

10-18-2011

## **Interview with Clem Morales (2011)**

Clemente Morales

California State University, Monterey Bay

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Interviewee: Clem Morales  
Interviewer: Mark Weddle  
Date of Interview: October 18, 2011  
Duration of Interview: 01:00:32

**Mark Weddle 00:00**

All ready to go?

**Clem Morales 00:01**

Yeah.

**Mark Weddle 00:02**

Alright. Hello, my name is Mark Weddle, and I am here with Clem Morales. It is October 18, 2011.

**Clem Morales 00:02**

Speak a little louder because my hearing is not very well, but—

**Mark Weddle 00:07**

Alright, Clem. So let's start off. We're here today to learn about you, any experiences you have with Chinatown, as well as what it means to you to be a Filipino and being a part of the Filipino community. So would you like to start off with maybe some history about your family?

**Clem Morales 00:33**

Well, I have—well, my father and mother came from the Philippines in 1926, and they worked in Hawaii, and then they came here to Paso Robles, at the Paso Robles Inn. My father was a busboy, and my mother was a housekeeper. Then they get involved with—there was a lot of Filipinos working around the area down there. But my dad had a little bit—he had a couple of years of college at the time. So he got hired as a bookkeeper for one of the farmers there in Paso Robles, because they were all Filipino workers. Okay. So, from that time on, they stayed there for another year, and then they opened up a camp here in Chualar.

**Mark Weddle 01:25**

Okay.

**Clem Morales 01:26**

A labor camp, and that's where I was born, 1931. So from there, my dad's working as a labor contractor, and I went—grew up here until—went to Lincoln School in Salinas. And because they moved the camp from Chualar to the [unclear] Ranch, which was by—what was that, Boronda? No, not Boronda. Anyway, close to the city limits at the time. And I went and started school. I went to Lincoln School, like I said, and then—and that was in 1937. My mother had a laundry on Lake Street. Okay. And at the time, there was a couple of Filipino merchants there. There was the [unclear] Photography and a [unclear] dry goods store. Because Chinatown was already there. So when they got—when they started out. So but as far as Chinatown is concerned, like I told you, it was a meeting place for all

because at the time, there was already a Chinese function there. They had the Japanese. And the Filipinos first started off by building a church there. And right on—I can't remember the street now. But anyway, it's still there. But it's—we're right across the street from the Japanese church. And so we used to go to school—when I used to get off school, I had to walk all the way from Lincoln School all the way to Chinatown, where my mother's laundry was, because my dad was working out in the fields. And that was a daily function for me. And, of course, going through Chinatown during the afternoon, there's hardly anything going on at the time. Everybody's working, and so that start moving around till about five o'clock in the afternoon, and they start getting lively because all the restaurants were there. And, in fact, there were only—let's see, there were hardly any Mexicans here at the time. Mostly all the workers were Filipinos. And, of course, the only recreation they got was going to Chinatown. And during the weekend, having the Chinese food and also a lot of them would gamble there. They had the [unclear] and card games in the back. And, of course, they—it was really quiet. We didn't have any—there was hardly any crime there. None at all. You know, it was funny as hell because there was no crime there. And so it was easy to function. And so anyway, and then in '30—we left here in 1939. After I went to the Philippines with my mother, we opened a plantation in the island of Mindanao [unclear]. While I was going to school in Manila at the Ateneo de Manila, and we were there for a couple of years and the war broke out. I was there during the war years. And for six years, until the war was ended. So we came back. My mother was involved with the guerrillas, with Dr. [unclear], in the—in Mindanao. And she had—they had, of course, being in the guerrillas at that time, they had a little bit more pull. So me living in the most northernmost province, and they were in the most southernmost province, they were capable of getting my mother—or the US Army, Air Force, to send a pilot all the way to Laoag, Ilocos Norte to pick me up. And, of course, my family, didn't want to let me go, because my mother wasn't there and everything. So, anyway, long story short, they—we got it arranged, and we came back to the United States in 1946. And that's when—that's when we lived right on—we lived in a camp. And then Salinas was going, in fact—I remember going to school, the population of Salinas at the time was about 10,000, you know. And during the war, all the Mexicans came, because all the Filipinos went to war—most of them anyway. And so the Mexicans came. But even though when the Mexicans came, they weren't—they didn't hang out in Chinatown either. You know, because I don't know, I can't remember any Mexican restaurants in Chinatown at the time. But it was just—we had one Japanese restaurant I know, and the rest were all Chinese, and there was a Filipino—I can't remember now if there was or not, but I don't think so. But from then on, I went to school here and went to—graduated Salinas High School. But as far as Chinatown is concerned, it was just a place to go on the weekend, and because it was—that was the only place to go for us. So, but after the war, it was the same thing for a while, but then most of the Filipinos got jobs other than the field work. They started getting to be cooks, busboys, and waiters. And then they were involved with all the other—with the regular restaurants in town and everything. So that's how—but as far as I can remember, when I came back, it was the same thing. In fact, they were—in '47, '48, I was going to school. I think Phillip Ben was a chef or cook in one of the restaurants, and most of the Filipinos were either labor contractors or working as a bookkeeper for the big—the growers and packers at the time. Other than that, there was, like going back to childhood, there was hardly anything there that was—there was no dance hall there. There was mostly gambling joints, and as far as I can remember, and that's about it. I remember as far as Chinatown was concerned, it's a place that your ethnic group, your Asians hung out. And there was hardly any blacks here at all. I think we had one black in high school all the time I was there. And most of the Mexicans that were here were prominent Mexicans, you know. They started their own business and everything

else, but they didn't hang out. They didn't hang out in Chinatown. So the only thing—they had a group we were involved with was when the Big Week was coming on. Like, we had—Filipinos had their own floats, Chinese, Japanese, everybody—every fraternity that Filipinos had there was all involved with the Filipino community and eventually the—one of the fraternity, the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang finally opened the lodge right here, the building right on Salinas street—not Salinas, right across the street from the Traveler's Hotel. I don't know if you know that—it's close to Chinatown. I mean, close to—it was right in front of Steinbeck, you know, the Steinbeck and then you have the Traveler's—it's a small little Traveler's Hotel. And they bought the building there and it was—we rented it out for—then we had our dances there and everything. And it was until after the war that they opened up the Filipino Community Hall here, and I think it was—I forgot when it was. It was 1948 or '49 when they bought that place. I'm not sure on that. But then, of course, then they just changed the street name to Calle Cebu, and it was—and all that. I was gone by then, in fact. When I came back after being away for so long, Henry Hibino was the mayor of the town, you know—Japanese. I guess you've heard of him, right? We went to school together. And it was funny because when we were going to high school, he was a—I think I was a junior, he was a sophomore, something like that. We were playing basketball during gym, and we were playing intermural. And Henry and I got in a big fight. You know, so it was one of the biggest things that ever happened at school. Here we are. We're gonna fight after school. So everybody gathered right behind this tennis courts and the eucalyptus trees up there. And we started—we fought. [laughs]

**Mark Weddle** 11:24

Wow.

**Clem Morales** 11:25

We actually fought, you know. Well, I see Henry all the time now and we laugh about it. Anyway, and we fought, and of course, everybody thought, oh, I was in the Phillipines during the war and I hated Japanese and all that, and that's reason I fought him. It had nothing to do with it at all I just—we just happened to fight each other. And other than that, that's all I can tell you about Chinatown. You know, it's—people gambled there. People ate there. People worshipped there. And it was the only place they could go. And the only time you got involved was during the Big Week because each—we had, like I told you yesterday, we had floats that traveled, you know. Big Week was a big thing then. You know, they put stands up and everything. And of course there was—as I guess, I don't know if you heard but they had a dance band at the Crystal Theater, the Fox and the Vogue Theater—no, and the El Rey Theater. And they closed all the streets and three bands playing and everybody was drunk, dancing. And they still try to do it today, but it's not—they tried it—we had [unclear], you know, where you're not wearing any cowboy outfit [unclear]. You had to pay to get out, you know, it's just a big promotional deal. But it was fun. We had a kid—the Kiddie Parade at the time was really strong. I mean, they had even floats and everything else during that period. So we started out—usually we started out in—where the railroad tracks is right across from Chinatown, you know. [unclear] right now, and then—that's when we wind up because the carnival was always there. We started out at one end all the way down South Main, and so they started at Monterey Street going south and then came around by John Street, and then came by Main Street, and then that was the—that was a travel for the floats, for the things though. And they had judges, and it was quite interesting. Nowadays, I guess they have the Kiddie Parade, but no more—no more dances out in the street and all that kind of stuff. But I'm talking all about Salinas.

I'm not talking only about Chinatown, but of course I know Chinatown, and in fact, even after I came back, China was still the place to go to eat, you know. So, and that's about it with me as far as that, and I went from here—I opened the bowling alley here in 1930—1940—1957. I just came out of the service and my wife tells me, says, "Is this what we're going to be doing the rest—" No, first I was working in the fields, and we used to travel from here to Las Cruces, New Mexico, Uvalde, Texas, Alamosa, Colorado, where the regular lettuce route, and we used to pick lettuce. And then when she came back, "Is this what you'll be doing the rest of your life?" I said, "No." So I walked into the bowling alley that needed some work. I said, "Yeah." They hired me there and—but we joined the service. I met my wife in Hawaii, and then we met, and we got married here in Salinas. But anyway, moved to San Francisco, worked for the Westlake Bowl. I opened that house up, and then I finally got a job with TWA. When I got a job with TWA my kids were both—well, they were still kids, and I—till 1970, well, I worked at '69, '67 all the way up to '74. By '73, my wife passed away, and my kids were already going to high school. So [unclear] TWA, they had an opportunity to go to Saudi Arabia, because TWA had the maintenance contract for Saudi Arabian Airlines. So I told the kids—they were in high school—I said, "Well, do you think you can manage?" And they—they did. I sent all the money home. I was going to go there for two years, get me—buy a car and come back, pay the bills and come back. That's about it, you know. I wound up spending 19 years there. I was there during the Gulf War. The Saudis loved me. They always extended me. When I was 50, they said that was it for an expat to live there, to work there. But they kept on extending, extending and—because I got along with them well. I've got a lot of good Saudi friends. And so anyway, I came back to visit for Christmas with my family and everything, and my son and daughter, "Dad, when are you going to come back? Your grandkids don't even know you. You only see them—" I says, "Well I gave them money and they're happy." [laughs] It's routine. And so finally went back and I told them, they said, "Oh, no—" This is after the Gulf War. And the Gulf War was another experience we had. You know, we had our compound there where it was all expats, all Americans and British compound with 100 units. They evacuated all the families out and—because of Kuwait thing—and they evacuate all the families out, so there's only about four of us that stayed that didn't have any families there, because we were running the airlines still. And then the communications—the army came in. They took over. So we were just happy as hell because they hooked up all our—CNN, we got all that video, we got everything, you know. It was—of course, we made our own booze. That's another story altogether. But there's so many stories, like the Saudis are great people, and don't get this thing about—well, the wife walked behind and then—the wife is the one that handles everything. They're the boss at home. I mean, absolute. And they say, "Well—" And of course [unclear] old adage, friend says, "Well, you got one wife. When are you gonna get another two? You know, you guys are entitled." He says, "Are you kidding? My wife will kill me." [laughs] It was a funny thing, but you know, everybody get the wrong impression. But it's the same thing up there. Only the very, very rich, or the very, very poor in ways that are [unclear] that are out in the desert. They can do all that stuff, you know. So, but when you're in the cities and towns, it's a whole different story. Like, I'll tell you, Mike—Mark. Yesterday, I never—I've been here 20 years, and it took me about four or five years before I met any of their wives. And it wasn't in the kingdom. When we'd take vacations or we'd go to London or Frankfurt or Spain, you see them all get in a plane. They're all dressed in that abaya and everything, all covered up. The first time I went up there, I says, "Oh, okay, this is Nimfa." And she was sitting. And then she says—anyway, they didn't want to talk. About maybe about an hour before landing, they all take turns to go to the bathroom as they came out. They're all dressed in jeans and everything. I mean, unbelievable, you know. The first time I saw it, I said, "Holy crap." I said, you know,

I said, "Well, now you can meet my wife." You know, [unclear] the wives and everything. And then we go to London for two weeks or whatever it is. On the way back, they're all dressed up with their jeans and everything. And then all of a sudden they, one by one, they go, they come back, they're all covered up. Land, we're back in Saudi Arabia. It's amazing how you get to—and then when I go to their homes for dinner, like for dinner, only the men eat by themselves, and the women eat by themselves. And we'll sit in the living room. There's no women—none of the wives—if you had a wife, they go with them. You know, the only thing that we communicate with each other is the kids. Until you're 12 or 13, they're free to move anyplace they want. After that, they become a woman supposedly, and this guy becomes a man. But anyway, the kids would come out—oh, they said, "Dinner's ready." So we go—only the men. And, of course, most of the time we eat on the floor. And that was the routine there. There was no dining room table. And so we ate on the floor. And then after that, even after we ate and everything, all the men stayed together, and they were ready to go home. Then the wives come out, and they go home. That's routine. We never sat to dinner with any of their wives except when we were in London or Frankfurt or Spain, where—they could sit there. So, and you could joke with them. It's funny. And this is—when I first got there, it was really strict. Everything was really strict and—but after the years gone by, it was, you know, everybody got to be a little bit more free and everything, and so—then it became stricter. You know, it was [unclear], and all of a sudden they—all of a sudden people were bringing drugs in and people were being jailed, people being beheaded. I saw—I had three beheadings I went to and one stoning. It just happened is that you're in a wrong place at the wrong time. What happens if you're in town on a Friday afternoon prayer—they call for noon prayer and they have the big microphones going up there. You better get the hell out of there because there's a beheading, because the religious police will gather you all, whoever is there in town—you have to go, except for the women. The men have to go all the way up to the town square for the beheading to watch it, just to show to people if you do something wrong, this is what happens to you. So, anyway, you don't want to get caught there, but I got caught there twice, and I got caught in Adamawa. I got caught there. We were there because we were fixing up their Saudi Arabian Airlines ticket office, and we were remodeling it for them, and all of a sudden they call noon prayer. I says, "Oh, crap. Here we go." So it was a—the first time was a beheading. The second time I got caught there was stoning of a Egyptian school teacher that was accused of being a prostitute. So they [unclear]—most of the beheadings and most of the, you know, if you steal, they get caught stealing, they cut your left hand off and all that. But it's all—they're injected with painkillers. It used to be—they used to—first time I saw one they just chopped it right off and they had this hot oil there, put the hand in the hot oil and that was it.

**Mark Weddle** 22:40

Wow.

**Clem Morales** 22:40

You're on your own. But anyway, now they inject it and everything when they cut. And they surgically cut it now. They just don't chop it off. But the stoning was the one that was—well, you couldn't see anything. We left before they even—they covered her up. She's drugged already, and then the women walk around her, and they start stoning the clump of carpet there until there's no movement. And you can't leave until finally they'll say, "Yallah." That's it, so we can leave. During the beheading or anything like that, you can't leave. You have to stay right there till the final, till he's presumed dead or he's—or she's dead. So, and those are the most horrible, but other than that, we had good times over there. All

the hierarchy of any company like that. They had booze. They had everything, anything you want. They had everything down there. But you don't—like I tell Mark yesterday, we had the consulate there. It was—our weekend is Friday and Saturday. Okay, weekend on Friday and Saturday. And on Wednesday night, the Philippines—I mean, the American consulate had a party, everything. And of course Americans are involved, and you would see a couple of the high muckety mucks in town, like the chief of police or the religious police—even the religious police. They all gathered there. You can see them dancing with [unclear], you know, and all this kind of stuff, and they're drinking beer and everything else. But you don't want to—you don't want to get caught outside of there, you know. But they—and everything—because everything was available, you know. And so we got to know a lot of the [unclear]. Like, I got involved a lot with Aramco mostly, because the people at the Arabian American oil company, they could have their own stills to make their own booze only for themselves. And each one of their stills has got a [unclear] number on it, you know, so that you're entitled. That's only in the [unclear] compound. And of course, they managed to—they managed to smuggle stuff out and, you know. But it's the only thing at the time that you had to drink, and you couldn't drink it straight, you know. And I couldn't even drink it with Coke or anything. You had to drink it with your grapefruit juice or, you know, with a lot of ice and everything. But you get the same thing. They make it at home. It's about 190 proof and they cut it with half water, and then you've got yourself [unclear]. I mean it's tough stuff. They have brown and they have white. They put oak chips when they're brewing it. They get the effect that it's brown, and then of course you get the regular stuff they call white. "What do you want, white or brown?" But I, let's see, a gallon—no, a liter. A whole liter of uncut. They call it uncut. It costs you \$150, okay. That's uncut, a liter. And then if you want to cut—well, anyway, it's mostly uncut you buy, you mix yourself. But you can get the real stuff. Any label on any kind of booze, as long as it's got alcohol in it, it's a hundred dollars a bottle no matter what it is. Hundred dollars a bottle. And it's—it's there. In fact, they had some big distillers. Even Saudis were distilling their own and selling it [unclear]. So the prince—the prince is there, you know. Used to raid—they'd [unclear]. When they're—see the princes had to—they were the ones that bring the real liquor in, like your Johnnie Walker or your Chivas. They're the one to bring it in. They sell for a hundred dollars a bottle. But—so when their sales go down, they start hitting the other guys that are making the stuff, you know, so that they—and anyway, that was routine—a hundred dollars a bottle. When I left—we got there with a hundred dollars a bottle. When I left after [unclear], it was still a hundred dollars a bottle. And of course, still today, you can't drink there anyway, but there's more booze around, you know. Of course, the drug thing got really bad because the Afghans used to come in to perform Hajj every year. The Afghans come in there and bring their hashish, okay. And the only way they could make it to the Hajj was hashish. So they'd make—as they come back they sell their hashish and everything. They were selling rugs too, but they're selling hashish so they can make it to the Hajj. This is—I said I couldn't believe it. I said, you mean it's outlawed, it's a drug and everything, but they use this so they can go to perform their duty with—So anyway, everybody knows this, you know. And then pretty soon, they couldn't—they didn't do anything hardly to do the Afghans because—but when the Pakistanis and Indians used to bring hashish in, that's when it really got—and before there was no dogs or anything at that time. And usually a guy buys hashish and it's—you know, everybody wears flip flops. And the flip flops are shaped like this, and he's got a label on it. And that's pure hashish and they walk into it—before they had dogs, they couldn't tell a difference. This is how they brought their hashish in. [laughs] Unbelievable. And of course the Thais—even though they got the Thai stick—the Thais used to bring Thai stick with them. They caught an Indian, a Pakistani, a Saudi—I mean, a Thai or [unclear]. It's either life imprisonment, or if it's

a big drug thing, you're dead. You know, if you caught with a little bit of pot or something like that, they put you in jail and they deport you. Mostly in America, they do that. But for the Pakis and all that—their life is not as worth as anybody else's, so they just put them away. [laughs] And Filipinos, Thais—but if you're an American citizen, then you have to go to the consulate and all kinds of things going on. As long as you didn't get caught selling, using. It's a long story. You know, I get so many stories about that, but it doesn't have to do with Chinatown. [laughs]

**Mark Weddle 29:29**

Earlier you mentioned that you were in the service. Do you have any stories you'd like to share—

**Clem Morales 29:33**

What's that?

**Mark Weddle 29:33**

—about those times? Do you have any stories you'd like to share about when you were in the service?

**Clem Morales 29:37**

Where, in here?

**Mark Weddle 29:39**

Yeah.

**Clem Morales 29:40**

Well, like, we had our little group. Of course, everybody's practically all gone now, but we went to high school, okay. Anyway, but being Filipinos, my dad had a labor camp on Highway 68. So Richard Baguio, [unclear], [unclear], these are all local kids here, and [unclear]. So they come up there and we were seniors. Actually, we started—we were seniors. Half our class was downtown, and we had went to Hartnell [unclear] for the afternoon class. So what—I had machine shop and automotive. Richard had electronics—radio and [unclear]. So, we never went there. Richard would say, "Oh, nice day," you know. So anyway, I said, "Okay." So what we do is we go to Monterey. I stopped by the camp, get a pot of rice and soy sauce. We get our—then we go get abalone, and we have a party down there by the beach eating abalone, and eating there and everything, have beer. And then during the clam season we had down here in Moss Landing, you know, of course in the coast there, the Pismo clams that big. You know, I mean, it's unbelievable. We'd go up there, we'd get clams and we'd build a big fire and put all the clams on the fire, they open up. We'd have big feasts right there. And most of us were seniors in high school. We never even before, because we knew everybody. Most of us were athletes. We were all high school. We—in fact, Bill Kearney just passed away last year. He was our coach. And when he first came in, he was working as a track coach, then he took over the basketball, the lightweight basketball team. First time there, we won the lightweight CCAL championship all four years that we were there with him, and it kept on going. Because we had Chris Chin, was Chinese, and [unclear], and in fact, let's see, he's still alive too, and he's here. Reggie [unclear]. Anyway, we had a team that won all four years that we're here, and it was quite amazing, because everybody would watch our game, but nobody used to stay for the varsity. Everybody be going home, because they didn't have a very good team. Reggie Kenyon—that's what his name was, and he's still alive. He still looks the same way he

was in high school, and he's 80 years old too. But he used to work out a lot, you know. But most of them, like, [unclear] gone. Chris Chin has gone. And so most of them—you know, I was just fortunate enough that I quit smoking when I was—in 1960, for no reason. Okay. I mean, no, there was a reason. We were sitting around with [unclear] and his wife, and we were talking—What are you going to give up for Lent this year? The routine, you know, of course, routine was New York cut steaks, dirty movies, and then all of a sudden he says, "Okay, I'll bet you quit smoking." And then if you quit, if you start smoking, you're going to have to buy dinner, plus a hundred dollars. You know, of course, well that's—one hundred dollars for us was all we made. Anyway, I quit. And, of course, he just lasted, what, a week. Anyway, and I kept on. So all of a sudden, I was—I could see myself gaining weight, you know? So I go to Dr. Lorber at the time, and he said—this is a doctor telling me this—he says, "Clem, you know, you're gaining weight. Of course, your heart has been—at the time, your heart beats the same, and all of a sudden you're gaining weight so fast that you're gonna put stress on your heart." And he says, "So, you know, you better take care of it. Either go on a diet or go back smoking." Exactly what he said. [laughs] I decided not to, you know, because for weeks I chewed gum, ate candy. I can tell myself I was gaining weight. Everything tastes so good after you quit smoking, and [unclear]. I smoked—we were smoking—when I was in the Philippines, we were smoking when I was 12, 13 years old. And there's another story, we used to—you know, the libraries are all closed, the war was going on. And we used to find old books, and we used to burn them and find out which one had a white ash to it. And that's what we used to roll our cigarettes in, because [unclear] have no black [unclear]. So it was a white—I mean if the paper was white, oh, that's it, you know. So we used to roll our cigarettes [unclear]. [laughs] It was—mostly it was because we—Northern Luzon was strictly all rice fields. We had mostly rice up there. And so, but there was tobacco fields, so you go and take tobacco, you dry them up because—my grandmother and most of the old ladies, they just smoked this tobacco that big around. And they used to—that's how they smoked. You know, they smoked tobacco. I mean, they really smoked this stuff. So, but my experience is that I walked—when I left—when I got out of—when we moved up to the province, for five years, I was barefoot with a T-shirt. That's all I had at that time. And the weather wasn't always good, but I don't know, [unclear] walk barefoot all the time until the war was finished, you know. But I didn't need shoes, you know, at 10, 11, 13 years old. I didn't need shoes. And so—and also I was—had to go to Japanese school. The Japanese came into our small little town. They set up a garrison there. They put a fence all around us. Put a fence all around the town. And we have guards north, south, west, east, and you had to bow every time you go through that—and so, if you didn't, they'd slap you behind the head, you know. So anyway, then they got all the kids that was in town to go to school. So I went—it was only about a year. And then we went to Japanese school, and we had to get up there and sing. I couldn't remember the [unclear] [sings in Japanese]. And then you sing the whole song, and then you start school. They were teaching—but that lasted about maybe two or three months, and then the war ended. The war ended, then everything happened after that. But those are my experiences. Nothing to do with Chinatown. [laughs]

**Mark Weddle 36:42**

You mentioned your mother was involved with—

**Clem Morales 36:45**

Oh, yeah. Well, okay, my mother—in fact, you see that little plaque right there behind you. That was given for the historical society for my mother, because she was already passed. And she took care—

the [unclear] gave that to her. She started—we first—when she came back—we both came back, and then she got involved with the Filipino community. And we got involved with—then she started folk dancing. She started teaching folk dancing to the kids, all the Filipino families. So I had pictures—I showed pictures of all the people, and then she had—we performed for parties, not parties, but big events. We went to San Francisco, St. Francis Hotel. We danced there, then we went to Sacramento to the state fair and danced there, and went to Los Angeles at one of the fraternities, big convention and danced there. Then we started different ages of dance. In fact, even the ladies were dancing at the time too. Then she got a big idea that we're going to start a drum and bugle corps for the Big Week, you know, for the parade. So we had got all the Filipinos and Filipino girls and boys, you know, at the time. And so we had a drum and bugle corps. Of course, nobody played drum, nobody [unclear] we had. My mother got a hold of a teacher out of Monterey at the same [unclear]. His name was Herb Miller. He just passed away last year. I wish I would have known that. He's the brother of Glenn Miller, and he taught here in Monterey. He taught the group, the all Filipino group, how to blow the bugle and how to play drums. Okay. And we went all over to do this thing, another Filipino group, and she started up. Then she decided, well, the Dimas-Alang, which is her fraternity. He finally wanted to push the youth. So anyway, she started—she wanted to start a dance band. So Herb Miller was already tied into us, and he says—so he taught our—guys don't even—we had a few people that had experience with saxophone and stuff like that. So, but she managed to get all the equipment, except for the guy that had equipment before. But [unclear] wanted a kid that didn't have it. In fact, I showed him pictures of the dance band, and we had a bass player, piano player. We had three trumpets, two trombones, who that was involved with, and then saxophone players and a singer. And we went from here to all the fraternities and played for them, because they were the one that supplied us with all that. So that lasted for a couple of years, and it was another experience. And Herb Miller was instrumental in teaching all of us this, which is great, you know. Some people didn't even have any kind of experience, but they—once they got a hold of an instrument, and they wanted to learn it more, so they learned. And Gerry Sutton was one of those kids, and because she praised my mother. In fact, most of the guys praised my mother. Most of them did because she did a lot for them, you know. So, anyway, that went on and then pretty soon everything broke up. Nobody went back into it. It was gone. My mother passed away in '64. And nothing became—the fraternities went along but there was no more dancing, no more drum and bugle corps, there was nothing more after that. So that's how she got—she was—everybody—in fact, we got letters when she passed away from Sam Farr, Sam Farr's father, and from the congressmen and everything, because she was involved with all these things. In fact, I have a letter from Farr and I got a letter from—when she passed away. And which we keep it—a precious thing for me, anyway. And that's about it.

**Mark Weddle** 41:11

How was your father involved with the field—

**Clem Morales** 41:13

My father was a labor contractor.

**Mark Weddle** 41:15

Okay.

**Clem Morales 41:15**

He was a labor contractor. He worked. We had Filipinos first, and then we wind up with Mexicans. And so he worked, and then he finally retired. He lived to the ripe old age of 87. He retired when he was 75, I guess. He kept on going. And he enjoyed his life. And I hope I can last as long as—I'm 80 now, so I just hope I can last another seven more years. My kids say, "Dad, we're going to have your 80th birthday party." I says, "No, I'm not ready yet." I says, "Wait till 85. What you do is this: every year on my birthday, save all your money. And when I'm 85, forget the party, just give me the money. [laughs] They wanted to give me a party. And so all these experiences I had and everything. So my son-in-law had a—is in Eastern Minnesota, graduated Michigan State, married my daughter, who went to college a couple of years, and they met. And so what happened, they started a business in Hawaii, in 2005, I guess it was. They moved to Hilo, and they bought a house there that belonged to my sister-in-law, which I'm going to see in December anyway. They started a business of transporting cars. In other words, people go to Hawaii and they go to Kona first, and they drive these rental cars all the way to Hilo. When they get to Hilo, they go to Honolulu, wherever from there. So he had the contract moving all the rental cars back to Kona. So he had—he bought two big car carriers. Then he got it—he took over the same thing in Oahu. But with all the cars coming from Japan, Toyota, Nissan, Honda, he had the—he moved the cars from the port to the dealers. And so that's how he got going. So finally, he's still got all the business. My daughter still does all the work at home. They live in San Rafael. She pays the checks. She pays everything from here. So last week, after watching a ballgame—not last week, two weekends ago. They said, "What are you gonna do, Dad?" I said, "Well, I don't got nothing. I closed the shop, and I'm just relaxing and everything. And my son-in-law says, "Do you want to work?" I says, "Oh, yeah, what do you got?" He says, "I want you go to Hawaii. I want you to go to Honolulu. I want you to go there. I want you to work down there." And I says, "Yeah, I'll tell him that I'm gonna—" "We're having a little bit of a problem with everything." And he says, "I'm gonna send you over there and I'm gonna tell the guys over there that I'm sending my father-in-law over there to help you guys." You know, and that was right away. You know, I'm a bad guy as soon as I walk in. So I'm gonna go there in December and start another adventure. [laughs] Yeah, so that's about it. Of course, everybody—our friends says, "What do you mean?" Well, I took a chance when I went to Saudi Arabia. I took a chance to go into the service, because at that time, we didn't want to be drafted. So most of us volunteered for the Air Force. I got stationed in Hawaii, met my wife, and the whole story. Went to Saudi Arabia, got to go all over the world—Japan, Russia, China. And working for the airlines you get to travel free. In fact, I worked TWA until American Airlines took over, so when I retired—when I left TWA, they gave me a lifetime term pass. They brought all the retirees over, so I can travel in American Airlines free, space available—so, no matter where they go. And if you want to upgrade—domestic it's \$25 to go first class, \$50 for international. But the thing is you always have a first-class upgrade, because when you go up to the gate, it says—first thing you go up there, it says they know you're an employee. Says, "You got anything up front?" And he says, "Oh, hang on. Hang on." So anyway, they call my name up, and they gave me my first-class boarding pass. [unclear] first class. [laughs] So, it was, you know, it was—everybody tells my daughters—I got this—I was telling my—I got this new program, which is—I haven't started, but it's called Dragon Speaking Naturally. And it took me about—to finally get my voice, it took me about three hours. I was talking, reading a book talking to it. Then I finally—they got my voice, then it goes right into the computer. But then my computer's [unclear], so now I can't do it right now. But he wants me to give the same story I'm giving you right now, but they want to know about my father. And this is another thing is—[unclear] When my son got his first son, and my dad was still alive—he was

already 80-something years old. And I never knew this. Anyway, we go up there and we brought him down, and he says, "This is your new grandson. His name is Nicolas." And he very calmly—and I was standing right there—and that was my father's name. And I never knew that. And it was Nicolas. And then when he said that, when I went back to Saudi Arabia, I'm going to go to—I'm going to go to Barcelona, Spain, because both my father's father and my mother's father came from Spain. My mother's was Matteo, and my father was Morales. So I went to the registrar office there, I said, "Look," I says, "I want to know if I got any relatives there." And he says, "Last name, is it Morales? Oh, you got plenty of relatives over here." [laughs] And they checked up. And they found out in 19—I forgot, it was 19-something. They found out that they went to the Philippines, where they went to, but they found the name is Victoria Matteo and Nicholas Morales. And they were both from Spain. And that's how come we got Matteo and we got Morales. And he said, "Oh, you have relatives. Just wait a minute. Next time I come up, I'll make sure I'll check." [laughs] Of course, Morales, like, here there's thousands and thousands of Morales. In fact, I get so many calls now, and in Spanish. And another thing that was funny, I applied for Natividad last year, or two years ago, because I was working at [unclear] golf club for about eight years. When I hurt my knee, I had a knee replacement, so I couldn't—they replaced—they didn't renew my job. But they started getting—they say they took off the title and everything. So anyway, I applied at Natividad. And it says—the thing says this, and it says bilingual. So I says, yeah, I'm bilingual. Okay, so with a name Morales I can walk right in, right? And he said, "Oh, you speak Spanish fluently?" I said, "I don't speak Spanish at all." "But you're bilingual." "Yeah, I can speak two different dialects of Filipino, some Arabic." And what more do you want, you know? I said, "Why don't you put it—you know, Spanish, I mean—preferably Spanish. You know, and then you can tell the guy that's not Spanish to—you know, that we can't use you." And he says, "Well, we'll look into it." In fact, the gal says, "Yeah, well, maybe we'll have to rewrite the darn thing." Instead of saying bilingual, saying Spanish speaking, or Spanish preferred, you know? So, anyway, I got kind of pissed. I says, "Okay, so in other words, if I learned all the language in the world, I can't get the job, right?" Well, not really. [laughs] So [unclear] all these experiences all the time. In fact, nobody believes I'm 80 years old. "No, no, you're not 80 years old." I say, "Yes, I am. Do you want my birth—" And I've shown my driver's license. [laughs] So anyway, and that's about it. As far as here is concerned. I—in fact now the—other than—most of the Filipinos now, all the kids now, they're not—hardly any are pure Filipino. They've intermarried with all different nationalities now—Mexican, whites, and everything is all mixed. So the kids are not involved with—my daughter still gets involved with Filipino culture, you know. She gets [unclear] by her mom, I guess. But everybody else, they've lost—so we have a Filipino American Historical Society, and we were trying to drum up members, you know. And I say, "Oh, we gotta get—we gotta pull this—we gotta get—" All you had to do is get your kids in here. You've got five kids, you've got six kids. And all we had to do was bring them in, you know. They don't even know where we come from, you know. They're married—you know, like this—so, in fact, we can't get any of the kids to come in, except my daughter, but she lives in San Rafael. [laughs] And it's amazing, you know. That's a sore subject now, because they keep on saying, "Well, what's Rod doing, you know? What about Jessie? How about—what you call? Don't they have—" Yeah, well they got their families and—" "Are they Filipinos?" You know, [laughs] anyway. Then I finally shut up because nothing happens. [laughs] Because if we got all the Filipinos and their kids, even just half of them, we'd have a big group. There's still a lot of Filipinos here. In fact, now there's a thing about the Filipinos here that came in and took over the community. They all came after the war. And of course, they all came after the war, so they don't really know anything here except they took over the community. They [unclear] Filipino. And it's

funny because Orly, the guy that's the Filipino community president, he says—I showed my [unclear]. He says, "Yeah." Heard about [unclear] because we were involved. And he asked me, he says, "Well, how big is your organization?" I says, "Nationwide." New York, New Orleans, Chicago. We have [unclear]—we have all these—and a lot of the kids that was your—at my age, like, from Stockton, Sacramento, Modesto, and all that. They're the one that pushing up—you know, because we're still here. In fact, I don't know if I got that. I just want to show you a picture. I was telling—Okay. I want to show you this so—I think I got it right in here. This calendar here—that's me right there. [unclear] And this is [unclear], Felix [unclear]. And Junior and Lily [unclear]. And I forgot her name. She's from Sacramento or Stockton. Anyway, I was all dressed up this way. And it had—it had a caption in here, which shows that—it shows here that—because I was wearing the suit—because most of the affluent Filipinos at the time used to go to San Francisco to have their suits made at Macintosh in San Francisco. In fact, they're still making suits. And they said [unclear] here. And they said, [unclear] made Clemente Morales Junior kid size Macintosh suit to match the fathers and uncles. Here is a picture of the—and that's about it. [laughs] So anyway, we—they're produced—we were going to try to make our own, but since they've got theirs going, they [unclear] every year, they have a different one.

**Mark Weddle 53:58**

Well, we're getting towards the end of our time here. Is there anything you would like to finish off with?

**Clem Morales 54:02**

What's that?

**Mark Weddle 54:03**

We're getting towards the end of our time here.

**Clem Morales 54:05**

Yeah?

**Mark Weddle 54:05**

And so I was wondering if there's anything you would like to leave off with? Maybe your hopes for the Filipino community, just something you would like to—

**Clem Morales 54:12**

Well, I just hope—see, right now it's—with a new Filipino—it [unclear] to say something that I wouldn't want to say, but what has happened is when the other Filipinos came in—used to be the Filipino community was a community of all the different ethnic—I mean, not ethnic—fraternities that we had at the time. We had the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang. We had the [unclear]. We had the Filipino Women's Club, and all around and worked with the community. Now, the community just works by themselves. And it got to be like cronyism, you know? [laughs] I'd say that. But there's a kid here named—he works for Farmers—Mars Rocamora,. And he wants—because of the building we have here, we want to promote it so we can make money. You know, it's a building right there where—we can rent it to the Mexicans, we can rent it to the Chinese—a big, big hall. You know, nobody has got a hall that big. There [unclear] Calle Cebu. But the people that are running it now are just making it their own business. In fact, now the board of health is out for them because they haven't cleaned up some stuff. Anyway,

like, I don't want to get in trouble saying these things because they'll listen to it. And I says, "Well, I just tell it how it is, so." But Mars wants to revive it so that everybody is involved. You know, because if you're gonna, if you're going—Filipino Community Hall is right in the middle of Chinatown, okay. And if you wanted to promote, that'd be the best place to promote, you know. You're cleaning it up, we'd probably get more people to come down to that area. So, because a lot of people don't want to go down there, let's face it. [laughs] And when they clean it, when you finally get it all cleaned up, and we could probably get business there, and we could promote. We could have dances again, you know, and all that. There was not—during the time when I was going up, or when I was here, every weekend there was a Filipino dance almost. [unclear] Filipino either to the armory, either at the rec center, or at the women's club, which is still there. There's always something going on, you know. So, anyway, none now. Everybody went their own ways. We got a few of these groups that collect money for, you know, for—you pay so much for initiation fee, and then you pay so much when somebody dies. It goes into a pot. And when everybody dies, you get some money coming out of it. You know, that's what they're pushing the most, because they got the—the [unclear] has one, the Visayans have one, and all that kind of stuff. But you could go to any one of them. There's still Filipino. But that's what—mostly is what they're—that we can get together. Other than that, nothing to get [unclear]. In fact, like, the [unclear] is the first time they had somebody in there that is interested to bring it up, you know. Like I said, we want to get more members. You have the kids involved and everything, but it's gonna be tough, because like I said, the kids are—they're not too many of them. In fact, I don't think we got one of the family members in our club. [laughs] And it's not a club, actually. It's a society. And a lot of them are the same problem too. But it really doesn't matter. You know, if it's—if you only got a quarter of Filipino, as long as you have that drive. It's gonna be tough to do. But as far as the Filipino community is concerned, we're right in the main—[unclear] when you clean up the place up there, you know, it'll be great if we can start using that as a—well, they're using it now for the Asian week. Thank God they had that, because it was at a hall, and you could be able to play music, and you could—they used to do it outside, you know, in the dirt and everything. But now—that's the way to promote it, to use it, you know, stuff like that. So, anyway, maybe I talked too much already. [laughs]

**Mark Weddle 58:26**

Oh, no. Everything was great. All right. Well, thank you for your time. And just to make sure we do have your permission to record this interview—

**Clem Morales 58:35**

What was that?

**Mark Weddle 58:36**

We do have your permission to record this interview?

**Clem Morales 58:38**

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

**Mark Weddle 58:39**

Okay, just wanted to make sure. And thank you so much for your time.

**Clem Morales** 58:42

Oh, yeah. You're welcome. You're very welcome. I mean, you know, I've been thinking about this. When the first time they did it, I tried to almost do the same stuff that I talked today, but not not talking too much about what we should be doing as far as our, our society goes, you know, and I think, I think if we get that pushed up, then we can get involved with the community. And Chinatown would be a nice place to go to, you know. And we could—because it's ideal. It's an ideal place for—especially, even the Mexicans or the Filipinos or Chinese, they want to—because it's a big enough hall that they could have—they got an upstairs. They were thinking about—Mars was thinking of making upstairs into a museum. We have an upstairs there, and it's showing [unclear]. Because when we have art, we have all the groups with the Filipino American Historical Society. We have Jesse, who is the president, Tabasa, he's got all these folders and stuff with pictures and history of Salinas and Watsonville. So we could have some kind of a—somebody come by, they want to visit the Philippines, they can go upstairs and see what's going on, you know? It'd be kind of interesting. Of course, if you want to get involved in it, like Mars Rocamora and I want to get involved with it. He says, "You got to come to the meeting. We're gonna have to go there and talk to these people, because they're running it like their own business." You know, nobody knows where the money is going, you know. Same route—Filipino routine. [laughs]

**Mark Weddle** 1:00:26

Well, thank you for your time.

**Clem Morales** 1:00:28

Oh, thank you. Thank you for having me.