

# UC Santa Cruz

## Oral History Collaborations

### Title

Juanita Sulay Wilson interviewed by Dr. Kathleen "Kat" Cruz Gutierrez

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## Juanita Sulay Wilson interviewed by Kathleen “Kat” Cruz Gutierrez

**Speakers:** Juanita Sulay Wilson, Kathleen “Kat” Cruz Gutierrez, Hermes Gutierrez, Allen Wilson

**Date:** May 4, 2021

**Scope and Contents:** In this interview, originally recorded in person, Juanita Sulay Wilson and Allen Wilson speak with Dr. Kathleen "Kat" Cruz Gutierrez, a member of the Watsonville is in the Heart project team, and her father, Hermes Gutierrez. Wilson gives an overview of her family's history settling in the Pajaro Valley and her father's experience working in the fields along the California coast as migrant workers. She details her parents' experience navigating race relations in the Pajaro Valley as a mixed-race couple. Wilson also discusses what it was like growing up in the Pajaro Valley as a mixed-race woman and the desire of her extended family to shelter her and her siblings from the racism they experienced as Filipino agricultural laborers. She also discusses the development of Watsonville alongside the changing Filipino demographics after the 1950s. Joined by her husband, Alan Wilson, they discussed how they met and moved up to San Francisco. Lastly, Wilson discusses her extracurricular activities including hula and archiving her family's personal materials.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 00:00**

I believe he was raised by a sibling. He's never said what happened to his mother. So I, I—since he was raised by a sibling, she [Mamerto's mother] may have passed when he was young. I believe he has one brother and one sister that are older. I think his grandmother was still alive. Because he told me of a story about how he had to feed her and take care of her nails. You know, little things like that. So, I take it as it was his grandmother. And he went to school up to seventh grade. I have a certificate which he carried around with him—which was a great find, actually. Where am I going? [laughs].

**Kathleen Gutierrez 00:14**

Oh yeah, just your dad's family history.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 00:16**

That's all I know about my dad's family history, except little bits and pieces. As you see I research and I've taken letters that I don't understand. Most of them are written in Ilokano which I tried to get translated through friends here and there. So I only take one out at a time. It takes a long time.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 00:22**

Sure.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 00:22**

So I've only had two of them translated. People don't feel comfortable translating them because of the time. Because, as you know, young men left the Philippines to make their fortune and help family in the Philippines. So people don't feel comfortable interpreting or writing them up in English for me because I try to pull out information out of them. There may be bits and pieces of hints where I can go and research. So—I lost my train of thought.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 00:32**

Whatever kind of community bits you find, like letters.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 00:35**

Yeah, from letters.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 00:44**

If you ever need help, my dad—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 00:49**

Yeah, I would love to!

**Kathleen Gutierrez 00:54**

—could read and translate in Ilokano. And he can still read it pretty well, I mean, it's his first native language.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 01:19**

Yeah. Oh, I would love it.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 02:21**

Oh, I would love it, yeah!

**Kathleen Gutierrez 02:27**

If you have some, yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 02:29**

Yeah, I do. I have a few of them.

**Hermes Gutierrez 02:31**

For the manongs.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 02:32**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 02:33**

Yeah. Yeah, that would be great.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 02:39**

Yeah, sure.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 02:47**

We always need something to do, right Dad? [laughs].

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 03:04**

I know sometimes they ask—a lot of times—it was asking for money and stuff like that. But hey, that was the times and—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 03:14**

So, before my father left the Philippines, we found out he was married. My mother found out he was married after she had three of us. And she was a young girl, so what does she do? But she's always told us the truth when we were old enough. Like I think I found out when I was ten that my dad had another family in the Philippines. So she's always told us the truth.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 03:49**

How did that feel at the time, discovering that your dad had another family?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 03:54**

It didn't bother us because I guess it was my mother's attitude.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 03:57**

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 03:59**

You know, what could we do? So she's never made it a big deal and my father never wanted to talk about it. Except he would say something like, "Well, I didn't know. I didn't know when I left." Because he actually left the Philippines in 1928, shipped months after he was married. And he left with his father-in-law—I saw the passenger's list. So he left with his father-in-law, his nephew-in-law—the two of them, I believe—and they went to Hawai'i to work on the sugar

plantation, which the Bormio's signed up to do. My father came on a passport and he didn't sign up to work on the sugar plantation so he had more freedom than they did, where they were obligated and they had to work there. My dad went with him to work and he didn't like it so he left and found something else to do. So he worked as a carpenter or something at a cement factory in O'ahu.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 05:27

In O'ahu.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 05:28

Yeah, they all went to O'ahu.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 05:30

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 05:30

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 05:31

Oh, I want to go into that more. I also wanted to talk a little bit about your mom's family before maybe diving into your dad's trajectory.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 05:38

Okay.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 05:39

So your mom grew up in Oregon, Shedd.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 05:41

Shedd Oregon.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 05:43

And then where did her parents come from?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 05:45

Okay. I'm a granddaughter of another immigrant; my grandfather came from England. So that's my mother's father. And my grandmother grew up in Maine—on an island like twelve miles off the shore of Maine. And she is descended from the original settler of that island. In Maine—it's called North Haven, Maine—and my grandmother actually was the first to leave that island in

generations and her parents moved to the mainland to warn me because my great-grandfather had asthma bad. They thought moving off the island and off the coast, just a little, would help his asthma. So that's why they left the island.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 06:58**

Do you know when they must have arrived? Like approximately?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 07:01**

Who? My grandmother?

**Kathleen Gutierrez 07:03**

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 07:04**

Oh, yeah. We have a joke now because the last time we went to Maine for a family reunion, we were in a gallery and this lady looked at us and looked at us. Because we all look different: from blonde and blue eyes to olive skin and dark hair and brown eyes, and she just kept staring at us. Pretty soon she goes, "Where are you guys from? And why are you here?" We told her why and one of my brothers came up and said, "Yeah, the coconut boat hit the Mayflower."

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 07:52**

So that's our family joke: the coconut boat hit the Mayflower. And we do! We have, so far, four lines from the Mayflower on my mother's side and I'm not through researching yet.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 07:52**

[laughs].

**Kathleen Gutierrez 08:07**

That's a pretty long history time, yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 08:09**

I wish I knew that growing up when people told me "What are you? Go back where you came from!" Then I could look at them and say, "I don't know what you're talking about, where did you come from?!"

**Kathleen Gutierrez 08:19**

You've been here for a while.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 08:21**

[laughs] Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 08:21**

So then what about—wow—and then so your grandfather, your maternal grandfather, he came from England.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 08:29**

He came from England. Worcester, England.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 08:30**

Worcester, England. And what brought him to the United States?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 08:35**

I have no idea. He first went to Canada, he signed up for some kind of military thing in Canada. And actually he deserted and came across the border to the U.S. and he joined the army here and that's how he got his citizenship.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 08:57**

Oh, wow. Okay, so he was in the army. Do you know approximately when he arrived to the U.S. then?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 09:02**

Oh, I do—somewhere I got it in a book.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 09:07**

For posterity.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 09:08**

But right off the head, I don't. Yeah, I have it all written down on a timeline. If you want me to look it up, I can look it up.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 09:17**

We will definitely check it out.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 09:18**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 09:19**

So then what slowly moved your maternal grandparents west?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 09:24

My grandmother.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 09:25

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 09:26

My grandmother. Mainers are artists and writers, and she thought she was a painter and writer. And she did write poetry, a lot of writing in poetry and in short stories—if you like her style of writing. She did paint. So she wanted to travel and left. So she—first, I should say—her father passed away. And so left her—my great-grandmother—a widow, with two teenage girls and a younger son. So she went to work. I don't know, I think she put the younger son in a boarding school. And my grandmother was old enough and they went to Washington D.C. And my great-grandmother was what you would call a nurse and housekeeper for a wealthy family in Washington D.C. And my grandmother worked for the government in secretarial at that time in Washington, D.C. She met my grandfather back there and they were married. What year—I can't think off the top—but maybe 1920 I want to say. About 1920. And they married and then my grandmother decided they want to travel. So she they traveled out to Oregon and my mother was born in—no, they first traveled to California, where they had a first child in Santa Cruz, which they lost. Then my grandmother supposedly was depressed, so they traveled to Oregon where my mother was born. And out of it came eight kids; she had eight children and they were born all over the United States up and down. From Oregon to Arizona to—I don't know if anybody was born in the state of Washington—but I don't remember where else some of the children are born. She traveled up and down.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 12:09

Quite a bit.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 12:10

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 12:11

Was your mother the oldest?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 12:12

My mother was the oldest of the eight children



**Kathleen Gutierrez 12:14**

Of the eight, Okay. And so then what brought your mother down to California?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 12:19**

Well, they were living in California. Her family was living in California at that point.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 12:24**

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 12:25**

And they were living in Santa Maria. And the whole family, they lived in back of the church. They were LDS Mormons. My grandparents converted into the Mormon church. And so, they were living in back of the church in Santa Maria. My grandfather kept up the grounds in the church and stuff, and my mother did housekeeping and worked out in the pea fields I guess, or sometimes. She met some of her best friends and met my father there.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 13:09**

Okay!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 13:10**

She was about seventeen.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 13:11**

Uh-huh. And they met in Santa Maria?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 13:14**

They met down in Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo—that whole community.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 13:20**

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 13:21**

And I'm trying to put it together because I had to put this together through my research. Growing up we didn't even know when they were married or where they were married.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 13:37**

Hmm.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 13:38**

So they met in Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo and when they got married, they had to go up to Washington, Vancouver to get married because it was against the law for them to marry in California.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 13:56**

Right.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 13:56**

So they took a trip with my grandparents, which my grandmother wrote a story about later. She was not pleased with the trip and why? She had to stay in Chinatown in a hotel.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 14:14**

In Washington?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 14:15**

In Washington. It was beneath her. But anyway, they were married and they came back down to Santa Maria and eventually they ended up outside of Watsonville and Pajaro Valley, because that's on the route the Filipinos would travel. And my father, they all kept his friends and people that he traveled with, and Watsonville was one of the stops that they worked at. So I guess that's where he liked it, and the people, they are pluses too. So that's how he ended up in Watsonville, in the, the Pajaro Valley.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 15:00**

Right.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 15:00**

And then my mother, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 15:02**

I see. So Watsonville was kind of one of those stops that one can stop along and is sort of around the agricultural area through California.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 15:09**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 15:10**

This is great. I want to kind of track your dad's steps too to meeting your mom because I think—so he arrived to Hawai'i around 1928?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 15:19**

Yeah. Came to California in 1930.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 15:23**

Oh okay, so only two years in Hawai'i.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 15:24**

Only two years and I found him in the 1930 census in Stockton. That's why we have the connection to Stockton, because I found him in Union City, which is just outside of Stockton. I guess [worked] in the asparagus [fields] at that time. So yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 15:46**

That brought him here, what brought him to California from Hawai'i?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 15:50**

Because that's where they were heading.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 15:53**

I see. So Hawai'i was sort of a stopover for a couple years?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 15:55**

Well, I guess it was supposed to be. I suppose they were supposed to work and go back to the Philippines. But they were heading to California and his father-in-law went back to the Philippines just before they left for the mainland.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 16:13**

Got it. Got it. And so and then his nephews-in-law, did they stay in Hawai'i?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 16:19**

No. They—

**Kathleen Gutierrez 16:20**

They also went back?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 16:22**

No, they came with my dad.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 16:24**

Oh, they came with your dad, too. Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 16:26**

They all traveled together, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 16:27**

Got it. So they ended up in Stockton and then he was living in Stockton; and then how much longer before he met your mom?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 16:35**

They were married in '40.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 16:37**

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 16:38**

So he was here a good ten years before he married. I guess they had no contact with the Philippines because my father once told me that he didn't know his wife was pregnant when he left. And it was hard to find people here on the mainland because they really didn't go by their names, which I learned through research. [laughs] Because "Max" was not my Dad's name, which I didn't know! [laughs].

**Kathleen Gutierrez 17:18**

Oh really? Was it like a nickname?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 17:22**

Yeah. Well, yeah. It was like me growing up with the name "Juaning."

**Kathleen Gutierrez 17:26**

Aww, yay. My dad is Hermes but they call him "Mess."

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 17:33**

Yeah, yeah! So I grew up with Juaning so I didn't know that Max was not my father's name.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 17:42**

I had an "Uncle Trining," for Trinidad.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 17:47**

Yeah. Yeah, we had a Uncle Trining and—

**Kathleen Gutierrez 17:49**

[laughs] You too?!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 17:50**

—an "Uncle Johnny" and an "Uncle John-John," "Uncle Green Eyes," "Uncle Skippy."

**Kathleen Gutierrez 17:59**

I wanted an "Uncle Green Eyes" I never had that. [laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 18:03**

He had green eyes! Had greenish eyes.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 18:06**

I see. So in the ten years before your parents either met or got married, what was your dad up to? What was his life like?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 18:18**

It's a mystery until I found him in the newspaper. But I don't know if I want [laughs] to talk about it. But I don't mind. I couldn't. He was single, he was handsome, he was tall. I guess he got a lot of girls. [laughs] He was big; he was not only tall but he was big. He was built big. And he didn't take things from people. So I guess, I take it he got into trouble a lot because he didn't take things from people. I mean even with his work, in his work out in the field and stuff, he didn't take what he didn't think he should take from bosses. He stood up for himself, so I guess he got into trouble that way. So he told me once that [laughs]—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 19:31**

—but . . . ahh, where was I? I forgot what—

**Kathleen Gutierrez 19:37**

So he would get into trouble?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 19:39**

He would get into trouble. They had told me that once.. He got married because they told him it's time for him to get married because he got into trouble.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 19:53**

So he'd be in less trouble if he had a wife?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 19:54**

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So I don't know who told him it was time for him to get married, but I guess it was time for him to get married. Then she met my dad. Well, then I found a story in the newspaper while I was doing research. I tell people, "don't do research if you don't want to come across things you don't want to know."

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 20:15

I hear you.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 20:16

But it puts things into perspective, because I could never understand why my father never got his citizenship. He didn't become a citizen till 1972—I think.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 20:30

Much later.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 20:32

Very much later. And all the uncles were all citizens and I was like, "why isn't Dad a citizen?" So while I was doing this project—well we got started and I started doing my detective stuff [laughs]. I started looking through the newspapers and just typing the keywords and I wanted to see what we have on the Sulays. Well, I came across my Dad's name: Max Sulay. And somehow he was at a taxi dance in Watsonville—taxi dance club in Watsonville—and at that time he lived in Hollister on—I don't remember the name of the company, but it's a seed company and they had a camp out there. They—the uncles—worked for that seed company. So he took home this taxi cab lady after the dance and evidently, she must have been married. She was white. And when they got to the camp, he noticed that there were cars there waiting for him. You you can read the article, I'm just kind of shortening it. But there was evidently a gun battle. And my father was shot and got wounded. He was in the hospital for, I don't know, for three or four days, and I forget where he was hit. Eventually it went to court and all. Two of the men were sent to San Quentin—and they were Filipinos. They were fellow Filipinos, but that was common then. They didn't fight outside of each other, but the fighting happened within their groups. So evidently, this woman was married to a Filipino.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 23:00

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 23:01

So I guess that's where it all happened. She was leaving him or whatever. I don't know if my father was a good guy or whatever. [laughs] And anyway, it all came down to two of them went

to prison. The woman got off, but then eventually down the road she ended up going to prison for something else. So my father was the only one that got off.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 23:29

I see, he got off!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 23:31

Yeah, yeah. No charges, no. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 23:35

No charges.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 23:35

No charge. But I think that's what scared him from applying for a long time for his citizenship. I'm putting that together: that's what held him back.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 23:46

Right. Like that record, just having had it happened.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 23:50

Yeah, yeah. So that's, that's the story I can put together for him.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 23:54

Got it. Got it.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 23:55

Yeah. And other than that, he didn't talk much. He didn't want to. He was like, "No, we're here." We don't speak the language [Ilokano], only English. It's not that we didn't want to. We all wanted to speak Ilokano, but they told us—the uncles, my Dad—told us, "We're Americans. You speak English."

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 24:23

So they didn't teach you Ilokano?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 24:24

No, but we did pick up the cuss words. [laughs]

**Hermes Gutierrez** 24:33

Then you go back to the Philippines, they didn't have to speak Ilokano anymore.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 24:36**

Maybe, yeah. Yeah, my parents—

**Hermes Gutierrez 24:38**

And look at her, she's white. He doesn't look like a Filipino at all.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 24:46**

Well you should see her photos from childhood, I would say she looks very very Filipina.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 24:53**

[laughs] Yeah, not going outdoors—like I worked forty years indoors and you don't go outside very much anymore.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 25:00**

Yeah, I lose my brown easily too!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 25:03**

But I tan up!

**Kathleen Gutierrez 25:04**

Me too!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 25:06**

I go, "people can spend all the time they want and I just walk out and spend time and don't have to lay there and tan."

**Kathleen Gutierrez 25:13**

Right yeah. You brown up easily.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 25:16**

One day—one summer when we were learning to swim and we swam every day, I was darker than my Dad. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez 25:29**

[laughs] I see so many resonances, too. My Dad is from Ilocos; his height was 5'9"-5'10" so he's pretty tall for himself. I also didn't get taught Ilokano or Tagalog. My Mom is Tagalog—and my camera conveniently turning off sometimes. [laughs]



**Juanita Sulay Wilson 25:35**

Do you need a battery?

**Kathleen Gutierrez 25:46**

The battery's good, it's just overheating a little bit. Ah good, I have my backup thankfully. I'd love to know—before your dad met your mom—what was the kind of work he was doing in those ten years?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 26:09**

I guess agricultural? Yeah . . . I guess that's it. I don't know. Like I said, he didn't mention it. No.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 26:20**

Oh, wow.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 26:21**

Yeah, my dad was more or less like that. He went out to socials and his lodge things and birthday parties; community stuff. But more or less my dad would stay at home when he wasn't working. Or this: he was big on roosters and cockfighting. I should tell you the story of my dad's cockfighting. He had one of his best roosters, I guess it got stabbed that day. But my dad saved that rooster. We couldn't figure out what he was doing with macaroni, but it patched back up the roosters wherever it got slit with macaroni. And so the rooster

**Kathleen Gutierrez 27:15**

Macaroni?!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 27:16**

With macaroni! I guess, connecting the vessels, whatever.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 27:21**

Oh!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 27:22**

[laughs] I don't know, my father did a lot of strange things. But he did it!

**Kathleen Gutierrez 27:31**

So was cockfighting a leisure activity?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 27:34**

That was one of his leisure activities. We went to picnics—well, we called them "picnics." We didn't know what they were, because we went out and there were picnics. They had barbecue, all the things we want to eat, all the things we wanted to drink. We never starved. Our parents were feeding us, the uncles were feeding us. So for us, they were picnics. So when people said "picnics", they knew what they were.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 28:03

How frequent were the picnics?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 28:07

They weren't every weekend. They were—I don't know—they were every once in a while. I remember the one of the chicken fights, "picnics," we went out at Sunset Beach in the dunes. There at that time in the late '40s, there were all these sand dunes and they were deep and tall. And so on the flat part of the flat sand dunes where you had the car parking and stuff. They would set up all the picnic and the barbecuing. And they they built us a—there was a square area filled with sawdust and it had little [unintelligible] so the sawdust wouldn't blow out or whatever. We would spend all day in that sawdust looking for coins, digging. I guess they threw coins in there for us, silver dollars or dimes, pennies. As little kids we'd spend all day in there looking for the coins to go buy soda whatever. But they would have that set up. And then you'd walk up over big sand dunes, you go down their valleys. Then we would sit up on the sand dunes and watch them do the chicken fights. The betting and the chatting. It was fascinating as kids. But then we'd run down and go eat.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 30:00

How many different families would you say would go to a typical picnic?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 30:04

Oh, I have no idea. I really don't have any idea, they were big.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 30:10

They were big picnics.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 30:10

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 30:12

And it sounds like the children had different activities than the parents.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 30:15

Yeah, we did! Or we ran around. Another time it would be up way up in the mountains under the redwoods or wherever. We would go to different areas. But I can tell you then they also paid off the sheriffs.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 30:35**

They paid off the sheriffs?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 30:36**

Oh, they did.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 30:37**

Why would they have to pay off the sheriffs?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 30:38**

And every once in a while, they would have to bust them. I can remember once, up in the hills, and people started running: it was the sheriffs coming up. They would grab their chickens and they were running through the woods; somebody would get caught. Then they would feed the chickens they seized to, I don't know, older people. I don't know what they did.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 31:11**

Was it because cockfighting was outlawed?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 31:13**

It was illegal.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 31:14**

Oh.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 31:15**

It was illegal in the state of California.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 31:17**

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 31:17**

Yeah, not in Arizona but in the state of California it was illegal. I mean, it's like anything else. Like gambling; they would pay off. There was always this payoff stuff. I didn't know that as a kid. I just knew that later on.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 31:34**

Got it.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 31:34**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 31:35**

And so for the leisure activities at the picnic: so if the kids are looking for coins and the men are engaged in cockfighting—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 31:43**

Then the women were visiting.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 31:45**

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 31:45**

They were visiting. They would be visiting each other. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 31:50**

Okay, chatting it out.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 31:51**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 31:53**

What was the food like at the picnics?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 31:56**

Typical: steaks, chicken—I don't know, all Filipino; lumpia, adobo chicken. Oh my favorite is chicken and pork adobo, dry. It's got to be the dry.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 32:15**

That's the one dad makes!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 32:17**

When people do it with soupy it's not chicken adobo. It's gotta be dry. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 32:24**

Yeah. That's the way that my dad makes it, he even puts a little bit of cinnamon.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 32:30**

Yeah, yeah. And I can remember the paprika.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 32:33**

Oh, paprika! Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 32:35**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 32:37**

Neat!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 32:38**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 32:38**

Did your parents cook and bring food to the picnics too?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 32:41**

Yeah my mother was known for her biko. The uncles taught her how to make biko. My Dad made the [unknown] to shred the coconut with. Because I still remember him sitting on a chair on this thing that he hand made and made the grooves in and put it on this block of wood, and he would shred the coconut. And they would fall in a big bowl on the floor. Yeah. So yeah, we had biko. My mother cook biko for all the holidays.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 33:24**

Yeah, it's different. People make bikos all different ways but my mother baked hers in the oven. I don't know if that's the typical way but I can remember her, as a little kid, the big pot of water. But the coconut that was shredded, she would put it in cheesecloth. And she put it in the pot of water and let it boil with the coconut in it; she never put it in the biko. Then she'd take out the cheese cloth then she would cook the rice and cook that all up and stir it and let it do whatever it does. And then the second stage, I can remember her putting in the brown sugar into the pot and stirring it until it was a certain color. Then she would get the baking sheets and she would spread the biko out in it. And then she would bake it until the sides would start dripping over a little bit so it carmelized then pulled it out and let it cool. But none of us learned how to make it. We always watched her make it. We kind of knew the steps. So then when my mother passed away we go, "Oh, no, we don't know how to make biko! Oh my god, what are we gonna have

for holidays?" But my youngest brother got it together and figured out the closest way and made up a recipe the closest way that matches my mother's. And then there was still something missing and we couldn't figure out what was missing from it. Then after he made it a few times, it kind of dawned on me: I had a job as a young girl when my mother cooked biko. I had to take a stick of butter and run it through the pan and on the sides so you had that buttery cut to it? Sure. And it was like, "Yes! That was it!"

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 33:24

Okay.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 35:51

So it was it?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 35:52

That was it! It was the butter that was missing on the pan all along. We could come close to everything else, but that was the ingredients that was missing.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 36:04

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 36:05

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 36:06

So it sounds like you grew up around quite a bit of Filipino food.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 36:09

Oh, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 36:10

Not only in picnics but also in the home. Your mom was cooking the Filipino food too, did your dad cook?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 36:15

My dad cooked sometimes. And sometimes when the uncles—when my parents bought the house—there was an apartment in the back, so a couple of uncles lived in the back. And they also cooked, so they cooked. I grew up with men cooking. So my husband cooks; I made sure I'm married to a man who cooks because I didn't cook.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 36:42**

[laughs] Yeah, what was your favorite dish growing up?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 36:47**

Oh, I don't know. The adobo. The lumpia, of course. And of course the noodles— pancit.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 37:01**

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 37:03**

I mean we had all kinds. We didn't even know it was Filipino food, it was just food we ate. Like the beef, the hamburger with the peas. What my cousins used to ask my mother: "Chop Suey." Yeah, it was whatever beef, whatever vegetable was in the refrigerator. Liver or whatever—garlic. But we didn't know it as Filipino food. It was just food. And the only thing we had different was only when my father was away, then we would have potatoes once in a while. But other than that we ate rice all the time.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 37:46**

All the time.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 37:47**

Morning, night. Yeah, fried rice in the morning, eggs.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 37:52**

Do you still have a taste for rice today?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 37:55**

I still eat it. Just lately—up until about a month ago I still ate rice every day. What's food without rice and juice over it?

**Kathleen Gutierrez 38:10**

[laughs] Right.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 38:11**

It's like don't make the chop suey without juice. Juice with the rice.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 38:17**

Right. So maybe I'll take a few steps back. I'm curious, I know that your parents met in Santa Maria, but where did they meet? This is just a few steps back so that we can get to the arrival of you. Was your dad traveling through Santa Maria?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 38:33**

No that was the time—I take it that they met in harvest time in that valley. Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo. That was harvest time. Because they had to have met in the spring-summer.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 38:52**

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 38:52**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 38:53**

How much time after they met did they get married? Do you know?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 38:58**

I have no idea. I can only go by the records like that and the article. Because that happened in—I recall it happened—in 1939. So they decided my dad needs to get married in a hurry because he met my mother and they were married in August, 1940.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 39:24**

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 39:24**

So . . . [laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 39:29**

Maybe quick. I think it was my mother's first boyfriend. First, because she was still living with their parents and going to church, so.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 39:40**

Right. So your parents joined for their wedding in Washington when they got married. Did your dad convert to LDS?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 39:50**

No. We were raised Mormon and Catholic.



**Juanita Sulay Wilson 39:54**

So your dad was Catholic?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 39:55**

My dad, what kind of Catholic? He was not church going, but he was Catholic.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 40:02**

Okay, how were you able to negotiate two different faiths in the home?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 40:06**

Uhm, well, my mother was like my Dad. Once she left her parents, she was not that religious after. And then there was that kind of stigma because she was still Caucasian married to a Filipino. So there was that stigma at that time.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 40:36**

Right.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 40:36**

Yeah. She left her family. I didn't know my grandmother that well.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 40:44**

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 40:45**

Yeah, I've only met her a handful of times. I only saw her a handful at times.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 40:52**

How do you think your grandparents perceived the marriage, or the union?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 40:56**

[With] my grandfather, I don't think there was any problem. It was my grandmother. Yeah. Because, I think it was after my mother found out my father is married, somehow there was a conversation and somehow my grandmother told my mother not to take those babies back to me—to her grandmother, to my mother's grandmother.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 41:25**

By babies did she mean you?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 41:26**

Yes.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 41:29**

But your grandfather was okay with it?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 41:30**

Yes.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 41:31**

Why do you think that was?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 41:33**

I don't know. I guess in England they were a little more open to it. I guess, I don't know. He just wasn't that way. Because they had the built in prejudice even in Maine the way they treat indigenous people. I mean, it still still happens today. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 42:01**

Right. So do you find that—or did your parents, for instance, come back up to Watsonville to kind of get away from your mom's mom maybe or the discontent of your mom's mom in establish a life out here?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 42:14**

No, I think it's because my mother wanted—because my mother grew up traveling all over and never got to go to one school, one place. She went to school all over the place and she didn't want that for her children. So she didn't travel with my father. When she started having children, she stayed at home. She based. She said, "I'm not traveling with my children up and down. They're going to go to school in one place."

**Kathleen Gutierrez 42:48**

One place.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 42:49**

Yeah, so we all did. We all went to the same high school.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 42:53**

Right, because the traveling could have also happened for work to follow the agricultural seasons?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 42:59**

Right, yeah. A lot of families did that with him.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 43:02**

And your mom said, "No."

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 43:04**

My mom said, "No."

**Kathleen Gutierrez 43:06**

Got it. So then you came along?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 43:08**

Then I came along.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 43:09**

And you're the oldest?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 43:11**

I'm the oldest of six—

**Kathleen Gutierrez 43:13**

Can you tell me—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 43:13**

—of my father's second marriage. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez 43:18**

I'm the youngest of my dad's second [marriage]. [laughs] Lovely families. Can you tell me your siblings' names and if you remember the years that they were born?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 43:31**

Oh, Lord. Maybe I could, let's see. I'm the oldest. Next comes my sister Manzanita—or Hulliermo Hina Manzanita—she was born in '44. Then comes Mamerto Sunny—as he was known growing up "Sunny"—but named after by Father. He was born in '46. Then eight or nine years later, came two more children. Chris, he was born in '50. Berto, or "Bert" was born in '51. And then, I don't know, eight or ten years or somewhere along that, came the youngest one, Mario, who was born in '61—the year I graduated.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 44:37**

From Watsonville—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 44:37**

So it wasn't twenty years. Yeah, from Watsonville.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 44:40**

Okay,

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 44:40**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 44:43**

How is it being the oldest child?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 44:46**

I don't know. My mother—that was another thing—my mother said her children were not going to take care of the other children. The children were not going to take care of each other. They're going to be children. So she let us all be children. I didn't—like most Filipinos families—I didn't have to take care of my younger siblings. And there [was] no hierarchy. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 45:25**

Tell me what it was like being a child. How did you spend your time? What did you like, enjoy doing as a kid, if you have any recollection?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 45:33**

Well, let's see. I have no memory of growing up on the ranch at the camps because my parents bought that house that my Christina still lives in, in Watsonville. In 1944 when it was against the law for Filipinos to own a house or land, the way they bought the house is that they put it in my mother's name. So, they were able to buy that house. It's kind of strange because we live in the north east part of Watsonville. So we were like the only families living on the city borders—city line. The side we lived on was in the city, the other side of the street was not in the city.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 46:43**

Very close to that border.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 46:44**

Very. We ran right down the street. And we live next door to the Crosetti's. I think the way they got that house or found that house was through the Crosetti's because my father had loyalty to J.J. Crosetti. And that, I think, has something to do with how we ended up next to his relatives. Because the two houses next to ours are both his relatives. I'm not sure, but I think when we moved there, his mother lived in the big house. I'm not quite sure. But they were all relatives. So it was kind of strange we ended up living next to them.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 47:39**

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 47:40**

Because my father had a chance to go into business years down the line. But he wouldn't do it because he had this loyalty to the Crosetti's.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 47:51**

I see. I want to ask about the Crosetti's and who they are, but do you remember the address or do you know the address?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 47:57**

Of what?

**Kathleen Gutierrez 47:58**

Of the home that y'all bought in? 1944?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 48:00**

Oh, yeah. 28 Brada Street.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 48:02**

28 Brada Street.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 48:03**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 48:04**

Got it. And who were there—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 48:05**

It was like a one bedroom house. It was just like a little box.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 48:10**

A one bedroom house.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 48:11**

It was a one bedroom house. I even drew pictures of what I remembered as a child, what it looked like.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 48:18**

What did it look like?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 48:19**

It was like you walked into the living room—it was maybe about the size of this room—and then it was another room the size of this room connected, which was the dining room. Then over on the left side was the bedroom and then the bathroom next to it, which had double doors going into the bedroom or you go into the kitchen. So the bathroom was in the center between the bedroom and the kitchen. And then there was a backyard, the back porch, then big yard and back there was a double car garage with an apartment in the middle of it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 49:00**

Okay, so all of you, the family of—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 49:04**

We grew up in—three of us grew up in that house. Well, actually, before they remodeled there was five of us. My mother and my parents, we all—don't ask me where we all slept. I have no idea! Come to think about it because I got used to—they remodeled it in the '50s, early 50s. So it must have been like '54 or '55 and that was remodeled by Ray and Eddie Castro who were leaders of the Filipino community. But they're related to us somehow. But I don't know how. The only reason why I know that is because I took my DNA test and their granddaughter ended up matching parts of my DNA.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 49:11**

They had to have been pretty close.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 50:01**

So it's got to be like a set, yeah. To where Sulay and Castro come from I have no idea.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 50:10**

And they helped remodel?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 50:11**

They totally remodeled the house. Yeah, so it ended up being—they tore down the wall between the dining room and the living room and made it one large room and added two more bedrooms.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 50:29**

Got it.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 50:30**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 50:31**

And so you were there for a little bit. Oh, before I go on from there, who was J.J. Crosetti?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 50:36**

He was a big land owner. Do you guys have his story in your archives? I just know he owns the company and where it was at. That's about all I know about him.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 51:01**

Right, and his family was sort of nearby in your neighborhood.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 51:04**

Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 51:05**

Right.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 51:06**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 51:07**

So when you were a child, did you play in the neighborhood?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 51:10**

Oh, we played in the neighborhood. At first when I was first little, we weren't allowed to. They wouldn't play with us because we were the only—there weren't that many children, but we were the only ethnic family in the neighborhood. Though they were Italian, or I guess they were Italian. I don't know what they are. But then eventually, we got to play with each other. We played outside all day long down in the orchards because orchards were across the street

down where Martinelli is and that whole new subdivision. That was all orchard all the way over to what used to be East Lake—I don't know if it's still East Lake—from our house to East Lake

**Kathleen Gutierrez 52:07**

So you play with your siblings then some of the neighborhood kids, eventually.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 52:12**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 52:12**

Did it feel safe?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 52:14**

Oh, yeah. I mean, we never—we only went home to eat, drink, and go the restroom. [laughs]  
Other than that, we were gone all day long playing

**Kathleen Gutierrez 52:24**

Oh, do you remember any specific games?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 52:28**

Well at night, the best part was hide-and-seek. And as we got older we'd play hide-and-seek, we were living near the cemetery and we'd play hide-and-seek up there. Yeah, just hiding behind the tombs and stuff; we didn't destroy them or anything [laughs] Until we got scared one night, and then we never did that.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 52:51**

Never did that again?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 52:51**

No. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez 52:54**

You kind of referred to it a little bit, but you identified as the only ethnic family in the neighborhood. Did it feel like that though? Did you feel different ethnic compared to the other kids? Or the other Italian kids?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 53:09**

Well, yeah, you kind of had to. People deny it, like people I went to school with and stuff denied that there was no prejudice, but there was. But my mother always had an answer for it. I guess



I used to come home crying from school. And my mother would tell me, "Don't pay attention. They're ignorant people. They're ignorant." And then I guess she would talk to the aunties, and then she came back with a story for me and she would tell me the story and then—yeah, we just ignored them. We just said, "They're ignorant. They're stupid people. They don't know anything." So and we were kept very close to home. The only time we left was to go to school. Other than that, our whole social was around the community. So we were really protected.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 53:24

By the aunties and the uncles?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 54:24

Yeah. Yeah. We were protected and we weren't told things we didn't need to know.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 54:33

Could you maybe describe an instance of prejudice that you remember from your childhood, if you feel comfortable doing that?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 54:40

I was always asked: "Where do you come from? What are you?" "I'm Filipino," I would say not knowing I wasn't supposed to say that. But that's how we were raised. We were raised to be proud of who we were and if you didn't like it, you were ignorant.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 55:05

And you say that you weren't supposed to say that, is it because?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 55:07

I learned that we weren't supposed to say eventually, but did it anyway, you know? "I'm Ilokano!" "What's wrong with you?" [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 55:20

Who told you eventually that you weren't supposed to say Filipino?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 55:23

Well, I guess I learned that or I guess I just picked it up eventually. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 55:30

And if you weren't supposed to say Filipino, I mean, what were you supposed to say?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 55:34

I don't know. "Where did you come from?" "My mother."

**Kathleen Gutierrez 55:40**

[laughs] Right. Yeah, yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 55:43**

"What do you mean, 'where do I come from?'" [laughs] I had no idea what they were asking when I was really little.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 55:50**

I'm really curious too how your mom developed that worldview as well to see that prejudice and name it as ignorant. Do you think that came from having an interracial family? Do you think that came from growing up in California? Being around different immigrant communities?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 56:08**

I think my mother always had a big heart. Because she always saw it also in the Indigenous people. I think it's just something—that was the way she was, because I told you my grandparents were Mormons. Well, they were also missionaries on an Indian Reservation. So my mother had exposure to them and she always felt sorry for them. So I don't think—I think it's just her, she knew how to protect us I guess.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 56:51**

So she lived on a reservation with her parents.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 56:55**

Do you know for how long?

**Kathleen Gutierrez 56:55**

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 56:59**

Uhm—

**Hermes Gutierrez 56:59**

[overlapping] No backyard, just concrete—sorry.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 57:03**

It's okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 57:04**

[laughs] So yeah, I don't know how long they lived on it or next to it. Because she also went to school across the street. So I don't think they lived on the reservation, but right across the street from it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 57:20**

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 57:20**

Yeah and that was in Arizona.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 57:23**

In Arizona, okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 57:24**

Yeah. I think it was in the '30s.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 57:26**

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 57:27**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 57:27**

Did your dad ever make comments about the prejudice that was in the community?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 57:32**

No. They never, they never complained. They never. That's why they spoke dialect. I think that's one reason why they didn't want us to speak dialect because they could talk amongst themselves without us knowing what they're talking about.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 57:50**

Right. Did your mom speak Ilokano?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 57:52**

No.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 57:53**

Did she understand?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 57:54**

No. But with her friends, they spoke pidgin English. So they spoke pidgin English and we couldn't understand them either. So until we got older, we kind of figured it out.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 58:09**

Where did they develop—where did she learn Pidgin?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 58:11**

I have no idea.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 58:13**

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 58:14**

I have no idea.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 58:19**

Uhm, so you had your childhood there for at least three years. And then did you as a family moved from that home—no, no, you were there in the '50s. You eventually went to Watsonville High and sort of tracing your family.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 58:31**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 58:33**

And so did you ever leave Watsonville as a child, did you travel?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 58:37**

We went. We had one trip.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 58:40**

One trip only. And we traveled to see my mother's aunt who lived in Eugene, Oregon I believe at the time. Yeah, that was a long trip. I can remember my father bought a trailer to pull. We had a station wagon. So they loaded all of the stuff I guess in the trailer—they had how many kids? Yeah, five then—there was five of us. So we traveled up and along the way, I don't remember eating out at restaurants but I guess we had to eat something. But as I told you before, my mother would go in check to see if it was okay if it came in. Or in a hotel, I guess to see if we could sleep or get a room. But at the time, we didn't know that's what she was doing.

It was just normal living. And I guess that's why my father never went to town with us either. All the time we grew up, my father never went downtown with us.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 58:40

One trip?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:00:04

For that same reason?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:00:05

I guess that's the reason why. It was just something that was normal to them.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:00:11

Right, sort of accessing these places with a white mother made that more possible.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:00:18

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:00:18

And this was even just in the town.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:00:19

Yeah. He'd never went downtown in Watsonville. No. As a family, we never went downtown. As a family the only place we went as a family was in Chinatown. We went out to eat, to dinner, at this Chinese dinner next to the Filipino restaurant in Chinatown. And I still remember that Chinese restaurant because you go in and they had booths. And in each Booth was four round, big round table. We'd go in there, and the uncles—we'd go in there as a family and sometimes some of the uncles would come and join. We'd have dinner down there on Sundays. I thought everybody in town, when they went out to dinner, had dinner at this Chinese restaurant—not knowing that was the only place we can eat as a family. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:01:20

Or the Filipino restaurant?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:01:22

But the Filipino restaurant was smaller. Much smaller.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:01:27

And this was throughout your childhood?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:01:30

Yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:01:33

What do you think would have happened had your family spent time in downtown?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:01:41

I have no idea. I really doubt—I have no experience to know what. I can only guess.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:01:49

What they were avoiding?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:01:50

Yeah. Cause they, they avoided it their whole lives.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:01:55

And so when was the first time you got to go to downtown?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:01:58

I went downtown with my uncles.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:02:01

Oh, okay. [laughs] When you were a kid?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:02:06

Yeah. Well my godfather, my ninong, would have to go downtown to buy some clothes or something and he would take me. So I would go down shopping with him. And I figured out why: because I suppose,, evidently, I spoke broken English, like my uncles and my Dad. And I used that to go with him to interpret what he said to them. I couldn't understand why they couldn't understand him, or them! So I would translate broken English to the storekeepers.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:02:56

I see. Well, what did it feel like going downtown on your uncles knowing that it was an avoided place?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:03:04

Well, I don't know. Nobody bothered me with that. Nobody.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:03:14

You didn't experience anything?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:03:15

No, no, no.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:03:18

My camera's doing that thing, it's just overheating.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:03:22

Did your dad need more coffee? Is he good?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:03:24

Do you want more coffee, dad? We're one hour in. Do you want more coffee? Are you sure?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:03:32

[laughs] Yeah I'm good.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:03:37

Are you gonna have some coffee?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:03:38

Oh, no, I have one.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:03:42

Make a little coffee and then slowly drink it until after one hour. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:03:49

I'd love to know a little bit more about all the uncles because you refer to them quite a bit. It sounds like you had them as a community to rely on. Can you name some of your uncles?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:04:02

There was some of my uncles. They were my parents' best friends—

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:04:09

[overlapping conversation] No grandchildren.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:04:14

—lifetime friends, which were all in that same area in Santa Maria. It was Uncle Johnny and Auntie Vira Morales. They were friends for life. They had two daughters.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:04:34

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:04:34

And we've always been in connection with them. So there was Uncle Johnny.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:04:40

Uncle Johnny.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:04:41

There was Ninong Lazo, Ninong Morales. Actually I called him "Ninong Monocle." There was a lot of Uncle Johnny's for some reason, Uncle Skippy—I'm sure I'm leaving a whole bunch out, but I can't remember them because I didn't know them really by their names. They were just uncles and aunties. We never used their first names or last names. They were just, we called them auntie and uncle.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:05:22

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:05:24

And most of the time, we didn't know what their names were.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:05:28

And did your dad make these friends through work? Through the lodge?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:05:33

I believe they were through both. Because people would come by our house on the way through and would bring us a cart of a box of oranges or a box of whatever they had been. And they would pass by and that's where my father came in. Through people, he would hire people for the crew. So that I guess they would always stop by to see if he was hiring and stuff. So there are a lot of uncles coming and going. I'm sure they're going to be insulted that I leave out their names, but I cannot remember. Like I told you, I remember Uncle Green Eyes.  
[laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:06:27

There were a lot of them.



**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:06:28

There were a lot of them. They spoiled us.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:06:32

And they spoiled you?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:06:33

They spoiled us.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:06:34

How did they spoil you?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:06:37

We never went hungry. We always got what we wanted, usually candy and soda. Or we'd get little fish like that; up there, right here.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:06:51

Oh, uh-huh!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:06:52

The uncles used to make fish and I guess that's coming through Hawai'i. I don't know if they did that in the Philippines or not.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:07:01

Where's the fish?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:07:02

The little fish right here?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:07:03

The blue and white fish?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:07:08

Yeah, yeah.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:07:09

Oh, yeah. Is that the white fish they would have?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:07:12

Yeah. They would give us things like that or different kinds of birds with weaving with long wings on it. They just spoiled us.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:07:25

Like being from palm reeds?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:07:27

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I had forgotten about that until I saw those in J-Town and I went, "Oh, yeah! I remember those." Go to the camp, like pay day, with my Dad. And the uncles would always give me a quarter or something like the fish or a bird. Or they would do yo-yo. I remember the "Yo-yo Man."

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:07:54

The yo-yo man? [laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:07:55

We would call him the "Yo-yo Man."

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:07:58

What was he like?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:07:59

He'd always do the yo-yo. The yo-yo! I think my dad knew the Filipino man who invented the yo-yo. What his name is I can't think of it now, but I think that's the picture I have. Oh, it's the album I didn't give Christina that. I still have. I believe that's the Yo-yo Man in there. But they would do that, or they would sing to us.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:08:32

And they'd sing?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:08:34

There was one uncle that sang in dollar day, ten cents a dance movie that was done—what's the name of that song? 'Calexico Rose' or something like that?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:08:53

'Mexicali Rose?'

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:08:54

Mexicali Rose! Yeah, I think he's the one that used to sing 'Juanita' to me. [laughs] I was always so embarrassed everytime he sang it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:09:09

[to dad] Do you know the song 'Juanita?'

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:09:13

I've never heard it before.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:09:26

So your father was a labor contractor?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:09:28

Labor contractor.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:09:29

Okay. Had he been a labor contractor your entire childhood?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:09:35

Oh, you know what, I don't know. That's all I know he's ever done. I remember when I was little girl and we still lived in the one bedroom place, at the table he would come in and you'd know it was payday because my Dad would go off and bring home the cash and lay it all out and all the coins. Then my mother would do the books. My mother would read the names because my father always kept books on his crew and how much was boarding, how much was food, and they would deduct it from their paycheck—their pay. So my father would read it off, and my mother would gather up the money, stick it in the small envelope with whatever change, seal it up, and they would do the payroll that way for the crews. So I remember that as a young girl. And then I don't know when he stopped being a contractor, but he got older. He was still up in the fields working in his eighties.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:10:47

In his eighties?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:10:48

Yeah. In his early eighties till about—he was about eighty; eighty, eighty-one— somewhere around there.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:10:58

So it was still probably high seventies?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:02

No, he was eighty-seven when he passed,

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:11:05

So I don't think he was out there in the field.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:07

No.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:11:07

He was in his seventies.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:09

Yeah, it's late seventies.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:11:11

Like Monaco, who worked until he died I guess.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:17

Yeah, a lot of the uncles did that.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:11:19

So in addition to contracting, your dad was working in the field still also?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:24

Well, yeah as a crew member, later on. Yeah. Yeah.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:11:30

Cutting.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:31

Cutting.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:31

Oh, a cutter! Right.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:34

I forgot to tell you the crop, yes, in the lettuce fields.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:11:37

In the lettuce fields.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:38

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:11:39

That was the main one.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:40

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:11:41

So did he work with specific like labor camps? Is that how contracting works then?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:11:47

He had a labor camp that was in Pajaro, which I still see. That's the one I remember it was the two story. It looked like a Chinese building, I think it was at one time. It was two stories. And I remember walking in the front door in the bunk and the cots lined up on the sides and their big suitcases on the ends. Then you'd go in the back, straight back and back there would be the kitchen—would be two rooms. And I think my godfather lived in one of the rooms by ninong, and the cook lived in the other room. So that's the cabin. I don't remember ever going upstairs, but I imagine it was the same kind of thing with the cots. And I can remember every Saturday or Sunday they would hose down— everything goes up on the bunk—and they would hose down the floors.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:12:51

Clean up the floors, huh?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:12:53

Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:12:56

Wow. And so would your uncles and the men who worked through that labor camp, would they also be traveling seasonally?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:13:03

They traveled, yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:13:06

Got it.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:13:07

They traveled. So my father also traveled with his crews. That's why my mother stayed with us.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:13:14

And so you'd stay home. So how many months out of the year would you not see your pops?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:13:18

My father was gone, I would say, six months. He was never home six months. So I would say: four, four and a half months, maybe five on the outside.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:13:37

Okay, out of the year?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:13:38

Out of the year. So he was gone a big majority of the time. So my mother was like a single mother.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:13:47

With eventually six children.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:13:49

Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:13:53

Would your uncle's ever talk about prejudice that they experienced?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:13:57

Nothing, nothing. I like I said, I didn't learn about it until I was thiry. I was working in a school district and that was the first time they decided that ethnic studies should be given to the staff, teaching staff. And so I signed up to go and that's the first time I was introduced to—I mean, I go in, "Well, let me see what they can tell me about being Filipino." So I go and I go, "Well, I know all this. I lived this stuff." And then I found out about the riots in Watsonville and I'm going, "What?! What riots?" So then I'd go home because we always went home—how many times a month would we got back home.

**Alan 1:14:59**

At least two, probably three at most.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:15:04**

Yeah, we'd go back home so I went and asked my Mom and go, "What's this about riots?" She didn't say anything and I asked my Dad, my Dad would go, "Hmmp!" I can't [impersonate] it like my brothers could do it. But you know that: "Hmmp!" He's not going to talk about it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:15:29**

[My dad] does it too. I'm familiar.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:15:34**

[laughs] So that that's the answer we got and I just kept questioning. And Fourth of July, I don't remember who it was, but I asked my Mom again. And she goes, "Let me see." So she came back after the Fourth of July, the next time we went, and she gave me a piece of paper. And she says, "You might want to get this book." And I remember going, "Where is she get this from?" So she gives it to me and it's *America is in the Heart*. I had never heard of this before so I went and got it. I end up going, "Who did she have to go and ask?" There was this depth that you go in and ask people, you just don't—my parents are very follow the rules, I think. I don't know how to explain it. But I read that book and it answered a whole lot of questions. I went, "Oh, that's why we did things this way. Oh, that's why we do things that way." I probably even met this—met him once. It was like a whole awakening of things we never knew, things our parents never told us. And ever since then, I've been collected every ethnic book I could find and that I could afford to get after a while. Yeah, it was really an awakening. And I'm glad I got it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:17:27**

So you think you met Carlos Bulosan?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:17:29**

I think I have, yeah. Because people came and go. Like I said, I didn't know anybody by their names. It was just, "Uncle came over." [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:17:45**

The author that would essentially chart a path for Filipinos.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:17:51**

He was still traveling even though you've—yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:17:56**

I gave that book to my dad many years ago. And you know, my dad's also from the Ilocos region. And so he could read it from the Philippine perspective because my dad didn't leave until he was fifty-five.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:18:06**

Yeah, that's what he says.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:18:08**

Yeah, so it's very different storytelling of California from the early 20th century versus the late 20th century.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:18:15**

Because they never said anything, not even in their letters back home.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:18:18**

Right. Right.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:18:19**

They never wrote what they went through here.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:18:23**

What do you think that was?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:18:26**

Loss of face. They couldn't tell what really happened, that the streets weren't made of gold. There weren't going to say how they were treated. Even though they had a chance to go back, even for free, in '30—was it '34—not very many took them up and were sent back to the Philippines. I guess a lot of them couldn't go back and a lot of them weren't going to go back.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:19:08**

Right.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:19:09**

So . . .

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:19:12**

Why do you also think that maybe folks were not talking about it domestically within their families or within the communities, specifically with the riots?



**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:19:22

They didn't—it was something that happened and they let it go. They didn't want—like I said, I think they protected us. Especially us girls. I know, a few that have been told as males. Not particularly in our family, but a few have been told about it. But other than that, they didn't want us to know, I guess for the same reason.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:20:01

Yeah, and there was a bit of a gender line?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:20:04

Definitely a gender line. I didn't leave home until I was twenty-four; until I got married.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:20:09

Okay.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:20:14

How did you meet Allen?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:20:14

[laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:20:16

Cabrillo College.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:20:17

Okay, so you went to Cabrillo College.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:20:18

I did. It was when Cabrillo was on the Watsonville High School campus before they had their campus built.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:20:24

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:20:25

So that's where I met Allen. Yeah. I always knew I wasn't gonna marry Filipino from the time I was little—especially teenage because I was always so tall. I thought I was a giant because when I grew up, I was almost a head taller than the majority of the community. So yeah, I

always thought I was a giant until I got out in the real world and found out that I was actually short. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:20:59

How tall are you?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:21:00

I'm 5'4"

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:21:01

I'm 4'11, I'm even short for the Philippines. [laughs] Don't know what happened. My mom's 4'9.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:21:12

Wow.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:21:12

Yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:21:14

Did not get my dad's height at all. And so what were you studying at Cabrillo?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:21:19

Oh, I was just going to Cabrillo because what else was there to do after High School.

**Allen Wilson** 1:21:24

Patrolling for a husband.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:21:25

No, I wasn't. No.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:21:30

[laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:21:30

Do you remember the courses that you took?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:21:32

Basic, mainly the basic courses.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:21:37

In general ed?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:21:38

Yeah, general ed. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:21:40

And then what were you studying Allenn?

**Allen Wilson** 1:21:41

When I met her I was studying pinochle but—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:21:46

That's right. When we met he was playing pinochle in the Student Lounge.

**Allen Wilson** 1:21:57

—music history and then I went on to San Francisco State for masters in humanities.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:22:06

I see.

**Allen Wilson** 1:22:07

And along the way I found what I really love, but it was too late: linguistics. But I was part committed to—with a wife and child you don't change your major after you've earned a BA and the second major; you don't start all over again.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:22:28

How much—so you met at Cabrillo College, how much long after did you get married?

**Allen Wilson** 1:22:33

About four years later.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:22:34

Four years later?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:22:35

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:22:36

So you must have met at twenty then and then got married at twenty-four?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:22:41

We got married at twenty-four—we actually met before I was twenty, huh. Yeah, I was nineteen.

**Allen Wilson** 1:22:50

No, you were twenty, I was nineteen.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:22:52

Oh, whatever.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:22:53

I robbed the crib because I learned in high school that a woman lives longer than a man, so she marries somebody younger.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:22:54

[laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:23:04

Brilliant. Brilliant idea.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:23:07

[laughs]

**Allen Wilson** 1:23:07

Somebody older than that'd be the end—

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:23:08

Absolutely.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:23:09

[laughs]

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:23:11

You'll live longer than us—

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:23:14

So you moved to San Francisco?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:23:15

—some three or four years.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:23:16

We did. After Cabrillo, first—

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:23:18

If you live up to something like eighty-eight, the women they live to ninety-one.

**Allen Wison** 1:23:26

Yeah.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:23:28

In the Philippines, the women they live to seventy. But the men, sixty-seven—

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:23:40

[laughs]

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:23:40

—sixty-eight, sixty-nine; you're gone.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:23:45

[laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:23:47

So you eventually moved up to San Francisco?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:23:50

We did. He went to—I got married. He went to San Jose State to get his mas—to get graduate.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:24:03

Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:24:03

And then came up to San Francisco. First he took off—I can't remember how it goes. Uhm . . .

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:24:12

[overlapping conversation with Allen] For a number of years the government.

**Allen Wilson** 1:24:15

Oh, yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:24:17

How did we end up here? No, I know how we ended up here?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:24:23

We could also ask Allen.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:24:24

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:24:27

Hey, dad, we're gonna steal Allen for a little bit. How did you end up in San Francisco? What was your trajectory?

**Allen Wilson** 1:24:33

My trajectory was I came here for—it was interesting. I left—where were we?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:24:43

San Jose State.

**Allen Wilson** 1:24:44

No, we were.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:24:46

When did you take off and worked in the lettuce fields with my Dad

**Allen Wilson** 1:24:50

Yeah, the second time we were down in—oh, hell.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:24:54

It was after Cabrillo, after we got married. After you graduated.

**Allen Wilson** 1:25:00

Yeah. I had nothing to do that summer and one day your father says, "Allen, do you want to come to work with me in the fields?" And sure! None of his sons would. So I went out there and became a closer, closing cartons.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:25:19**

Okay, what does it mean to close?

**Allen Wilson 1:25:23**

You put a rectangle steel—that's a rectangle—put it over it, and then you staple.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:25:37**

Oh.

**Allen Wilson 1:25:37**

Four staples in each end.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:25:40**

I see, to protect the head of lettuce?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:25:43**

Box.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:25:44**

Oh, the box.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:25:44**

In the box.

**Hermes Gutierrez 1:25:46**

Remember, "close the curtain."

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:25:47**

I know. I've been away from home for a while after I got married. For some reason, all of a sudden I couldn't understand my Dad because I worked so hard to get rid of the Pidgin.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 1:25:59**

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 1:25:59**

I mean, I've worked two years to get rid of the pidgin English and still it creeps up. But my father said one day, "Juanita, close the"—I forget how he said it—and I couldn't figure out what the heck he was saying. And then Allen had to interpret and said, "He wants you to close the curtains."

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:26:19

[laughs] So you're saying your brothers didn't work in the lettuce fields?

**Allen Wilson** 1:26:29

No. I did because I couldn't say no.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:26:34

They had something out there to bet on.

**Allen Wilson** 1:26:38

I remember I wouldn't make half a day.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:26:40

Oh, really?

**Alan** 1:26:41

Yeah, so.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:26:42

Look at that white boy, he's not gonna make it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:26:45

[laughs]

**Allen Wilson** 1:26:45

He had lost some of the most money on me.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:26:48

Oh, really?

**Allen Wilson** 1:26:49

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:26:49



Cause he lasted the season.

**Allen Wilson** 1:26:51

Oh, yeah. And then came back and we went over to [unknown] which is in Eastern Contra Costa County. We went there, we were hoeing lettuce waiting for the crop to come in. And then we went to Phoenix and worked outside in west of Phoenix. And then we went to Imperial County, we got a place in Imperial. And we did most of our work south between Imperial and south of—what's the city? I can't remember the name of it. in Imperial County—El Centro. We worked outside El Centro. And that's the trajectory to San Francisco. We went back after Christmas. I got my acceptance from San Francisco State. So I worked a few days a week or so and then we went back to Santa Cruz. And then up here and we we crashed with friends of hers who lived in Daly City. while we're looking for a place and went to school.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:28:06

And then you had here. Have you been here this whole time? This home?

**Allen Wilson** 1:28:10

No, we were on Judah Street.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:28:12

Oh, yeah.

**Allen Wilson** 1:28:13

Around the corner. Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:28:18

We've been in this place for—

**Allen Wilson** 1:28:21

I don't even want to think. [laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:28:23

Forty something years because Stephanie just started high school when we moved from round the corner here.

**Allen Wilson** 1:28:30

Yeah, she graduated '84. We moved here '83.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:28:35

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:28:35

I see. Okay. And Stephanie is your daughter?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:28:38

Stephanie is our daughter. She's—oh, I shouldn't say—she's gonna be turning fifty-five this year.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:28:47

That's amazing!

**Allen Wilson** 1:28:48

[laughs] What was that look there?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:28:49

[laughs] I know, I hope for posterity the person transcribing this understands my facial expressions.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:29:00

[laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:29:00

I'm curious, then, for your daughter who grew up really in San Francisco, how has it been sort of transmitting some of this history to her since you became a lot more well versed in ethnic studies, in Philippine-American history in California—have you tried talking to her about this history?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:29:20

Oh, she knows. Yeah, she knows. She's—I probably really, really shouldn't tell this story, but I will. When she was in the third grade, she came home and she was so excited. She was going, "Mom, Mom! There's two Filipinos in our class now. There's two Filipinos!" And I'm going, "Okay. Who is it?" And she was saying this young man's name and I go, "Well then okay. Who's the other Filipino?" "Me!"

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:29:39

[laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:29:47

It's like, "What's wrong with you, Mom?"

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:30:00

[laughs]

**Allen Wilson** 1:30:01

She identifies very strongly with the Filipino side. I mean she coined a word to describe people like her: "Hapas" and "Hapa-Hapas" and "Flipazoids."

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:30:18

Would she consider herself a "hapa", does she use hapa?

**Allen Wilson** 1:30:23

I use Hapa-Hapas, I don't know.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:30:28

The hapa, from what I've heard is—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:30:30

Yeah, she identifies, definitely, Filipino.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:30:33

Where did that come from?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:30:35

She identified with my Dad! My Dad would chase her all around the house. She was really shy—

**Allen Wilson** 1:30:40

and her cousins—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:30:41

—and all her cousins.

**Allen Wilson** 1:30:46

My sisters, well, two of her cousins were older than my older sister. So they weren't—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:30:54

Well, they weren't—your father was not thrilled when we got married. That's another place that we—[laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:31:07

This is what his sister told me: one night that they were all at the family having dinner at the table and his sister told his father, "Allen's seeing a Filipina." He was not too happy.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:31:26

What did your father know about Filipinos?

**Allen Wilson** 1:31:30

Virtually nothing. They weren't white. If this is the universe, of ethnicities and races, one of these little stitches was his home turf. He had a pejorative name for everybody who wasn't Anglo-Saxon German. I could go on and spend a minute spewing out all of that, but I won't. But yeah, I guess the only Filipino who he probably knew was the barber I went to—and he didn't know him, he never went into the shop. But he knew I got my haircut there.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:32:20

I actually read what you had written about being in a mixed race child. I thought it was really, really special. So I'm curious, did being in an interracial relationship ever pose problems for you while living in California or in the Bay Area or Central Coast?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:32:43

That one time when we tried to get a place

**Allen Wilson** 1:32:46

That was Victor and I went in there.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:32:48

Oh.

**Allen Wilson** 1:32:49

Yeah. People were standing—when we went to Parkmerced and Victor went in with me.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:32:58

Is he Filipino?

**Allen Wilson** 1:32:59

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:32:59

Okay.

**Allen Wilson** 1:33:00

And they didn't have anything to rent to us. But they had rooms to rent to white folk. But that's the only real—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:33:11

That's the only time, yeah. Then it became so common now that I actually feel sometimes—

**Allen Wilson** 1:33:21

You've been superseded?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:33:22

[laughs] I wasn't unique anymore.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:33:31

And how are your parents with your interracial relationship?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:33:34

Oh, they were fine. My dad was fine. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:33:39

No questions?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:33:40

No.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:33:44

How did you feel—so I read what you had written about sort of being a mixed race child and actually, there is more scholarship coming out on mixed race Filipino children in the United States, especially. I don't know if you saw this book, it's on sort of Mexican-Filipino kids.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:34:01

I did see that somewhere!

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:34:03

That's out there.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:34:04

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:34:06

Mexipinos?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:34:06

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:34:08

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:34:08

Well, we have a Mexipino in our family too. A couple of folks. Yeah. We have all kinds of mixtures in our family. Mexipino, it was unique when Mark was born, though.

**Allen Wilson** 1:34:22

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:34:25

The "Mexipino" one came out the first

**Allen Wilson** 1:34:28

What was that term our Japanese friend of ours—what was it a hat or a T-shirt?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:34:36

It was a hat.

**Allen Wilson** 1:34:38

"I'm a Beaner-Pino"

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:34:39

A "beaner-pino." What decade was that?

**Allen Wilson** 1:34:46

The '70s.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:34:48

The '70s. Wow.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:34:51

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:34:52

Well and for you Juanita, what do you think was the most challenging part about being a mixed race person growing up in Watsonville, but maybe in perhaps moving to San Francisco?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:35:07

Well, it's just sometimes you learn to shut things out when you see things that are not so kind. Growing up you learn to shut it out. You learn not to let it get to you. The first thing I hate is for anybody to tell me who I am and what I am, because like I said, we are raised to be very proud that we are Filipino Ilocanos. And then they tell you, "Well you're not Filipino. You don't speak the language." And then my little kindergarteners before I retired going, "But Ms. Wilson you're not Filipino, you're white." [laughs] All the things I fought for—[laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:36:04

Undone by a five year old. [laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:36:10

So then I had to bring in pictures of my dad. [laughs] Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:36:16

And that's the tricky part about race and ethnicity. So much of it is based on—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:36:22

How you look.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:36:22

—your features.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:36:23

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:36:24

And I've seen images of your siblings, you all look a little different and probably were raised differently.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:36:33

Yeah, because we were three sets we lived in three separate time zones. Unfortunately I got the bet—the first three; myself, my sister, and my brother; got what I call "the best part" of growing up in the '40s with all the uncles and being spoiled. We didn't feel not wanted or been loved I guess, in a sense. And then came the two sets that kinda like—all the uncles were getting older and elderly and some of them were dying and some of them were now married younger women. So that's another part and then by the time Mario, the youngest one, came along there were hardly any uncles left. I mean they were all elderly and most of the the younger people who are newcomers, and then the newcomers looked at you and said, "You're not Filipino." We all—in the one family—we lived in different parts of the timezone. So we all have different stories.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:38:01

Right. It's interesting how you relate that too to the aging population of the manong.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:38:09

Yeah!

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:38:10

If you had them in their prime or when they were still kind of working and a little bit younger, it was a different experience for even how you identify.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:38:17

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:38:18

Versus when—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:38:19

As they aged. Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:38:22

Yeah. It sounds like they really instilled a Filipino-ness

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:38:27

In the first generation. Because we were their buy in here. That's why we were—the children of the community—were so important. I feel is that we were their buy in here

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:38:47



Yeah. You're right; these were a lot of single men who sought to establish families here.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:39:01

And a lot of them never married.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:39:03

You're saying a lot of them?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:39:04

The majority of them didn't. Yeah, never married.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:39:07

Right and so it was almost like the children of the community.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:39:12

Yes! Yeah, we were. That's why we were so spoiled and we were always taken care of.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:39:22

Did your uncle's ever mention that you were their apo?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:39:27

No. Children in Watsonville were very, very protected. I think because of what happened before and they never wanted us to know that.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:39:47

So protection looked like: one, making sure that you were fed. That you had picnics to attend and then you had leisure activities together. Did you ever—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:39:58

That whole community feel, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:40:00

Did it ever feel like you had to be protected against prejudice or discrimination? Did you ever see your uncles—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:40:07

We were never put out there.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:40:08

You just never saw it?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:40:10

No, we were never put out there to even experience that. Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:40:17

And so if I'm remembering correctly, then you sort of had your neighborhood, you had Chinatown, to maybe had the labor camp to visit. And were those sort of the main areas that you went?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:40:28

Yeah. Well, I didn't. I was not so much in the labor camp. Yeah, I only remember the one when I was a little young. And I know what the labor camps were because I've seen you know, I saw them as I was when I was young. So I know how they were. I know how they were set up. I know what they have, because of traveling they never collected a lot of stuff. Unlike myself.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:41:02

[laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:41:04

I think I do that because we really didn't have anything when we were younger. We didn't have generations of things passing down to us. We were it! We were it. I never saw old things. We only had the bare necessities of things growing up. I think that's why I'm the way I am. Do I need all this stuff? No. Allen wish I'd get rid of it. Those are Allen's family. Those are his great great grandparents. It was like, "Whoa, I never saw a picture of my great, great, great grandparents." I don't even know if I know my grandmother's real name or my grandfather on my father's side's real name. I'm still researching, but I don't know if I will ever find it. Even asking my other family—my brother's family—some of them have taken the DNA and they show up. So we know we're connected. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:42:29

That constellation at least.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:42:31

Yeah, it's there. But the names and the sharing. I have very few pictures on my father's. I just don't get answers. .

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:42:46

Have you ever been back to the Philippines?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:42:47

No. I've never been.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:42:51

We should go.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:42:51

I want to go. I really, really, really want to go. I've been I think somebody ought to start a business. Because there are so many, like myself, we don't know our Filipino side. We don't know. We only know through research of what it's like there, or who our families might be. And how much of the records really exist? I heard a story once that my father was illegitimate. I don't know if it's true. I found cousins there, but I don't know how they're connected. I went on Zoom two months ago to one of the Sulay cousins, and she started giggling. And she was going: "You look like a Sulay." "Why?" And she goes, "Wait, I gotta get my mother!" And she goes and gets her mother and tells her in Ilokano: "Look, she has eyebrows just like you Mom!"

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:44:25

How many families or people do you think haven't been back to the Philippines but want to know?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:44:32

I think there's a lot who are coming up, generations who want to know who their—because you can see it through the DNA. People who are now taking the DNA testing and getting frustrated because they can't find that link in the Philippines. And I think somebody should have started some kind of business for travel for people who don't know anything about the Philippines and the chance to travel there in their father's footsteps. Because I think it's a connection that's missing.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:45:11

Right. Right. What's interesting for me about this project is it's a collaboration. Roy is really spearheading it and we have a team of us at UC Santa Cruz now trying to support. We have a sociologist who works on Filipino labor, Steve McKay, who's kind of taking that on. I work on the Philippines, I don't work on ethnic studies, primarily in the States, I do Philippine History. I work on the history of science because my dad was a botanist, so some of that lineage is there. And I've always been interested in trying to track back to the Philippines those families, because you actually can—with some digging—go back to the communities, show some photos and say, "Take me to the person that you think is related to this person."

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:45:57

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:45:57

It's possible and I think you're right; it's kind of that extra link now for a lot of families here. Because Ancestry—DNA stuff is incomplete.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:46:08

But you don't know what's missing—

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:46:10

You don't know what's missing, yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:46:11

—until you feel it. There's a feeling you get when you find it. Like the first time I went to Maine, I felt my roots on my mother's side. There was that deep rooted sense of ancestry, but I'm still missing a link to who I really am and I think it's through my dad.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:46:38

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:46:39

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:46:40

Do you think a trip to the Philippines is in order?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:46:45

Allen could tell you, I'll drop anything to go. But I can't get my brothers to go. I have one brother living there now who does not speak the dialect. But has lived there for—

**Allen Wilson** 1:47:03

—almost a decade.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:47:04

Yeah.

**Allen Wilson** 1:47:04

It's been about a decade.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:47:06

And married there outside Manila. And has a daughter—I love her, dearly—but she doesn't call me anymore because she's getting too old.

**Allen Wilson** 1:47:17

You're old news now.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:47:18

I know.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:47:18

[laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:47:19

But yeah, I would love to go back. Because I think you know when you feel it. Yeah, and because people can just travel there without knowing. They have to have some kind of guidance.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:47:37

Right, right. Yeah. Maybe someday down the line, not too distant in future, we can go back to the Philippines. I go back yearly. And my dad had actually been living there after his own retirement. You're right, you have to go back regularly, become a little bit more acquainted, meet family, sort of recreate bonds. It's good to go with a group of people too!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:48:02

Yeah!

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:48:04

Maybe we can have that as a pie in the sky plan. Write that down!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:48:09

[laughs] I would love to love to go. I was trying to research just through the names I find in my father's papers of his parents. I mean, the names change from—they just change on different papers sometimes. So you know, which one of these truly belongs to me? Do I belong to? I should tell you, the reason why I took the DNA test is: for years and years and years my father would say, "There is no Spanish." And it's like, that can't be true because Spain had the Philippines for 400 years. So how could there not be no Spanish? So I took the DNA test then I

got my youngest brother to take the DNA test because then I have the two male and female lines. And we took it, the test came back and sure enough, there's no Spanish. How could there not be any? I don't understand. How could there not be any Spanish?

**Allen Wilson** 1:49:46

Probably less penetration by Spaniards up north?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:49:51

Potentially.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:49:52

Yeah, because I've gone through the different lists of Filipino names, Filipino names with Spanish. Our name doesn't show up, so far, in any of those groups. The Sulay name doesn't show up in any of the surnames that I've checked. So I don't know.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:50:18

Do you have other people that you grew up with in Watsonville who've done similar, like trying to go through DNA testing?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:50:27

They just did.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:50:28

Oh yeah?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:50:29

I actually got a DNA match with one of them in Watsonville.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:50:33

Who?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:50:35

He used to be the mayor Watsonville—the first Filipino mayor. What is his name, Bergman?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:50:45

Oh, Bersamin!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:50:48

Yes! I got DNA tested connected to email

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:50:52

We're interviewing him too.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:50:54

Yeah. So we got the Castro's and I got the Ber—how are we related?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:51:02

Right. And maybe that tracks back to the Philippines? Maybe northern Philippines and the Ilokano community.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:51:09

Yeah, yeah. So it's like, I don't know . . .

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:51:14

I find that fascinating how modern genomics is helping communities of—especially like the children of the manong generation—figure out not only their ancestry here, but then of course in the Philippines when a lot of those stories has had a bit of a disconnect.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:51:32

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:51:33

Yeah, so I work on science and technology studies so that's why

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:51:36

[laughs] I'm going to stay and go to the Philippines with you.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:51:44

I mean why not?! A trip or do something like that, there's probably a pot of gold somewhere in doing this. [laughs] Because the Philippines I think is a necessary part of the story, especially in that transpacific travel that your father did.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:52:00

Yeah. What was it that somebody told me once? Oh, they said something like, "Oh, Ilokanos. They're the travelers. What does that mean?"

**Allen Wilson** 1:52:12

They were the first to arrive.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:52:14

Yeah.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:52:16

Maybe because we're the only ones who would like to leave our place.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:52:21

I guess so.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:52:22

They go to different places in the Philippines, the Ilocanos.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:52:29

Yeah, that was another mind—I know my Dad had land there and I know for sure because my Dad told me, but it's not my business if it happened or not. He had land there. And that he was supposed to be left to his cousins eventually, if all of his children were here. So I don't know. But the reason why I want to know where that land was because it's another hint of where I could research on that. How it is, where it is, yeah..

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:53:31

Right. Because again, your record goes back to Nueva Ecija because I know Ecija is more of a Tagalog speaking region, right dad? And then in the Ilocos, it's different.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:53:45

Yeah.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 1:53:46

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:53:46

Interesting. And other side question, were you able to observe some of the ethnic differences among your uncle's too? Like those who spoken Visaya, those who spoke Ilokano.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:53:59

They mostly stayed together. They got together outside but mainly Ilocanos stayed with Ilocanos. They were kinda separate group-ish, but then came together only in certain ways. Through activities and stuff. But yeah, all my close, close ones are all Ilokano.



**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:54:30

Got it. What kind of activities would bring them together?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:54:33

Well, like the lodge dances in the lodge and whatever activities were going on. But mainly, yeah, probably like in the Philippines, the grouping.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:54:49

Right, especially the language difference—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:54:51

—and the language difference. Let's see, my dad spoke—

**Allen Wilson** 1:54:55

He spoke Tagalog, English, Spanish.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:54:59

He spoke in Spanish?

**Allen Wilson** 1:55:01

Spanish.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:55:07

The certificate only said that he was ready to go. He graduated, he went up to seventh grade—I don't know past that because I don't have papers. But he was I mean, my father surprised me. He was really intelligent. Even though he didn't speak, the things he knew that—I wouldn't imagine that he knew.

**Allen Wilson** 1:55:35

He read the paper every day, he watched TV news when he wasn't watching wrestling.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:55:47

Right. So he was consuming information.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:55:49

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:55:49

In a lot of different ways, even though he wasn't speaking verbally a whole lot.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:55:53

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:55:54

How much education did your mother obtain?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:55:57

About the same.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:55:57

About the same?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:55:59

But she did graduate from high school. After my youngest brother was born, she completed her high school. She went back to school and completed high school.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:56:11

At Watsonville High?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:56:12

Yep, in the adult school. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:56:15

Okay. What motivated that? Do you remember?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:56:18

Because she always instilled in us to graduate and to go to school, and so she felt that she needed to. She succeeded and all her children at least graduated from high school. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:56:38

So I'm going to shift gears a little bit from the education to—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:56:41

I thought of something too to tell you, but now I forgot it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:56:44

Oh, no. Education? Traveling?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:56:47

No, it was like growing up when we were teenagers.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:56:51

Playing around?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:56:52

No, When we were teenagers in high school—we always wanted to have our own club—and we used to call ourselves "Flips." Because you know, we needed an identity. So we always called ourselves Flips—which we didn't know that we were insulting the uncles. That was actually an insult to them. But we finally got our Filipino Youth Club in Watsonville. It only lasted two years, maybe. But we we needed our identity. And so we did start a Filipino Youth Club. And that was not done just like that—it was another time my mother had to go somewhere—whenever it would be okay that we'd start a club. Youth Club.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:57:49

Where did she have to go?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:57:52

The hierarchy. Whoever was in charge of the community then or whoever.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:57:58

To ask permission for the club to start?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:58:00

Yeah. Things just didn't happen. Yeah. I didn't know that either, but that's how things worked.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:58:09

And who was in the club?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:58:11

The teens.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:58:13

Ah, the teenagers.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:58:13

Yeah, yeah. All the uncles taught us how to dance. You know, as we grew up, we learned how to waltz, we learned how to cha-cha. But when I was growing up in high school, we wanted to do rock and roll. And the Filipino bands didn't play rock and roll.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:58:34

[laughs] What music did you like?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:58:37

I'd say it was rock and roll. We could dance to it. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:58:40

I hear the sentiment, I play it at home all the time and my dad says it just sounds like screaming all the time.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:58:49

[laughs] Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:58:49

So the youth club didn't last for very long, but was it a place where you could sort of dance together, learn cultural practices?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:58:57

We danced and just had fun with each other. Yeah. It was the place to meet. Because we're all separate in Watsonville, we all went to different schools. The only common school that most of us went to was Watsonville High. And then there was the group that went to Morro High, the Catholic school; so there was the two schools in Watsonville.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:59:23

So at its height, how many members did you have?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:59:26

I don't know, I have a list of it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:59:28

Okay, great!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:59:32

We started out with friends, but then we started writing all the ones and certain ages with their names in the area. So I do have that list. I have a few records from there.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 1:59:44

Is that how you got into hula?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 1:59:45

No, I—well, growing up we danced Filipino folk dancing from the time we were—I guess I was like six the first time when we first started Filipino folk dancing. So we were raised on Filipino folk dancing, and also hula. Because, naturally, coming through Hawai'i. Some of the aunties—one of the aunties—was born in Hawai'i, on the Big Island. And so we had hula so I got back into it after I was married and my daughter was older and because I learned there were Filipinos that I understood there and understood me, other than the newcomers.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:00:43

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:00:43

Because there was that divide when the newcomers—what we call the "newcomers"— came in the '60s. So coming in the '60s.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:00:54

Post '65?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:00:55

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:00:57

So it sounds like one of the aunties who had been born in Hawai'i came to California and brought the practice—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:01:04

Well, she didn't. But a lot of them did.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:01:06

A lot of them did? Okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:01:06

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:01:07

So other than the community—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:01:08

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:01:09

—for practicing hula.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:01:11

Well, they taught us hula—what hulu they do—but yeah. Yeah, I mean, I thought it was all one island myself growing up.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:01:22

Were there other cultural practices that were Hawaiian? Or that you thought were Hawaiian?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:01:26

Like barbecuing pig. Oh my God, I can remember going out with my Dad and the uncles and they go out and kill a goat or pig and barbecue it. I could remember that; going out on the ranch before a big party. I didn't know that what was going on, but they would go out and kill a pig. And now I know how to kill a pig from watching them.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:01:56

Oh, like my dad.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:01:57

Yeah.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:01:58

It's the preparation.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:01:59

Yeah, the prep: the feeding of vinegar, vinegar down the pig or the goat.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:02:06

Really?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:02:07

Yeah. Yeah, it's like, the vinegar. Was it rice too?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:02:11

Yeah, Filipino rice?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:02:15

Yeah.

**Allen Wilson** 2:02:16

Because then you eat the meat, the guts.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:02:20

And they're sour.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:02:22

I don't know. But I can still remember seeing them doing that then slitting the throat with the pan underneath.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:02:30

So you give the goat vinegar before you slaughtered?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:02:36

Yes.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:02:36

Yeah. Hold the throat.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:02:39

You want to get the juice from the small intestine.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:02:46

Oh, the "chocolate meat," as we grew up with it.. We didn't call it—it was chocolate meat.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:03:02

Did you like it?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:03:03

Oh, yeah! We ate it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:03:04

Nice!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:03:08

It was chocolate meat.

**Allen Wilson** 2:03:11

I remember dad's friends say, "Try it Allen! You know what you're eating? You're eating the shit."

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:03:20

[laughs] No. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:03:21

[laughs] Way to stick around. Way to stick around through all of that, wow. Did your dad ever talk about his stint in Hawai'i?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:03:38

I didn't learn about that until I took my first trip and came back.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:03:42

Oh really?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:03:43

Yeah, that's when I found that out about my father. I told you, my father knew a lot of stuff.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:03:49

But didn't talk about it.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:03:50

Never talked about it, but yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:03:52

How did you find that out on your first trip?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:03:55

On my first trip, I felt very comfortable in Hawai'i. It was like going home. I don't know why it was going home. And walking around Hawai'i, where was the first place I go? Chinatown. But yeah, I felt very calm. Walked through the park where they play mahjong and the Filipinos are playing the—I forget the card game. It felt very home. So I'm trying to figure out how would the Philippines feel? But yeah, I found hula and that's where I found a lot of Filipinos I feel



comfortable with. A lot of them are hula hulas who would teach us hula—probably Filipino. It's funny how you can walk down the street and you know somebody is Filipino. You don't even have to ask them, you just know.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:04:56

Do you mean here in California?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:04:58

Anywhere! Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:05:01

You just know?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:05:02

You just know. They don't have to look all over you, you just know.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:05:15

So you've been dancing hula for decades?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:05:19

Yes, since 2002.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:05:23

Okay.

**Allen Wilson** 2:05:23

Well, before that there was an ilani.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:05:23

Well, yeah, that's true.

**Allen Wilson** 2:05:28

So that's probably twenty-five years.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:05:31

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:05:32

Twenty-five years. And Roy said that you're a champion dancer?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:05:36

Oh, he's making that up. I'm a team player, always a team player. I can be a team player.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:05:47

[laughs] What's a team player versus a champion? [laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:05:54

I don't know, that's very Filipino. [laughs] To be like, "No, I'm not."

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:06:02

Do you feel like other residents of Watsonville or kids that grew up also had a similar connection to Hawai'i, that kind of instinctual connection, that you discovered for yourself?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:06:14

I don't know. I never spoke to anybody about it. But, yeah, because so many of the uncles came—I mean, they all came that way from my dad's era. The majority of them, some did go to Seattle. Some came in San Francisco. But the majority of the Ilokanos, all the Ilokanos, came through Hawai'i. Yeah. I mean, so much of what Hawai'i does that is in their culture is the same as in our culture. So I guess that's why we feel so at home there.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:07:07

Yeah. Do you ever feel—I mean, and this is a point of curiosity for me—so for instance, hula and some barbecuing practices found their way in Watsonville. Do you ever think Watsonville ever found its way to O'ahu or to Hawai'i? When you visited could you sense or did anyone ever talk about that? It's harder to imagine.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:07:30

No, I don't think so.

**Allen Wilson** 2:07:32

I have, in discussing with several people in the Filipino community at Watsonville is well known. Partly because of the riots, that is certainly one thing; but because of the mobility of people. You went to Salinas, you went to Santa Maria, you went to Stockton. And it's kind of like Watsonville was a focal point. Stockton was another one. I don't get that sense from Salinas, do you?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:08:11

No.

**Allen Wilson** 2:08:12

Although it had, probably, a larger Filipino population than Watsonville.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:08:16

But they came to Watsonville.

**Allen Wilson** 2:08:20

It was home.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:08:25

For all the migrant workers as they were moving through?

**Allen Wilson** 2:08:28

Yeah. And there was a special connection to Watsonville. Stockton would be the only other.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:08:37

But Watsonville's beautiful valley is nothing like in any places. Very few places. I love that feel of that valley and the beauty of it. The richness of the soil is such that beautiful, dark brown that you don't see everywhere. Between that and then the ocean smell You get the valley and then you get the the ocean breeze.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:09:09

Wow, that's very distinct.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:09:12

Yeah. Yeah. It's like you come over the hill and you go, "I'm home." Alan always gets to me he goes, "This is home." And I go, "This is never home to me. Watsonville is always home for me. When I go home, that's home.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:09:33

What were your memories then of the temperature and the climate? You have a great kind of recollection of the soil.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:09:41

I do. It was chilly at times, but I think it was more—it's comfortable when it is. It's the weather. I don't know, how do you describe it?

**Allen Wilson** 2:09:59

Comfortable?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:10:00

Comfortable. It gets cold. But then the cold will go away. It'll soon be spring. You can tell when spring comes along there. And then the summer, the heat of the summer. Yeah, you get that fog, but then it goes away soon. It doesn't stay like here in the city: That deep cold breeze that stays forever that doesn't go away. Or in Watsonville, the majority of time it flows out to the Bay. It's warm summer playing and running around bare. My mother always got mad at us because she put shoes on us, our play clothes were always ironed, and starched—nobody could ever be bad about her kids because she made sure our play clothes were right here and inside. She was on us about that. But soon as I got outside shoes came off. [laughs] always ran around barefoot in the summertime.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:10:00

Was it dirt, was it concrete?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:11:08

Dirt mostly. Dirt, concrete, pedals—it didn't matter. I ran around barefoot. It's the first thing I do now: get inside and shoes are off.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:11:29

[laughs]

**Allen Wilson** 2:11:35

I can't take mine off.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:11:38

Good for walking? Yeah, I get mad at my dad when he has his shoes on in the house. Has the landscape changed much though as you were growing up?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:11:53

Oh, slowly.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:11:54

Yeah?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:11:55

It didn't change. It only—the buildings started in really the '70s, '80s. Watsonville stayed the same way for a long time. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:12:13

And the buildings were shifting.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:12:14

And then the buildings and the things all started shifting. Building more housing in the fields—well they were fields before and it was spread out. You can really tell—we came over the hill from Santa Cruz and you could see the valley. At that time you could see Watsonville over here and you can see all the farmland. But now, you come over the hill and you just see it just spread: all the housing right in front of you.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:12:46

Instead of the farmland from before.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:12:48

Yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:12:50

Is that the main change that you've observed with the agricultural lands? Have the ownership of the agricultural lands changed much?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:12:57

I don't know, I left in the '60s. After I was married, I wasn't around to really see the change. Just like one big change to many buildings—as everywhere—and taking your beautiful farmland. Which I'm not willing to farm—but that's one thing I didn't want to do.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:13:35

How come?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:13:36

I have no idea? [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:13:40

I'm curious, too—I've killed both my batteries. And that's fine, but—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:13:44

I have more!

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:13:45

Oh, that's okay. These are like —

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:13:46

I have Sony!

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:13:48

You have Sony ones?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:13:49

Yeah!

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:13:50

Oh, it's fine. Thank goodness for this great recorder, it's just been sticking around. I do have a question about that, and then because we're already at 2:13 and I don't want to exhaust you too much—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:14:01

Don't worry about us. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:14:04

—but one of my curiosities is how the landscape of California, especially in Watsonville, can be tracked and changed based on the movement of manong, right? Because, like you were saying, it was a mobile population. And I wonder too how that tracks alongside agricultural development, how the landscape is shifting, and then certainly when buildings start to emerge and really change? Just something off the top of my head. I'm sure it's gonna take a little bit more research.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:14:38

Yeah, because I've never really thought of that. And then the changing and the aging and the new immigrants that are coming in; how it's changed. Watsonville now is not the Watsonville I grew up in, at all.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:15:02

Right. So

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:15:04

Buildings are different, everything's different. The only thing that is a constant right now is the Plaza. The Plaza is the same. The high school's in the same place, but even the buildings there have changed. It's not the Watsonville I grew up in. Watsonville I grew up in is a very

farming town. Very quiet. People knew where they belong, like I learned. You just learn things: where you belong and what you should do. You just live your life.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:15:47

Right. Did you observe other communities belonging in other parts of town in Watsonville? The Filipinos hung out in one particular area, and then perhaps the white European Communities—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:16:01

I lived on the side of them. Like I said, I lived in the north east, and everybody was in the south of Watsonville.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:16:13

Other communities are in the south?

**Allen Wilson** 2:16:15

Yeah. Mexican were in the south. Let's see on your street there was the—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:16:32

The Crosetti's.

**Allen Wilson** 2:16:41

What really changed, I think was: second generation, they're breaking away. There's a push-pull. So like, Firestone opened up a plant in Salinas. And Ted, Phil, and—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:16:58

A lot of them went to work for Firestone.

**Allen Wilson** 2:17:01

They went to work in Firestone. No, they didn't—even if they worked in that field through their parents when they're growing up—that was not for them. And then there was mobility and they went to college, opened the doors, and then you have the new arrivals. I had to sanitize that. I almost said, "F-O-B." But that's what they were called.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:17:33

Oh, I see.

**Allen Wilson** 2:17:33

The indigenous Filipino population.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:17:37

Oh, interesting. I was called that when I was growing up.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:17:40

What?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:17:41

An F-O-B, a "fob."

**Allen Wilson** 2:17:42

Yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:17:44

I didn't realize that, like a generation of Filipinos also used that.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:17:48

Oh, yeah. That's like us with the "Flips"—we didn't know.

**Allen Wilson** 2:17:53

But yeah, it's just really happens in most communities. Each generation removed is a little more acculturated. And they gain—you gain social and economic mobility, but you're losing a piece of your identity. And I think, you know, down the line, people begin to realize that, there was something back there. There's a pull.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:18:29

Right. Right.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:18:30

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:18:32

Wow. And it sounds like with the newer generations of people that were coming in, that was probably even changing how the layout of Watsonville and where communities stayed and congregated, right?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:18:45

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:18:45



So if the northeast was typically sort of Italian, maybe European communities with your family. The south had Mexicans, Filipinos—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:18:56

—Chinese, Japanese. Well, they were spread out because they were on the farms. They had the farms in the '40s—after the war, when they started coming back. We didn't know that either growing up. We didn't know that Japanese were sent during World War II, that they were sent to—I almost said concentration camps—but . . .

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:19:29

Internment camps?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:19:30

Internment camps.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:19:32

You weren't aware?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:19:33

No, we were not even aware of that growing up.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:19:37

What happened to the farms now? They were already developing two housing projects.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:19:44

When?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:19:45

The housing, the farmers?

**Allen Wilson** 2:19:48

There's still a lot there.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:19:49

Ah, there's still a lot there?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:19:50

Yeah.

**Allen Wilson** 2:19:50

There's a lot of flower—a lot of people growing flowers. Strawberries are big right now, another berry crop, their table vegetables, smaller farms. A lot of organic growers, who interestingly mainly come from back east. Some have PhDs and they end up farming. There's an interesting farm: a young woman came from Nicaragua and she founded a farm that—I can't think of . . .

**Allen Wilson** 2:20:29

But, yeah, it's a really organic farm. She sells in farmer's markets throughout the Bay Area.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:20:38

A lot of Watsonville farms are selling at farmer's markets up around the city and all through the Bay Area.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:20:46

So they come up here to sell?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:20:47

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So yeah, there's another piece of history that we didn't know about in Watsonville.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:20:55

Wow.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:20:56

Yeah. Our best friends growing up, since we were a minority, were Filipinos, Japanese, and Chinese. We all kind of stuck together because there were so few of us in the high school. So we had no idea and my father never said anything, my mother never said any. We were all friends. So we had no idea.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:21:22

When did you learn about the internment camps?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:21:27

Maybe about the same time?

**Allen Wilson** 2:21:30

We knew about them because of Larry and Muriel.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:21:32

Oh, that's right. Our best friends, yeah. Because Muriel grew up in . . . yeah.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:21:41

Nick Segundo, the family of Nick Segundo, also—

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:21:45

—was from Watsonville! Yeah, I have an uncle who worked in the grape fields. Also along the Central Coast.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:21:54

Yeah.

**Allen Wilson** 2:21:56

That's the other thing. New arrivals did not do farm work.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:22:00

Right.

**Allen Wilson** 2:22:01

I remember one guy came out there. He was an accountant but he couldn't find a job because he was the wrong shade of—yeah, but anyway—he lasted a day and he said, "No mas, no mas. I am not coming back. But yeah, that changed too. Because I mean, when I was working for the cit of San Francisco, Filipinos and Chinese found out that they could get jobs in accounting; clerks, accountants, and whatnot. They were good test takers. And so they got high on the list, and got it. And, you know, a totally different vibe because they were homeowners. Their children went to parochial schools, by and large.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:23:03

Yeah. The same thing kind of happened in Watsonville. Same kind of thing.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:23:08

Right. Right. Would you say that this happened around 1965, like that big shift?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:23:14

Yeah, late '60s-'70s.

**Allen Wilson** 2:23:18

University grads coming from the Philippines are fighting to get a job close to what their degree was. Because you found nurses and physician assistants who were medical doctors in the Philippines.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:23:34

Right.

**Allen Wilson** 2:23:34

Because we can recognize South Asia because the British set up the schools. But we can't—and we were there for how long? I mean come on.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:23:47

Almost fifty years.

**Allen Wilson** 2:23:48

Our general primary physician is Filipino, he's good. I don't know how many like him, who didn't get to practice medicine, who just would be just as good.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:24:10

All those are those uncles that came early who are professionals worked in the fields They never worked their jobs.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:24:22

Oh, man so many questions. I'm curious to how your relationship has been to Filipino arrivals after 1965? Have you noticed a disjoint at all?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:24:33

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:24:35

Really? In like the way to relate, culture to culture?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:24:38

There is. They don't—there is no connection between the newcomers and the Filipinos before because I think we just got shut out. We just got shut out after the newcomers came.

**Allen Wilson** 2:25:03

Two things: language and food.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:25:08

Well, I don't know so much about the food.

**Allen Wilson** 2:25:09

I mean the food that you ate at home was not what they ate in the Philippines.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:25:14

Yeah.

**Allen Wilson** 2:25:15

They will get that. And if you can't speak Tagalog, Ilokano, Pangasinan—

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:25:21

You're not as connected.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:25:23

You're not connected with them. Yeah. Yeah, I think a lot of people got hurt in the community that a lot of those who grew up here got kind of shut out of the community in a sense. It's not talked about too much.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:25:50

Yeah, it's always interesting for me too. My parents arrived in 1985. And my dad's sister was really the first one to bring over the Gutierrez family in the '70s. That's when she first arrived. I was the only one of my siblings that was born here. All of my other siblings were born in the Philippines. So even within our tiny unit there's a disconnect of language, of childhood. I only knew L.A.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:26:20

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:26:21

I would describe L.A. in the same way you might describe Watsonville as home. But even within that, my connection to the generations of the waves of Filipinos that came.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:26:31

They're all different.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:26:32

They're all different, yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:26:35

But we were always told growing up—cause sometimes you go, "Well, why? Why?" Like my mother would send money back to the Philippines but yet we would go without things, you know? And the saying always is: "It's okay. We're making the way for others to come." Sometimes we were sending money when they got education but there was no one here to help us to go on through school necessarily—financially. But it's okay, because we're making the way for others to come.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:27:21

Your mom would say this?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:27:23

My Mom, Dad, Uncles. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:27:33

That's special.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:27:34

It's special, but sometimes it's like it didn't make sense to us. Even though we were spoiled and got everything when we're younger. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:27:48

Like where's all this money going when there's need here?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:27:51

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:27:52

Immediate need.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:27:53

Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:27:56

Did any of your family from the Philippines ever visit? Did you ever get to meet like a cousin for instance?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:28:02

My brother? Came in '78, '79—I can't remember. That was another part: I didn't understand what my role was. I learned what it was to be the oldest child [pauses] in my fifties or so. I don't how old I was when [my brother] came.

**Allen Wilson** 2:28:31

Mid thirties?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:28:32

Mid thirties that I, as an oldest child, had a role to play So when my father petitioned them, when it came time to petition them to come over after his citizenship, that I had to go with my Dad to help petition for that part of the family to come

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:28:57

I see. Because you were the US citizen.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:28:59

I was the US citizen. Well, he was too but by that point, for some reason, I'm the one who had to go with them and sign papers or guarantee or whatever it was that was needed. I went, "Oh, that's the part of being the oldest child." So I do have nieces and nephews and great nieces and great nephews on that side of the family, but I don't know them now. I only met them when they came over because I was already married and had my daughters grown when they came.

**Allen Wilson** 2:29:50

About same age as Eunice.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:29:54

I don't remember. But I only saw them briefly because I didn't live over in that area then.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:29:59

Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:30:00

So I don't know them there. Unfortunately, I didn't really get to know my brother at all. I only met him a few times because then they got their own home. And, you know, I always get home to my parents. But I never really get to see them or grow them. We're only connecting now sometimes, and Facebook makes it possible. So I do know some that grew up like the oldest, his oldest grandson, I know him because he was here around.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:30:43

For a time being?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:30:44

For a time being. Yeah, I really don't know them that well. I would love to.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:30:50

Sure. And was that Sulay cousin that you were able to connect with on Zoom? Is this person still in the Philippines?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:30:56

Oh, yeah. I Zoomed two people. Somebody goes, "Oh, Augustine!"—because my father's maiden name is Augustine—so they go, "Oh, we have an Augustine and from that area. So we contacted through Facebook, actually, a lot of it. And one was through DNA. So yeah, we don't talk all the time and we only talked once or twice. But I don't know how to ask them. I asked them if they knew my father or anybody and the letters, I gave them names of that area and they go, "Oh, yeah, that's my uncle, or that's my father or son." But I haven't been able to get information from them. But somehow I could almost see how it's going. Because I live here and they live there. It's still—they live in rural areas.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:32:01

Where are they in the Philippines?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:32:02

In Talaga?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:32:06

Talaga, yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:32:08

Because it's all right there in that same—

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:32:10

Sort of the center of Luzon. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So and how did you find that one cousin through Ancestry? Did that person's DNA match come up and then you connected on that?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:32:22

Yeah. I emailed him. That was on 23andme, not Ancestry. They're all different.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:32:30



I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:32:30

Yeah. Like 23andme is like, yeah, I'm connected but it doesn't give you any more information. And a lot of people take their DNA, but they have no trees, no information. So it doesn't do anything good. And sometimes you message them and they'll answer you or not answer you, or they'll get back to you and not back to you. That kind of thing. And then through Ancestry, I've connected one of them through that.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:33:08

I see. So you were able to email them directly?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:33:11

Yeah, to message them directly. Through those places.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:33:16

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:33:20

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:33:20

I see what you're saying. Like in lieu of good record keeping and archival data, through things like Ancestry and 23andme are at least able to give you some hint of a link.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:33:33

Yeah, maybe where to look if they have a tree—like I downloaded a few trees—one had Augustine so maybe if they had a little more information, or I get more information. So I'll take that name that they had on that tree and then I'll go to family search, the other one—the free one, the family search one—and I'll go through their Philippine records that they have there. They have more than—even though they're owned by the same group, they are all different. So this research, Family Search, has more Philippine records. You could go directly and if you know how to navigate through some of it. The learning curve, though. I got into some census in some area, like Licab, where my father said he was born, and I found a whole lot of Augustines that lived there and a few Sulays. So I've been taking their names and putting in all the information I could find in a form, and then just try and hopefully, someday, to connect or somehow find that connection through all that.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:34:58

That's tedious work. That is hefty.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:35:02

I have a lot of papers in the back, that's why.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:35:08

I think that's great. I'm very curious about how those dots continue to connect.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:35:14

That's it. You have to gather the dots.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:35:17

You do.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:35:17

Yeah. Even though, if you get a feeling about what—like, I got a feeling about one—"Juana Sulay" [laughs]. There was a Juana Sulay, and I had a connection. I don't know why. I can't prove it. But the time is about right.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:35:37

I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:35:37

So I just keep finding what I can find of one person, keep in record of what I find.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:35:49

Good to know. I am probably going to have to ask you more questions about this if I get a chance to interview you again.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:35:55

It's been fun. I got nervous for nothing.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:36:00

It's fine!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:36:01

I don't know because sometimes your thoughts just—I'm not a storyteller like a lot of my friends are. I just know things come and go. [laughs] I think I take after my father, I really don't

speaking a whole lot. You know, I just like taking him to the graveyard. I love going to the graveyards, the cemeteries. You meet the nicest people out there.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:36:29

[laughs]

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:36:30

You do! Ask Allen, he didn't believe me! I dragged about the cemetery because I'm researching not only my side of the family, but his side of the family. So I got in the back room in the office. But I have old photographs from way back on his side, tons of them. And just doing his family history of his life. So I have all these going, then I've started somebody else's tree. Then I help somebody else then I start their tree. It just goes. But like Alan, we found out—because he didn't care about who he came from. But then we found out he came also from the Mayflower. He only stopped there because he liked that one the best. He was the first—

**Allen Wilson** 2:37:25

I descend from the first colonial execution.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:37:28

Oh, wow.

**Allen Wilson** 2:37:31

Yeah, I kind of like that. That's a nice badge to wear.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:37:33

Oh my god. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:37:34

Do you know the family name?

**Allen Wilson** 2:37:36

Yeah, Billington.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:37:37

Billington.

**Allen Wilson** 2:37:38

He was not a Puritan. He was a carpenter or something anyway. They brought a lot of laborers in since they're too busy praying to learn to trade, I guess. But yeah, he ran afoul of Bradford, a governor, and he killed somebody. It probably wasn't murders, it probably was—

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:38:03**

An accident.

**Allen Wilson 2:38:04**

—altercation. But anyway, they hung him. They didn't like him anyway.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:38:10**

First colonial execution.

**Allen Wilson 2:38:12**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:38:14**

But he had kids.

**Allen Wilson 2:38:16**

Yeah. Oh, yeah, he had children.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:38:18**

He had a couple—well, he had three, but only one survived. But out of that one survivor . . .

**Allen Wilson 2:38:32**

There's a fellow who still carries the Billington name. He wrote a piece—was a professor at Harvard or something—talking about it. Because some people want to hush that up. Yeah, we'll find your family.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:38:53**

Oh, sure. Yeah. But it's very distinct, right? I mean, the ability to go back essentially to colonies.

**Allen Wilson 2:39:03**

But there are hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of us now who are descended from Billington. So it's not like there are twelve of us and we get together once a year.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:39:13**

Just to toast to them. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:39:24

But then that's totally distinct from kind of a lot of the investigatory work that you've had to do for your family. Just because the records sort of start to trail off. You can't go as far back with that much clarity.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:39:37

Yeah, yes. Yeah.

**Allen Wilson** 2:39:40

A distant cousin did all the work on that.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:39:42

Oh, wow. Okay,

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:39:43

On that side. But it was linking up and finding the connection to link up. Because nobody had it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:39:50

How'd you do that one?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:39:53

Allen just thought I wasted time. I start with his grandparents and you list all the children and I do all their genealogy. I always put three generations because if you don't put three generation for each sibling it's hard to connect the DNA because you have to have some somewhere to link. Alan thinks you get direct descendant and forget about everybody else, but that's not how it works because sometimes the only way you can find a line is through a sibling. So I did all this work and Alan thought I was wasting my time, he wanted to throw out all the old pictures and whatever. I go, "No because Stephanie needs to know where she came from." I started mine because I wanted my daughter to know where she came from so it happened to be two families.

**Allen Wilson** 2:40:58

There was a photo you posted of Charlotte and she saw that and wondered why her great grandmother was online somewhere in somebody else's file. They found out that yeah, the lines split there.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:41:23**

I see. I see.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:41:25**

And that was set through a second marriage. That's why you always write down all the marriages you find.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:41:31**

Right, then using something like social media, post it online, and then someone's bound to respond.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:41:38**

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:41:38**

Oh, wow. Yeah, cool. All right, so maybe I can ask—I love it!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:41:45**

Really, we're not doing anything. Are you hungry?

**Hermes Gutierrez 2:41:49**

Oh, no.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:41:50**

Are you sure dad? I feel like maybe you should snack a little bit.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:41:52**

No, no, but have another cup of coffee.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:41:58**

Oh! He wants another cup of coffee, hun?

**Allen Wilson 2:42:00**

Okay. I would have had better—the bakery was closed, I think they're on vacation this week.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:42:09**

Aw, that's fine. Thank you.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:42:10**

What do you want? Do you want a little more water in there? Are you okay?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:42:16

I'm okay with coffee and then probably pick up one of these.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:42:29

We were gonna get pork buns. Over here is good.

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:42:34

There's a hard in the back?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:42:35

Do you want to smoke?

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:42:36

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:42:37

My dad smokes cigarettes.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:42:37

Oh!

**Hermes Gutierrez** 2:42:40

There's—here in the back?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:42:41

Okay, someone pick up a chair. Will he be okay, will he need a chair?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:42:41

No, I think he'll be okay. You'll be okay.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:42:41

There's a back porch, don't look at my mess in the back porch though. I'm hiding it. Go follow Alan. And somewhere I think I have a—wait I think. Yeah, sure Let's take a break.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:43:01

Oh, absolutely.

**Allen Wislon 2:43:02**

Doing this . . . here you go . . .

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:44:27**

Oh, it's okay. It's okay, no worries!

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:45:09**

Oh, this is great. I'll keep a note because it's a good break for the timer. Christina and Meleia, another graduate student on the project, would really love to know if you have any hula photos from when you were younger?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:45:28**

No.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:45:29**

Oh, really?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:45:29**

I've been trying and trying and trying. We hardly took pictures back in the '40s and then with the war, they couldn't afford to take pictures and develop them. So yeah, I was surprised we had as many as we did, but this is what I didn't give Christina. I said. "No, you can't take that." [laughs] I want to show you, I found this when I was in Hawai'i. This is the year my Dad went to Hawai'i and that's what it looked like when my Dad was—that's Waikiki actually now. If you've ever been to Hawai'i, this is the Pig Palace. And my father said that's where they used to go and gamble.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 2:46:24**

Another leisure activity. And so for maybe for posterity sake, I'll just describe what this is: the image that says "the Royal Hawaiian 1928." So this would have been—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 2:46:36**

That time my father went to Hawai'i. Yeah and then to Waikik and I go to bookstores, I go to the library—if I could talk to whoever is with me to go the library and the Bishop Museum. Because I after the my first visit, my father told me that they lived in Hawai'i and they lived across the street from the Queen's hospital. So the next time I went to Hawai'i, I went to the Bishop Museum Library. And I didn't get to do too much research. But I talked to somebody there and they said, "Yeah, there were a lot of Filipinos living around there." There were barracks, or I don't know what kind of housing that was around that area. So I don't know if I could find records they kept during that time of people living there. So it would be interesting.



**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:47:51

Yeah, absolutely. Especially because then you'd be able to sort of trace your father a little bit in his movements there.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:47:59

His employment too.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:48:05

Were these the folders that you wanted to organize them before?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:48:08

Well, I did meet with Eva yesterday—Christina is gonna interview her—but we were there the other day, I haven't had time to print them out to add. And I think they were actually more to that the binder she had. These are ongoing binders so they're not permanent of what she's scan, because they're always going to be added to. As much as I can find. But I do want to keep them somewhere.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:48:47

Sure.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:48:48

And my first thought, a long time ago, was at UC Santa Cruz, because that's our home county. That's where I was hoping for. So thank you, thank you, thank you. So these are not for me because my family, they don't know what to do with it. So I do want to leave them to UC Santa Cruz. But it's an ongoing project to keep building on it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:49:17

Absolutely. I think what we can anticipate and do for instance, is we can scan what we've got and have that on hand, and then maybe check back in. Because this isn't going to be the end of the project, right?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:49:29

Right.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:49:29

And so if there's anything added, if you feel okay, just marking that.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:49:35

Well, I'm trying to mark what's been scanned.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:49:39

So yeah, so we actually have an undergraduate researcher also, who's going to be scanning everything.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:49:44

So did they scan all the way? Okay. She said she was going to wait.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:49:50

So on Saturday, I'm going to transport them to Santa Cruz with a nice flatbed scanner and I'm going to instruct our researcher to label them properly, document by document, so that they live in a digital place. And then we can return the hardcopy binder.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:50:05

Yeah. And then I could always add.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:50:07

Absolutely, yeah! And then if you have any ways of just like marking the new additions,

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:50:11

What I've done, because Roy's scanned some before too. So what I've done is if they have little marks on them like a little "x", yep, they've been scanned.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:50:20

Oh, okay by Roy.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:50:25

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:50:27

Okay

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:50:28

That way I knew what was scanned and was not or else I would not have any way to know.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:50:45

We can do that too. I think Roy probably maintains his database separately. We're gonna do a whole nother scan really for the special collections in the archives and that's the one that we think is going to be sort of installed and so we'll just do it again.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:51:03

Yeah do it again.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:51:09

I'm so glad that's going to happen and work out.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:51:12

This has always been my dream when I started the researching, that I wanted someplace. Since Allen's mother already donated the Bancroft books to UC Santa Cruz library. When his father or—when did your mom donate that stuff to the library? After your father's death right?

**Allen Wilson** 2:51:19

Which stuff?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:51:21

The Bancroft books?

**Allen Wilson** 2:51:56

I don't remember.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:51:57

Anyway, she donated them to her So ever since she did that.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:52:08

That's kind of the architecture of the project. So Steve McKay, who's also kind of working as faculty on this, he's really well connected to special collections and regional history department there. And they love this collection. And I think they're really trying to make space for not only the recordings, but then also just copies of the images and whatnot. And so they're hoping to make that available in house like if you visit special collections, but then also online so you can still see some of these materials.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:52:38

Well, good. So yes, let's find a home yeah, yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:52:46

That's great. If you feel comfortable, I can go ahead and transport these back to our research assistant, Nick. He's also doing interviews, and then he'll scan them and then I'll pick them back up from him on the 21st of May then I can bring them back to you immediately.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:53:01

Okay, yeah. Do you want to take a few at a time? I mean, they're heavy.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:53:07

Okay, yeah,

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:53:09

I could tell you I go go through withdrawals.

**Allen Wilson** 2:53:14

Separation anxiety.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:53:16

I definitely don't want to keep it from you too long.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:53:20

Okay in the image: this is Auntie Esther. This is holding the Filipino flag. That's Auntie Connie Ramirez, she's the one who was born on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:53:46

Is this the one who taught you hula?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:54:28

No, it was another lady from Salinas. The male I don't know, but the lady standing up is my mother.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:54:41

Okay!

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:54:42

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:54:43

What what year would this have been?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:54:44

This is 1978.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:54:47

Okay. Oh, wow.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:54:50

That would be good too: for you to take video of some pictures being explained.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:54:59

Oh, of course.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:55:03

I told you I have a battery.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:55:10

Oh Sony, the bane of my existence will be on the—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:55:13

I know about batteries. I was the technical person at school.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:55:18

[laughs] Oh I feel for the person who's transcribing this in the future.

**Allen Wilson** 2:55:25

They're getting paid.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:55:28

What's wonderful—

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:56:02

What did you know about the Philippines or Filipinos when you were growing up in Santa Cruz?

**Allen Wilson** 2:56:14

I think we're in eighth grade—seventh, eighth grade together. He was the first Filipino I knew. Tony the barber. Had a barber shop right off Pacific Avenue in Santa Cruz. We went there because it was just cool. I mean, there were all the flashy dressers coming in and out on weekends. I mean, guys come in dressed to the nines. Yeah. That's about it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:57:20

Where exactly did you meet? So you met at Cabrillo, but was it a class?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:57:24

No, no, it was a student lounge.

**Allen Wilson** 2:57:26

I saw you in Hinton's class, U.S. history

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:57:30

Oh, that's right. I didn't even see you there.

**Allen Wilson** 2:57:41

Then saw her in there she was waiting for somebody and started talking and we went from there.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:58:08

Was Allen your first boyfriend?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 2:58:10

No. I had a boyfriend in high school. [laughs]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 2:58:16

Was she your first girlfriend?

**Allen Wilson** 2:58:21

I had a lot of short ones, you know, last two weeks

2:59:53

[Overlapping, difficult to decipher conversations. Juanita is showing pictures.]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:02:02

Because we did throw a couple of dances [whispers] with rock and roll.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:02:21

Were you listening to bands like the Beatles?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:02:24

No, the Beatles came later. We had like the Temptations, Buddy Holly.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:03:37

So maybe as a nice way to cap off the recording that's caught so much of good conversation already, I'll ask one more question. Why do you think this work is important, this collection of stories that we're trying to preserve for Watsonville.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:04:01

For the generations, not for us. It's important to remember who came before us and the sacrifices they—you're going to make me cry—

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:04:15

—for the sacrifices they made what they had to go through themselves and didn't pass it down to us—it's important for the generations who come way after us searching for who they are and to connection is important, in a lot of ways that people don't realize. Just working for the San Francisco school district for forty years. I was always told, "Never forget where you come from." And I really try hard to remember that. Never forget, never forget where you came from and the sacrifices they made. And through that, I was able to see what's happening to the Filipino youth here in the city in San Francisco in the early 2000s, because they were having an identity crisis. And the schools are noticing that a lot of them were dropping out and a lot of stuff is going on. And they lost who they were, they were looking—they lost their identity. They were struggling to find who they were. I want to be able to put that out so they can find it.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:06:12

You know, I find that to be special to in the sense that like, you know, you're speaking about students in San Francisco who maybe have very different migration paths compared to yours, but you're seeing them tied to the same story.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:06:26

Yeah. The same identity. Every child, we come in life in a teenager's where I guess we look for who we are, who are we? And for them, here in the city, they lost a lot of who they were. So all the students that I ran across through whatever I was doing for the school district, especially the Filipinos, I know I can help them. I remember when the first Filipino teacher came, one of the first Filipino teachers here in San Francisco

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:07:23

What was that like?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:07:27

It was exciting it the first first time. I'm starting to see people that I didn't have when I was going to school, people I could identify with that I wish I had when I was younger.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:07:45

Now at work in a school setting.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:07:48

Yeah. Yeah. And that's where I learned about—oh, I was gonna tell you that story. The story my mother told me that she got one of the aunties. I guess when I was down crying or whenever when people would make fun of me that I don't remember, she would tell me the story about how God made us and that the story was: "God was baking one day and he decided he was gonna make people I don't know how the story exactly went. Well God put his first batch in the oven. He put it in and he took it out. And it was like not done. So those were the bites. So he tried again, put it in a bag, took it out. He didn't watch it very well. He left it in too long. So I had the darker skin up. This time, God was not going to make a mistake. Put in the batch in the oven. watched it very carefully. When he pulled it down, it was a beautiful brown. And that's who you are." I remember that My Mom tells me where she got it from, I never told anyone because I thought as I got older, I was like, "Well, that's really prejudiced." My mother must have gotten that story from one of the auntie's.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:09:54

Yeah, to sort of transmit that to the kids. . .

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:10:00

I mean how could that be a Filipino?

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:10:03

It was like an origin story.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:10:05

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:10:08

Oh gosh, now a side question. This is gonna be terrible for the person transcribing, but—it sounds like you had a recognition of your skin color growing up in Watsonville. Was that because you identified as someone who was brown or did people point that out to you?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:10:29



Identified, like my daughter. I picked up broken English. I spoke proper English like the uncles. My mother didn't, my mother's an English speaker, but I didn't pick up her I picked up the uncle's broken English. I mean, even in high school they asked me if I was born in the Philippines. I worked hard to take out—but the minute I went the first time to Hawai'i and the people that picked us up on the tour spoke broken English, within five, ten minutes that was coming out of my mouth again.

3:11:22

[Overlapping chatter; talking about parking]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:12:01

Thanks for all of this. I know we're gonna have to talk again.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:12:05

I'd love to. You have to come you have to come and hula.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:12:14

I definitely want to. See how rickety my hips are.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:12:18

You'll pick it up, especially if you take Tahitian. I watched some of our my hula sisters when they're pregnant, and they're out they're still doing Tahitian. They were in good shape.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:12:52

When are your hula classes?

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:12:55

Mine are on Thursday nights from eight to nine. Yeah, but the ones that are just started are usually seven to eight. Free intro.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:13:10

Send me the link.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:13:25

Oh, check it out. Yeah.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:13:59

It's amazing what hula can give you if we have more teachers and more administrators.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 3:14:11**

One more thing: and the hope is that part of this archive that we're building is going to become part of like a K-12 curriculum.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 3:14:22**

Yes.

**Kathleen Gutierrez 3:14:22**

Right. I think Roy mentioned that. Hopefully that's the plan, that it can find its way into public schools. We're starting already to think of what that might look like and Pajaro Valley Unified School District, but then expanding that. So long term.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 3:14:37**

Yeah. I saw it happen in San Francisco School District. They gave every school, they gave the school a library of all the ethnic literature. The thing is, it somehow only lasted like five years, six years. It just like dropped down to nothing I see. And it was up to individual teachers to maybe celebrate certain things. So yeah, it's it's a real tricky thing to really embed into education. That's going to be the hardest part

**Kathleen Gutierrez 3:15:23**

So it's not sort of an elective, it becomes really part.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson 3:15:40**

Not even elective, first there was demand in each grade level to teach whatever. Then it came down to the teachers which ones they were going to pay. And they had everything appropriate to grade level. But it was just never really embedded. I really think it has to embed in state law.

3:16:36

[Overlapping conversations, hard to discern who is speaking and what is said.]

**Kathleen Gutierrez 3:18:22**

But so far, we have eight people scheduled for interviews. Hopefully another set soon enough once Roy gives us their contact information. And like I said, I'll be talking to Modesto in a couple weekends.

3:19:59

[Overlapping conversations]

**Kathleen Gutierrez 3:20:42**

We realize that there's so much more history to tell from different angles.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:20:47

Right? Yep. Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:20:48

That's fascinating and relevant.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:20:52

Yeah.

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:20:52

And thank you for helping us find more people to talk to. Yeah. And you know, as long as you can give those contacts to Roy, and then he can sort of shuffle that down to us. We have until about June 30. That's our plan.

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:21:04

I hope he does. I told him yesterday, so keep it in mind and ask.

3:21:18

[coughing, overlapping conversations]

**Kathleen Gutierrez** 3:22:18

Thank you, Juanita

**Juanita Sulay Wilson** 3:22:26

You're welcome. I'm glad to make another connection and you're only across the bay. I'm gonna get you into hula. I know you would love hula.