that is the profession he has here in this country and to teach people and they will accept it it's all right with him, but I don't think they will stay there for good, you know? We send a student also in the Philippines. You remember he used to be the president of Delta College, what is his name? He is now a port commissioner.
- Hensley: I don't know. I haven't been in Stockton that long. He is married to a Chinese, Blanchard, Dr. Blanchard. Dr. Blanchard used to be the president of Delta College and now his wife is with the University of the Pacific. He sent his son to the Philippines to study as a doctor. And he's coming back I think this month or next month. He graduated over there.
- Hensley: What do you miss about the Philippines?
- Diangson: I do not miss anything. I go there every year. Walter's go there oh mostly, he just came back not so long ago. Last month he just came back and they have this project Mubay and its also like a People to People project, what you can

do if you want to help the people there. But it's not only that you can help but it includes also that if there are students that could not afford and could not be able to specialize here in this country the Project Mubay offers some help to them to come in and study.

Hensley: When you first got here did you miss the Philippines?

Diangson: Of course. Everyone gets lonely.

Hensley: Was there anything that you missed most of all, the weather, your home, your family, anything?

Diangson: I can't remember very well. And besides at home I was educated also in a private school so I was sent to another town to be educated also in a Catholic school, so I was brought up in a Catholic school.

Hensley: What did your father do for a living?

Diangson: Oh, my father is a rice grower. He has a big rice plantation. As I showed to you, my hosue, my father's house in the Philippines.

Hensley: I think it's this one?

Diangson: No. This is it. My family is not really rich people but we are not also a poor family. This is inside the house. That party was given when we arrived there. My sister and I went to the Philippines that time.

Hensley: 1966?

Diangson: Uh huh. That is when we first took the Stockton Charter to Iloilo as a sister city of Stockton.

Hensley: Stockton became a sister city in 1966?

Diangson: Of Iloilo. Iloilo became the sister city of Stockton.

Hensley: Is that because of the large Filipino population in Stockton? Why was Stockton chosen as a sister city?

Diangson: Because of the important export items I think, of Stockton that is similar to the one of Iloila.

Hensley: How long did you go to the private school, the Catholic school?

- Diangson: From first to seventh grade.
- Hensley: Was it all girls?
- Diangson: Yes. So you could just wear a middy blouse with a black skirt.
- Hensley: A uniform. When did you meet your husband?
- Diangson: Oh, that was in 1926.
- Hensley: So you didn't meet him much earlier than when you got married, too much longer before.
- Diangson: No. No. No. This is a friend also of my brother.
- Hensley: Uh huh.
- Diangson: His father is an ice plant engineer in Stetsonberg, an American base where they have now the Clark Field. He was the first engineer that was sent there in an ice plant. That was his father. His father was also a bookkeeper in Australia, my husband's father. That is why Walter and Bill become an engineer I think. See, as you could compare it Walter and Bill are fifteen years difference and they have similar \_\_\_\_\_. They have designed also a cabin in Lake Tahoe. They both designed the cabin and they own the cabin.
- Hensley: What about your daughters? You haven't told me too much about the,. Where did they go to school?
- Diangson: Barbara? Barbara was educated as I said in Brown's School for Girls in Glendora and after that then she was sent to Notre Dame in San Jose. She was also educated in Notre Dame and then again transferred to Notre Dame in Alameda. Then when an opening came in Glendora that she was accepted at the Girls School, Brown's School for Girls in Glendora, then she went there where she graduated high school. That's only high school. The Brown Military is only high school. Only high school. That's where Walter also finished high school and then went to the University of the Pacific as I told you and then he went to Berkeley and then after he graduated from Berkeley he went to Columbia University for his Master's Degree.
- Hensley: A lot of education.
- Diangson: My sister also when she was here in this country she went to Notre Dame, then she went to the University of California in Berkeley, then went to work

with the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C. and then took her Master's also at Columbia.

Hensley: How long was she here in the United States?

Diangson: Just during the war and after the war she went to \_\_\_\_\_ University. Four years I think and then she went home. She was a representative to the United Nations as the queen of the Philippines.

**Timestamps for Specific Topics:**

Discrimination / Prejudice:

Great Depression:

Labor / Working:

Maintaining Customs:

Home Life:

Community Relations:

Living in Stockton: