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Interview with Clem Morales (2008)

Clemente Morales

California State University, Monterey Bay

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Interviewee: Clemente Morales
Interviewer: Miguel Ramos, Andrew McHargue
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Duration of Interview: 47:24

Miguel Ramos 00:03

So let me just ask you—your name, sir?

Clem Morales 00:07

Clem Morales.

Miguel Ramos 00:09

Clem Morales. And how old are you, sir?

Clem Morales 00:11

I'll be 78 in December.

Miguel Ramos 00:14

78 in December. And where are we? Where are we?

Clem Morales 00:18

We're at the Valley Center Bowl in Salinas, California.

Miguel Ramos 00:21

Valley Center Bowl in Salinas, California. Thank you very much. Alright, releasing the video and the audio tape for educational purposes and archiving purposes. And I'd like to ask right now for verbal permission to—

Clem Morales 00:39

Sure.

Miguel Ramos 00:39

—record you. Wonderful, wonderful, thank you very much. I just want to kind of start out by letting you know the format of the interview. We're going to start out with some close-ended questions asking you about your life and your family situation, and like where you came from and your—simple questions, but then we're gonna get into the more open-ended, meaty questions about how Salinas has changed over the years and how the Chinatown Revitalization Project affects you and what it means to you. Alright, so let's start it off. Where were you born, sir?

Clem Morales 01:20

Salinas, California. Actually, I was born in Chualar. Chualar, yes. In a labor camp, but we were—my mother and I was delivered over here to the hospital in Salinas [unclear].

Miguel Ramos 01:23

Chualar? Okay—

Clem Morales 01:37

Park, not Mark, Lane. Anyway, go ahead.

Miguel Ramos 01:39

Park Lane. Wonderful. Wonderful. And do you have any brothers and sisters?

Clem Morales 01:43

No. The only one in the family.

Miguel Ramos 01:46

Okay. Well, I'd just like to ask you a little bit about your parents here. Were they born here in America? Oh, no kidding.

Clem Morales 01:55

No, they were both born in the Philippines, and they lived [unclear] Philippine Islands. And they both migrated to Hawaii, where—that's where they got married. And in 1928, they came here, worked at the Paso Robles Inn as a maid and busboy. From then, he was [unclear]—he had some college, which was good because [unclear] we had all the laborers at this time. We were all Filipino laborers here.

Miguel Ramos 02:28

Oh, right, right.

Clem Morales 02:30

So they had somebody with—that could do bookwork. And also he winded up being, eventually, a contractor.

Miguel Ramos 02:37

Oh, no kidding. So he worked his way up?

Clem Morales 02:39

Worked his way up.

Miguel Ramos 02:39

Wonderful.

Clem Morales 02:39

And then came to the camp in Salinas, and he worked for Farley Food Company.

Miguel Ramos 02:45

Farley—?

Clem Morales 02:46

All the time that he came here as a [unclear].

Miguel Ramos 02:48

Oh, no kidding. Well, that's wonderful.

Clem Morales 02:51

Yeah. And my mother was also the cook.

Miguel Ramos 02:53

Oh, she was?

Clem Morales 02:54

Yeah.

Miguel Ramos 02:55

Oh, I assume—

Clem Morales 02:56

For the camp.

Miguel Ramos 02:56

Oh, okay. Oh—

Clem Morales 02:57

She cooked for the camp. The most the—most of the contractors' wives cooked for the camp here.

Miguel Ramos 03:03

Oh, no kidding. So they all kind of worked together.

Clem Morales 03:05

Right, absolutely.

Miguel Ramos 03:06

Oh, that's, that's wonderful. I've never—

Clem Morales 03:08

And since they were all Filipinos—easy for them to get together. So—

Miguel Ramos 03:10

Yeah, it makes sense. Were a lot of the workers—were they mostly immigrants, or were there a few second generation—?

Clem Morales 03:22

No, no, they were all immigrants.

Miguel Ramos 03:24

They were all immigrants?

Clem Morales 03:24

They all came from the Philippines at that time.

Miguel Ramos 03:26

Did you feel that there was any, not necessarily discrimination, but any sort of disconnection from second generation?

Clem Morales 03:37

There was no disconnection. It was just, it was like everybody—

Miguel Ramos 03:42

Okay.

Clem Morales 03:43

—was a minority here.

Miguel Ramos 03:44

Okay.

Clem Morales 03:44

Built a resentment for, you know—

Miguel Ramos 03:46

Yeah.

Clem Morales 03:47

It's almost common, naturally, you know.

Miguel Ramos 03:48

Yeah.

Clem Morales 03:49

And of course, we got—we had mostly Filipinos, and most of them, most of all, or nearly all of them, could speak English. Because the fact that they studied English in school in the Philippines. And so it was a lot easier for them to communicate.

Miguel Ramos 04:04

Yeah. Okay, well that's, that's interesting. So you said that your father worked as a labor contractor. And your mother worked as a cook—did she do that for a living or did she have her own—?

Clem Morales 04:22

No, she eventually in, of course, about '38—before we left, and that's another story. We had a dry cleaning on Lake Street—dry cleaning establishment.

Miguel Ramos 04:34

So you were very close to—?

Clem Morales 04:35

Yeah, and in—on Lake Street.

Miguel Ramos 04:37

Wonderful. So you really got some good memories of—

Clem Morales 04:42

Oh, yeah.

Miguel Ramos 04:43

—what Chinatown was.

Clem Morales 04:45

[unclear] school, and they couldn't pick me up. So I had to walk from Lincoln school all the way down to Chinatown. But it's amazing that—

Miguel Ramos 04:57

What years was this?

Clem Morales 04:58

Huh?

Miguel Ramos 04:58

What years was this about?

Clem Morales 05:00

'37, '38.

Miguel Ramos 05:00

'37 and '38, okay, okay.

Clem Morales 05:03

And then, quit my dad's labor contract. We had a contract—the labor camp was right close by too, was right here next to Blanco Road.

Miguel Ramos 05:14

Oh, no kidding.

Clem Morales 05:14

Yeah. And it was the [unclear] Ranch at the time. And we had laborers there. And we had about 80, 50 to 80 laborers—Filipino laborers. And then, of course, you could—when I came back, we, well anyway. From then on, you know, I, my mother and I left to go to Philippines to buy some property. There was some investment we wanted to do. So we both went to the Phillipines—my dad stayed here. And we—I'll never forget that we rode the Suwa Maru, the Japanese ship, to Tokyo, Hong Kong, and eventually Philippines. During that period, I went to school in Manila, and my mother had—we were trying to start a business in the island of Mindanao. [unclear] And then the war broke out.

Miguel Ramos 06:07

Oh, so you, you went over before World War II?

Clem Morales 06:09

Before the war.

Miguel Ramos 06:11

Okay.

Clem Morales 06:11

Before the war. And like I said, we were in a Japanese boat and everything—we went there before the war. And when the war started, there was no communication anymore. So my—we didn't, I had no communication with my father or my mother. My relatives picked me up in Manila, where I was going to school, brought me for the most northernmost province, the longest north to the Philippines. And my mother was in the southernmost island of Mindanao. So that's when I spent all my—the war years.

Miguel Ramos 06:45

So you had no communication with them throughout the entire war?

Clem Morales 06:48

All in the entire six years. But I was with my relatives.

Miguel Ramos 06:53

So well, yeah, but still, to be disconnected—

Clem Morales 06:56

And I was, you know, a kid. But we—when we were on an [unclear], we were evacuating when [unclear]. I saw part of the Bataan Death March when we—

Miguel Ramos 07:07

Did you?

Clem Morales 07:07

We didn't know at the time what it was, but it was there with—it was kind of gloomy at that point, you know. And so we wind up in the province, and that's where I spent most of the war there in the province.

Miguel Ramos 07:13

Yeah. Wow, that's, that's amazing.

Clem Morales 07:21

With no communication, except for my relatives there.

Miguel Ramos 07:24

Yeah, I mean, thank goodness they were there. You know, or else you'd—

Clem Morales 07:28

[laughs] [unclear], you know?

Miguel Ramos 07:31

Yeah, man, that's, that is amazing. I can't believe that. My goodness. Well, moving from there, where—

Clem Morales 07:42

Well, moving from there—

Miguel Ramos 07:42

Who was teaching the school? You said you went to school out there?

Clem Morales 07:44

Moving from there, we went—of course, I was barefoot with a T-shirt on most of the time. When I was growing up, there was nothing new. We had—I got to learn how to go fishing, and thereby I had to learn how to [unclear]. I wasn't, I wasn't an exception. I was part of the family. In fact, when the Japanese occupied, they didn't want to know that I was an American citizen or—because I was Filipino. It was never—that thing was never brought up because they would—eventually the Japanese took over the town. And, and so we had—I was living in the town so they started school there in [unclear]. Japanese.

Miguel Ramos 08:24

Oh, okay. So it was a Japanese school?

Clem Morales 08:26

Yeah. We had to, we had to—they were teaching us Japanese at school. You know, we had to sing the national anthem—[sings part of national anthem in Japanese].

Miguel Ramos 08:34

You still remember it to this day?

Clem Morales 08:38

Yeah, I still remember the first part.

Miguel Ramos 08:38

Oh, okay. Okay.

Clem Morales 08:39

And then we had to bow—we had guards at every entrance. And we had to bow every time you questioned a guard, and then bow when you left. Because it was like, they made the whole town into a garrison. They occupied the schools. And that was their main place [unclear]. And that's part of the war part. And then we waited to [unclear] whole thing until they finally—we saw planes coming over and they were going to bomb. They were bombing the airport in our province.

Miguel Ramos 08:45

What planes?

Clem Morales 09:07

They were American planes. Really brighten up the whole thing—it was amazing. Because everything was silver planes at the time. I can remember all that.

Miguel Ramos 09:23

Man, that's amazing. So you were just so used to seeing the Japanese planes and then went—

Clem Morales 09:29

Oh, well, no, there was not too many Japanese planes there. But there was a lot of Japanese there. There's a few little towns and they occupied every town—they had a small little garrison. And they didn't have a full complement. They might have maybe 15 people there, maybe 15 Japanese soldiers. They keep the town kind of leveled off there. And they try to get the city to have their own mayor and all that kind of stuff. They got to be—because then they start calling these people collaborators, you know. They also had the beheadings. I saw that too.

Miguel Ramos 10:02

Oh, my goodness. So yeah, my next question was going to be how, like, was there a lot—were they fairly kind or were they enemy occupiers?

Clem Morales 10:16

No, they were fairly kind because they had to live with the people.

Miguel Ramos 10:19

Yeah, that's what I was wondering.

Clem Morales 10:20

We know that they were, that they were in charge. So, so that way, we know that—we had to get along. And, of course there was a small guerilla factor in the mountains close to our place. And they were operating there, and they were trying to chase them up in the mountains and everything. And we

were—in the beginning, I had to stay with them, but then we couldn't live out there. You know, we could live out there. But then when the thing got calmed down, then we came back to, came back to town, but still the guerillas were still up in the mountains. So we tried, we tried to get—we didn't know what was gonna happen, so we might as well get along, so to speak. But they ran the place. I mean, they, they ran it with an iron hand, you know. So if they feel like somebody said the wrong thing, they slap him around.

Miguel Ramos 11:07

Yeah, so you witnessed a lot of that.

Clem Morales 11:11

Right, right, right. Beheadings. I've seen a couple of beheadings. One was a relative and—a distant relative, but it was a relative. And then after that, when you saw the planes come over, and today you're getting liberated, you know. And then we had a—this is the first contact I had with my father—we had a few of the volunteers from here that went to the war, and they descended with the Filipinos to land in the northernmost part first, [unclear]. And I got—I finally got a message from my father. One of them was one of my dad's workers and he [unclear]: "If you get to this town, just get a hold of—I hope my son is there." You know, I got a letter saying that, you know, he hasn't heard from us and, of course, we couldn't send mail or anything. And then eventually, in '46—beginning of '46—I went to the capital of the province, and it was [unclear]. And I went—started high school there. I was [unclear] when I started high school there. And I didn't even finish the first year because finally I got in contact with my mother. This is an amazing story. My mother was part of the guerrilla function in the island of Mindanao—

Miguel Ramos 11:13

Yeah, that's—was she now?

Clem Morales 12:31

—and she was involved with [unclear]. And they were involved in the guerrilla faction there. In fact, I can't find them all, but we had—she had, she was allowed, in fact, just being—but she wasn't an American citizen. She was just a permanent resident at the time. You know, they didn't get naturalized until after they came back. She had so much—she had a little bit of pull. She got to [unclear], and then they, and then they told the situation because she was part of the guerilla factor there. And so she got, she said she—they wanted the pilots for Mustang—fighter pilots. They says, "[unclear] gonna go pick up your son." So, they arranged to take all the radio equipment out of the back of the Mustang—of the aircraft—flew down to [unclear], where I was at. [unclear] I'm going to take him to my mother—to his mother. Of course, my relatives said, "You're not taking him any place." You know [laughs]. So, anyway, eventually he went back, and then eventually, we got [unclear]—they came down with a C-47. And it came down, and she was there with him. We met, picked me up, and we went back to Manila. And it took us about six months to get her paperwork before we could come here. So we were in Manila, and, of course, you know, I had—believe it or not, I had to go, we had to make some money, you know. We had relatives there to stay with. I was shining shoes at the, at the internship, for when they had the Japanese prison camps. I was shining shoes for the GIs, you know. They get a few bucks, you know. Of course, everybody wanted to buy a Coca Cola. Everything—[unclear]—you want to get a Coca Cola. So anyway, we spent some time there, and then eventually we got our paperwork done, so

we got on a—I forgot the name of that ship, I should have remembered. I was so small, I guess. When I started high school here [unclear]. Anyway, we got on the ship, and it was all the GI ship bringing GIs back in those days. My mother stayed in the—it was a transport ship, but they had a section for first class, so to speak. And all the nurses that were going back and all the women were there—and kids, children. When they found out how old I was, they was—they put me down with the GIs, which was great. I was with the GIs all the time we were coming over here. I was the only kid there, so I got spoiled by the GIs. So anyway, we came back all the way here, landed here in San Francisco. And after my dad [unclear] and everything and then employees came here and then 1946 September, I started high school here at Salinas High School.

Miguel Ramos 13:14

Yeah, no kidding, that must have been—

Clem Morales 14:04

"What the hell's he doing here."

Miguel Ramos 14:14

[laughs] No kidding?

Clem Morales 14:20

Yeah.

Miguel Ramos 14:36

'46 you say?

Clem Morales 14:39

Yeah, and I was the smallest kid in the class.

Miguel Ramos 15:21

[laughs] Were you the youngest?

Clem Morales 15:24

Yeah. No, I was—in fact, we were all about the right age for high school, you know. But I was only about a little over four-feet-nine, four-feet-ten, because I didn't have all the vitamins that I should have. [unclear] And I grew from there. I played in the Salinas High School lightweight basketball team, all the way up until 1950. And I was already five-seven.

Miguel Ramos 15:53

You played all the way through your high school career?

Clem Morales 15:55

Yeah, we had our team—it was all the way through high school. In fact, Coach Kearney here was our coach to begin with, and he coaches [unclear], we won a championship every year we were here.

Miguel Ramos 16:06

Wonderful. Congratulations.

Clem Morales 16:08

Yeah, and then—of course, everybody goes to the service, right? So right after that, Korean War broke out. And so everybody was volunteering. So decided we were gonna go, so I volunteered for the Air Force. And went to Fresno with the [unclear], and then—because I wanted to, I wanted to be in the action. I applied to be a gunner. I wanted to be something—I wanted to go to, [unclear] wanted to go plus because I wanted to go to Europe. I wanted all this kind of stuff. Never worked out that way. Says you're a mechanic, you'll wind up being a mechanic. And I wanted to go back east, and then I finally wind up going west. It was nice because I was close to home. But then I got stationed in Hawaii. And it was amazing how we got to stay. We had to take another boat [unclear] Sergeant Maurer. I'll never forget that boat, all the way through [unclear]. Together, we went to Hawaii. Spent my four years in—four years there. I married my wife there. And my wife was a stewardess for Aloha Airlines. And then we met, and then we got married. And then we—I have a son was born there, at Tripler Army General Hospital. And then we came back here in 1950—no, 1954. That's when I got out of the service.

Miguel Ramos 17:33

My goodness, that's an eventful 15 years for you, wasn't it?

Clem Morales 17:37

Yeah, and then after that, we came back here and I was in the produce business. And, of course, my wife—I had a son, I says, "Well, we gotta get permanently situated." Can't be traveling all over New Mexico, or Arizona, Texas. [unclear] was in Colorado the whole time. All year, you have to do this routinely. And so we decided, this is unbelievable—this place was just opening up in 1957. Wasn't even open yet—Valley Center Bowl. I walked into the back, and I said, "Do you need any help?" You know, I needed—looking for work. And he says, "Yeah, we're looking for a pin chaser, you know, just to, you know, help us." And he says, "What kind of experience you got?" I says, "Well, I was an aircraft mechanic." And so they hired me. Within a month, the two guys that [unclear]—for the machines and everything—quit. They got a better offer in San Jose, and so they both left. So I was left here. It was—it wasn't easy, but also with the military instruction, you read the manual, and you follow the manual. And if you've got any kind of mechanical background, you can [unclear]. It was kind of hard at the time, but I did that. Then, and then after that—it was so funny, after that—well, before that. Before when—I was working in a field with, before I—during the high school years. I was working in the field every summer with my dad. Yeah, working with—

Miguel Ramos 19:14

What exactly would you—what were your duties in the field?

Clem Morales 19:17

I was working with the workers.

Miguel Ramos 19:18

So you were out in the field?

Clem Morales 19:20

Yeah, I was [unclear] lettuce, I was crawling on the ground [unclear] lettuce. We'd weed lettuce, and we cut lettuce and I was there all during the four years of [unclear]. So I was just telling him that, you know, at that time, we only—then we had Mexican laborers. We had Mexican laborers. We had a few Filipinos that were sort of [unclear], you know, like, stuff like that—

Miguel Ramos 19:42

You saying by about that year? Because you were saying earlier it was all Filipino workers.

Clem Morales 19:46

Yeah. And then all of a sudden the Filipinos—most of them volunteered to go into service.

Miguel Ramos 19:50

Okay. Oh, okay.

Clem Morales 19:52

So, the Mexicans, the Mexicans came, and this what we had. We had all Mexicans except for a few foremen, so we had [unclear]. My mother was a cook also, for the—our camp. And it's amazing that, you know, that the way that the situation is happening now with the laborers there. Believe it or not, we served hot lunch. We had a truck.

Miguel Ramos 20:15

That's great.

Clem Morales 20:16

They had—we had breakfast in the morning before daylight. Had breakfast in the morning. And then they'd ask the cook, could you, you know—so they'd give him scrambled eggs with a, on a piece of bread. So they'd have a 15 minute break at nine o'clock. So what happened—everybody knows the break time. So they cut a head—when we were cutting lettuce, they cut a head of lettuce, put it in between, and that's their, that's their break. And about 11:30, you'll see a pickup truck, lunch, comes out there. And they had a big pot, hot pot of food with rice, tortillas. And everything right there. And they serve you by plate, and you—and they serve them hot food out on the fields.

Miguel Ramos 20:56

That's great.

Clem Morales 20:57

Through Gonzales, up to here, Salinas. They serve them hot food.

Miguel Ramos 21:00

That's wonderful.

Clem Morales 21:01

And nobody knows this.

Miguel Ramos 21:03

Yeah, I don't think—you don't hear much about that anymore.

Clem Morales 21:07

No, and when they serve them hot food and—it's amazing because, half an hour, and in half an hour you had a time to eat and to take a little bit of a nap. You're tired. I was tired. And so, to that, then school, and then finally back to the Philippines, came back over here, went to high school. And went in the Air Force—stationed in Hawaii like I told you. [unclear] Then worked here, then I finally told them here and then I says, well, like I told the rep for the company [unclear], saying that I need to get out of this town, you know. So he recommended me, and I got an interview in San Francisco at Mission Bowl, which was owned by John Swanson, who told me that they're looking for a good mechanic to work, that they're opening a 32 house—32 lane house in Daly City, California. Westlake. And so I went there. I worked there until—I worked there until '68. And then '68, the bowling alley was—started going down again. So I was in San Mateo, and I got a—I saw a paper, took the San Mateo Times, and there was—TWA was looking for building maintenance mechanics. And across the street from San Mateo was the Industrial Relations Officer, [unclear]. So one day I went there and I took the test and I passed the test, and he says, "Well, when can you start?" Because I was working for the bowling alley at the time. "Well, I gotta give two weeks." He says, "Fine." Went to work for TWA in '68, and then '75 comes around, and then the Israeli War started. [unclear] before I went to join—before I went to work with TWA, I was working part time at—they had a [unclear] photo out at Marina—part time to make ends meet. So then—

Miguel Ramos 23:13

As a photographer?

Clem Morales 23:14

No, as a maintenance—maintaining printing machines and—

Miguel Ramos 23:19

Oh, okay. Okay.

Clem Morales 23:20

—and all that kind of machines [unclear]. So in 1975, TWA had a maintenance contract for Saudi Arabian Airlines. So they needed people to go to Saudi Arabia to work. If they had the maintenance, then they wouldn't have to start up the whole company. And you couldn't have—first thing to do was you couldn't have any Jewish relationship. Even if your wife is Jewish, she couldn't go. And you could, you could be a Muslim, you could be any other, you know, Catholic or whatever, you could do that. But you couldn't be—you couldn't be Jewish. Anyway, now [unclear]. So we had to go through that check for the air, then went to Saudi Arabia—2-year contract. And I says, "Well, I get extra money," and everything. But during that time, my wife passed away. Okay. And that's one of the reasons—I had kids going to high school already. And they were, and they were old enough to know how to run—so all the money was sent into their account. And so they maintained—they did a good job taking care of, taking

care of their mortgage and taking care of business. And they were both in high school. And so, first after the two years, you know, I figured—and they extended me another two years.

Miguel Ramos 24:46

Oh, no kidding.

Clem Morales 24:47

The money was good. Like, really good. And we were—we didn't have to pay any taxes until you made over \$75,000 because of the hardship area. And for the companies—never told the government how much we make. The first time we didn't make no \$75,000. But after a while we did manage to, but they never told—the Philippines, I mean, the US Consulate kept on—we'd meet with them, went to parties, stuff like that. They says, "We know how much you make." No, I says, what is it, what do they do. So they—we look at the records, and no this is all we get paid. What they didn't know—they didn't know that after it got to the point we made a certain amount, they cut it off. And they paid us in Saudi riyals. So, we never lost anything because of that. So they paid us in their money. And so, you know, and it was quite amazing, because then I decided—they were paying even—because I managed the facility maintenance in Dhahran. Took care of the Saudi Americans—all their, we took care of all the expats. We had Thais, Filipinos, Brits working there, and we had to take care of all their facility. We had to provide them with homes. And being in a management position, I had—mostly all of them, the Americans especially, had all villas to live in. Yeah, we had 100-unit compound. And they had everything in it. Two-bedroom, two bath, three baths. The only thing we had to pay for was our phone bill and our food while I was there. You know, as far as medical as far as anything else was all handled [unclear].

Miguel Ramos 25:25

That's a good job.

Clem Morales 26:32

Yeah. Anyway, so I was there from—they extended me every year. And then when I wanted to come back, they said, "No, no, we'll extend you." But after you get to be 60, you had to have either one of the princes to cite for you or have the Director General of the company to extend you. And so they extended me again and again. They didn't want me to leave, so. Gulf War—I was there at the Gulf War.

Miguel Ramos 27:00

No kidding.

Clem Morales 27:08

Yes, I was there when the first Gulf War came out. They evacuated half—well, almost half our compound, and then the communication department from the army came there and they took over [unclear]. And they wired our whole house, housing project with TVs, so we can get—we had a good time there.

Miguel Ramos 27:58

My goodness.

Clem Morales 27:58

But, you know, American ingenuity. We got to find a way to sell this stuff. People want to buy it, you know [laughs]. A gallon of uncut, which is to mean it's 180 proof, that come off the still is \$100 a gallon uncut. Then, I'm sorry—it's \$200 a gallon. When you cut that, with 50/50 water, you come up at 90 proof. Okay. We sell that for \$100. But you can also buy booze on the black market, which somebody was smuggling in—you know, they'd smuggle in there. Any kind of booze, I don't care what it is—gin, scotch, bourbon, whatever it is—that had alcohol in it, went for a \$100 a bottle.

Miguel Ramos 27:58

My goodness.

Clem Morales 27:58

That's the regular price. Yeah. See 500,000 Americans—talk about being proud. [unclear] and it's so quick. And, of course, the people that I knew that were staying in our compound—because I had a lot of, I'm into music, so I had all kinds of jazz albums and all my [unclear] stuff, you know. And they'd love it because we'd go up there and we used to make our own booze, you know, and then—we used to make our own booze out of [unclear]. We were closely affiliated with Aramco because all Americans who live [unclear], and so they were allowed to have still. They can make it only to make for their own use.

Miguel Ramos 28:50

Okay, it's not for commercial use. Is that—is it there's just no alcohol?

Clem Morales 28:55

It's illegal. Oh, no, it's alcohol. It's illegal. I mean, it's all illegal. [unclear] is all illegal there. And it was—
No, well, that was—

Miguel Ramos 29:02

But it was—it was okay for the Americans for personal use, is what you were saying? They could make—

Clem Morales 29:07

They could make it for their own personal use.

Miguel Ramos 29:09

Okay, but—

Clem Morales 29:09

Well, that's—then everybody start—

Miguel Ramos 29:12

Okay, okay, okay.

Clem Morales 29:13

They'd find a way. We used to spend—when we first—during the period, we had—every Wednesday, the American Consulates had a party for invited guests. And they were allowed—in fact they had Saudis in there too. And you were allowed to have—we had beer and wine. This was where everybody gathered for talks, you know, and everything else. So, and, of course, if you got caught drunk outside, forget it, you know. You're either deported or put in jail. And, of course, it's like any [unclear] when you have friends that—I had good friends [unclear] that had been there 20 years. I had some real good friends. And they take care of you, you know? It's like anything else—there's always an underground [unclear] going on. But if you commit a crime, if you commit—they can see all they can see. But with their Sharia method, it's very just, believe me. And I don't care if you're Saudi or whatever. You commit a murder and you're accused [unclear], your head gets chopped off. That's all there is to it. And I've seen quite a few beheadings there.

Miguel Ramos 30:23

Even more?

Clem Morales 30:24

Oh, yeah. Oh, a lot of it's not even advertised because the fact that—it'd be like, for one instance, okay. We had Koreans there. We had Filipinos there. We had Thais there. We had Indians. We had Pakistanis. In fact, my group with—I had Thais, Filipinos, Pakistanis, the Indians working for me, and a few Saudis. We had a robbery downtown, and find out that they robbed this merchant who had a Jewish store—shot him—and they escaped. And he—they didn't know he was still alive. You know, they found out—they told him they were Koreans. So right away, they stopped the airport there. They only have one airport there. So they stopped the airline, the Korean airlines, and they stopped them, and then they—in fact, they inspected all their luggage. They opened every one of them. They found the jewelry on two of them and it belonged to two guys. So, a murderer. He's in jail. And they were scheduled to be, they were scheduled to be executed. What happened was, they only execute on Friday [unclear] noon prayer [unclear]. So they—the religious police would start yelling [unclear] around noon prayer. [unclear]. So they gather all the people to this square to view the beheading. They want as many people to come and watch it, so they know which—what you're being killed for. If you do this, this is what happens. So finally they got up there, and there wasn't enough people. So they got a reprieve.

Miguel Ramos 32:07

No kidding?

Clem Morales 32:08

Until next week.

Miguel Ramos 32:08

[laughs]

Clem Morales 32:10

And then, then they got the crowd in there, and then they beheaded them. But they're, you know, I've seen a couple of hands being cut off—left hands, for stealing. And it used to be really, you know, they

just chop it off and put it in the hot oil. Now, they [unclear] and the guy has no pain and they make sure they've surgically cut [unclear], not just to chop it right off, not like the old days. Even the guys being beheaded, they are already drugged. And then they're—when they're down there then—and, of course, the executioner, most of them that I saw, were all big guys, and they were always hooded. And they chop their head off. But if you're at top—that's why everybody kind of does want to go on top when they know it's gonna be a beheading, because you're gonna have to go up there and watch this thing. Because I saw one in Jeddah, and then I saw two of them—one in Dammam.

Miguel Ramos 33:02

My goodness.

Clem Morales 33:04

And then after that—'93, after being there since '75, came back and my son and daughter says, "Dad, when are you gonna come home? You know, your grandkids don't even know who you are." You know, and all this kind of stuff and everything. So they're very—believe it or not, Saudis are very family-orientated. Don't tell me that they're the boss of the house. The wife is still the boss of the house. You know, don't give me that—they say they walk behind—but they're still the boss. Anyway, I keep what they—very family-orientated. I says, "Well, my kids want me to go back." They say, "You gotta stay one more year because we're going to move to the new airport. We want you to help us move to the new airport." And they had found out that I was serious about leaving this time. So they gave everybody a big party. We had a big party—going away party.

Miguel Ramos 33:49

Oh, wonderful.

Clem Morales 33:51

It's quite an experience doing that and working with different nationalities. And we have Brits, and, of course—it's funny because we had all the different nationalities, and everybody got along well, you know. Every—even with the Saudis and stuff, everybody got along. And it isn't like we were all separated. We're separated because we had to stay in areas that had to be protected, you know, so to speak. So we can get a hold of somebody right away. But yeah, out there we see—in fact, where the hangar was, we had the Patriot there.

Miguel Ramos 34:27

The missile?

Clem Morales 34:27

Yeah, the missile, right there. And when it went off, it looked like it landed right on top of our [unclear]. And we could tell. And we had the Scuds were coming in, you know, and it amazes me. In fact, I can't even find—I had, they were trying to—everybody that had a Scud [unclear] but had to turn it down. They didn't want anything to do with us. After that, we stayed about another couple of years, and I came back and came here with a new family. I got married again, and I have two stepchildren. In fact, came over here and somebody was here, and he says he's gonna open a shop in Monterey. He said,

"Why don't you take this over here." So I—but during that period of time, I was drilling balls in Saudi Arabia.

Miguel Ramos 35:15

Oh, no kidding. The whole time you were just—

Clem Morales 35:17

Most of the time because I used to ship my, ship balls up there and we had bowling. We had 10 lanes in [unclear] and we had 10 lanes in Dhahran. But people were bowling, you know, and then I'd get the stuff [unclear] come back, bring stuff back. And I'd drill—I have my own drills out there right in my house [laughs].

Miguel Ramos 35:33

Okay, so it was a nice easy transition when you came back.

Clem Morales 35:36

Right, right. I know the new products. I know them all because I deal directly with the distributors.

Miguel Ramos 35:40

No kidding? Okay.

Clem Morales 35:42

I deal with a good left-handed bowler, Steve Cook, out of Sacramento. He's a famous bowler [unclear]. And then I wind up being here and, of course, with my experience here and—nobody believed when I said, "Yeah, I worked here. I opened this house." You know, '57—that's how many years? Yeah, so it was quite an amazing—well, that's about it right now. I live in a—of course I'm over 55, so I got myself a trailer. I've lived on Ruby Lane all these years. And then I—it got too big, and then so I moved in a little [unclear]. But that's where I live now, so—

Miguel Ramos 36:23

Okay, where did you live when—just to try and take it back a little bit here. Just curious—where exactly did you say you lived when you were a child? Where, like, what part of—

Clem Morales 36:32

Well, first we lived in Chualar.

Miguel Ramos 36:34

Yeah, you said you were over here—

Clem Morales 36:36

Yeah, we had a small little labor camp there. And then after that, we moved right here to [unclear] Ranch, right up the [unclear]—

Miguel Ramos 36:42

So you lived on the ranch? Okay, okay, that makes sense then.

Clem Morales 36:45

Yeah, I lived right on the ranch. We had—there was a big house in front of the camp where we stayed. It was a farmhouse, but big. It was really a nice farmhouse. And then they built the camp right in the back in the [unclear]. That's how I learned how to drive—drove the pickup right into a ditch—

Miguel Ramos 37:03

[laughs] Oh, man—

Clem Morales 37:04

—before my dad even knew that.

Miguel Ramos 37:08

[laughs] [unclear] found out? Yeah, [Clem laughs] my goodness. Yeah.

Clem Morales 37:09

Well, no, because I had—I know how to drive a tractor and that, you know, and everything. And I hooked up the chain and I pulled it right out because—had to wash the truck afterwards. So, and one of the good things about is the time—in high school nobody had a car in those days. Since my dad was a labor contractor during the war, there were a lot of, there were a lot of gas because they were in the industry. And she was allowed to buy a car. So you bought a brand new 1950—1942 Chevrolet. The last time they went to Chevrolet's [unclear]—before the war got really going. You know, they made 1942—

Miguel Ramos 37:47

Beautiful car.

Clem Morales 37:47

Yeah, and so I had that all during high school and everything else.

Miguel Ramos 37:48

You lucky guy!

Clem Morales 37:55

[laughs] You know, anytime I had—but then at weekends, like when a Saturday, they work, everybody worked on Saturday. I had to be—I'd go out there and deliver lunch to the guys in the field. And my daughter—they tried to tell me to do this—I can't remember. "Put it all on tape, Dad. Put it all on tape." And this way, maybe she knows what's going on. And both my son and—my son lives in Daly City. [unclear]

Miguel Ramos 38:26

Okay, and his name is?

Clem Morales 38:28

Huh?

Miguel Ramos 38:29

His name?

Clem Morales 38:30

[unclear] Morales.

Miguel Ramos 38:31

[unclear] Morales.

Clem Morales 38:31

And I have—he has two children. I have two grandchildren. And then I have a daughter named Dina. Her name was Dina Morales, and her husband's named Dan [unclear], and they live in Hilo, Hawaii. They moved there five years ago. And they always want me to come. They say, "Oh, retire dad." [unclear] I've lived in Hawaii and I know a lot of my relatives are in Hawaii. It's island fever. There's no place to go. There's no place to go. I live—they live in Hilo. There's no beaches in Hilo. You have to go all the way down to Kona, the other side of the island to get to a beach. And that's their recreation. They take their kids, go to Kona on the weekend. And of course, you have, down in Kona, it's all where the volcanoes are, rocky beaches, right? They have a—they have a yacht club there. Hilo Yacht Club, where there's no yachts. There's not even a dock [both laugh].

Miguel Ramos 39:36

Why do they call it that?

Clem Morales 39:37

A lot of retirees are there in the Hilo part, because it's a quiet town and everything. Rains a lot but it's a quiet town. They always want me—they have a little cabin, a little cottage in the back of their house. And they said, "Dad, you can have the place. It's all set up." It's got one bedroom, living room, bedroom, and everything all there. Well I said, "What am I gonna do there?" So anyway, they only want me—my son wants me to move up to Daly City. And I said, "Well, I'll move when I'm in a wheelchair." Where I can't maneuver, and then I'll get a [unclear] around. [both laugh]

Miguel Ramos 40:12

Okay, okay.

Clem Morales 40:13

You joke about [unclear]. We have a group here, but—in fact they were all Filipinos who grew up with me, high school. You know, they have a—Grace Encallado, I mean, yeah, Grace Encallado, who was married to Noah Encallado. And Grace [unclear] was married to Sonny [unclear]. And Al Baguio. These are all, you know, [unclear]. We have our regular poker night on Saturday. And she, she cooks all the food and everything. We laugh all night long. Sometimes we get a little risqué, but we play till three o'clock, four o'clock in the morning.

Miguel Ramos 40:50

Oh, that's wonderful.

Clem Morales 40:51

And that's—this is [unclear]. We have to postpone, well everybody gets, what are they going to do, you know? [laughs] So we just got through finishing a tournament here. A good friend of ours, a very, very good friend of ours, that was—died last year. And we had a tournament for him yesterday. So we had a lot of people in here attending. Mike Castaneda passed away last year. And so [unclear]—he was a good bowler. And we had a tournament here yesterday—for him.

Miguel Ramos 41:18

Wonderful. And it was a big hit?

Clem Morales 41:23

Yeah. And the thing is, he's married, he's got two kids. And, but the thing is, the thing is the fact that everybody here in the bowling alley. It's like a big family. We don't have any [unclear] anymore, only to [unclear]. And we get to know their families, get to know everybody. So it's really nice. Because [unclear], the family, like, Jim and Leslie [unclear] who own the place. They've been very kind. They really give us—because there's nothing for us to do, you know. Other than—bowling's gone down because the fact that everybody got something to do in the evening now. Television, you got computers, you got everything else. So we have to, we have to—business is really bad. We just discussed [unclear] earlier. This is really bad because of the fact we're in a recession, okay? The only thing you sell a lot now is cleaner and tape, you know.

Miguel Ramos 42:14

Yeah, whatever—to repair or whatever they still have.

Clem Morales 42:17

But as far as selling a lot of bowling balls [unclear]. It's tough, but it's an outlet for me. And [unclear] security and everything. So it's something to do. That's why I don't want to go back to someplace where I can't do anything.

Miguel Ramos 42:33

Wasn't that what you were doing already? And you said you were doing it already just for fun. You know, might as well get paid for doing something—

Clem Morales 42:39

[unclear] and everything else. I enjoy doing the work here, so—and the people are great. The people are really great. But that's my life story. You got it all in a nutshell, but I want to emphasize that during the, you know—we had, I can remember the sign right here as you entered Salinas. The population in 1946, okay—10,000.

Miguel Ramos 43:07

10,000 back then?

Clem Morales 43:09

Yeah, 10,000.

Miguel Ramos 43:11

My goodness, how it's grown.

Clem Morales 43:13

Because the city limits is right where I turned to go to school. We weren't even in the city limits.

Miguel Ramos 43:20

No kidding?

Clem Morales 43:20

Yeah. I see that sign all the time, you know.

Miguel Ramos 43:23

Okay, so—yeah, it's right there.

Clem Morales 43:25

Right, and I see that sign all the time [unclear]. And it grew from there, you know. Because, of course, a lot of our— like [unclear] they go here and then they go to Phoenix. They go to all these different places, back and forth. So now the population's unbelievable. But industry came in here—it came and gone.

Miguel Ramos 43:45

Yeah, seems to fluctuate in and out just depending on the seasons, depending on the wind, blow them in and out. Wow, that's great.

Clem Morales 43:55

Anyway, we had a—I have a pretty— if I go tomorrow, I don't regret anything I've done. It will be great because my daughter will know exactly what's happened [laughs].

Miguel Ramos 44:11

Yeah. Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. I suppose this is a good point to possibly stop my part of the interview. So, so—

Clem Morales 44:24

Well, I want to also bring up the fact that since—this interview started because of the Filipino American Historical Society. And that's our group.

Miguel Ramos 44:28

Yeah—Al Baguio.

Clem Morales 44:29

Yeah, and Al Baguio, and all our group there. And we always have a Christmas party, you know, dinner like that. But this is why I—when Rina called, and I finally got—and I says, "Well, this is history." And we're trying to get everything together. I'm trying to get all the work that I could find with my mother. My mother did a lot at this town. She was a member of the Filipino [unclear], president of the Filipino [unclear] club, and all the lodges that was out there, and she was involved with the, with the state. We had folk dancing. She produced [unclear] dancing, bands, drum corps for the rodeo. We were in the California Rodeo every year during, after '46, and then we went to Sacramento for the State Fair Dance [unclear] Filipinos [unclear]. Went up to LA, Ambassador Hotel, their dance there. And it was—we were all over.

Miguel Ramos 44:45

And what was her name, your mother?

Clem Morales 45:28

Paulina Morales.

Miguel Ramos 45:29

Paulina Morales.

Clem Morales 45:30

And she was involved with the government, and also—

Miguel Ramos 45:32

She seemed to be quite a woman.

Clem Morales 45:34

Oh, yeah. We had a dance band, and we had our teacher, her [unclear]. In fact, he was a brother of one—anyway, he taught us the drum corps, the bugle corps. We started a dance band.

Miguel Ramos 45:52

Oh my goodness.

Clem Morales 45:53

We had a dance band. We traveled all the different places, and he taught us. Like, I never know how to play trombone. [unclear] beginning and taught us, you know.

Miguel Ramos 46:03

Wow, that's awesome.

Clem Morales 46:03

And I'll remember his name one day, and I'll tell you about [Miguel laughs]—his brother was a famous artist, you know, famous artist. And I just can't quite remember the name. Anyway, he taught us the

whole drum and bugle corps dance band. We had folk dances. We went all over, and she was—if you look in the archives, if, you know—the activities in Salinas during that time, she was involved in a lot.

Miguel Ramos 46:26

Wow. It's in—well, even more so than that. Even, like you said during the war—

Clem Morales 46:32

[unclear]

Miguel Ramos 46:32

Goodness, she—working, feeding the guys out on the field. Wow. She's—

Clem Morales 46:37

Most of the Filipino contractors at the time—nearly all of them—their wives cooked.

Miguel Ramos 46:42

Oh, so that was—I mean, that was just common. But still, that just adds to her dynamic.

Clem Morales 46:47

They worked together.

Miguel Ramos 46:48

Yeah, goodness.

Clem Morales 46:50

It's amazing, so I can bring these up—everything's coming up all [unclear]. And so I'm proud of the fact that my family was involved with the city of Salinas and into the whole community of California. And that—and to honor her for that, too.

Miguel Ramos 47:07

Yeah. My goodness. Well, wonderful. Thank you so much.

Clem Morales 47:08

Yeah, I'm glad to bring this all up.

Miguel Ramos 47:15

No, no, it's—everything is just wonderful. I love it all. But yeah, let's probably stop it right here and—
[recording stops]