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Daniel "Dan" Kerubin Fallorina interviewed by Ian Hunte Doyle Part 2 of 3

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Daniel "Dan" Kerubin Fallorina interviewed by Ian Hunte Doyle Part 2 of 3

Speakers: Daniel "Dan" Kerubin Fallorina; Ian Hunte Doyle

Date: May 31, 2023

Scope and Contents:

In this interview, originally recorded in-person, Daniel "Dan" Kerubin Fallorina speaks with Ian Hunte Doyle, a member of the Watsonville is in the Heart team. In the interview, Dan describes his mother, Angelina Nicolas Fallorina's career in Watsonville's food processing industry from 1963 through 1987. He explains that Angelina worked for United Foods and in the Green Giant-Pillsbury factory. Dan shares that while working in food processing, Angelina was a member of the Teamsters Local 912 union. In addition, Dan discusses Angelina's work in agriculture. He describes Angelina's work harvesting produce as well as her role overseeing bookkeeping while the Fallorina family sharecropped strawberries with Reiter Berries during the 1960s. Dan also reflects on Angelina's involvement in Watsonville First United Methodist Church and her love for gardening. This interview is part two of a series of three interviews conducted by the Watsonville is in the Heart team with Dan Fallorina.

Ian Hunte Doyle 00:00

And, okay. So this is Ian Hunte Doyle, interviewing Daniel Kerubin Nicolas Fallorina. It's 1:44 on Wednesday, May 31, 2023. And we're at Dan's house. So yeah, I guess to start with I'll just go over it again. I'd like to honor your mother's memory, get a little bit of the background information. Maybe we can talk about the canneries. And I'm interested also, you know, in your mother's role, but also like the, the nature of the work, the labor, you know, and where, where they were. But we can get into that and maybe talk about sharecropping towards the end too. But maybe you want to start off with some of the background information on your mother.

Dan Fallorina 00:57

So my mom came in 1952 after she had married my dad, so that's in another interview. But when she first came, apparently my dad was working in Soledad, and they were working in carrots. So my, my mom had talked about how she would learn how to pick the carrots, you know. And they would pick the carrots, and they would have to make sure that the carrots were bunched in one pound bunches. And she said that, you know, the boss would say, you know, it can't be more than one pound. Because if it's more than one pound, then we're losing money. And if it's less than one pound, then the customer is gonna get upset. So it has to be one pound, you know. So it was amazing. Because when she would talk about that. And she would, she would pick things up, she'd go, you know, "yeah, this is one pound." You know, and so she could tell, you know, you know, weighing different things, if that can be one pound or not. And it was like, it always amazed me when she would go, "yeah, this is a pound."

Dan Fallorina 02:09

But shortly after, you know, being in Soledad, I believe it's 1955 is when they moved to the Pajaro Valley. And then they went ahead and started sharecropping in the strawberries. So they lived in two different locations. I think it was maybe three different locations on San Andreas, but I only remember

two. And so my mom and dad were sharecropping with another fellow named George, I don't know if I have all the information on them. But so, so from there for where she did the sharecropping— it looked like she helped with the books because we found some books that she had written about all the different employees that they had, the amount of time that they were working, and some were paid by piecemeal, which means that they would be paid by the crate. But the way that sharecropping worked was, the owner of the land, and I believe they were working for Reiter Berries at that time, would provide the land and it was up to the sharecropper to buy the berries, which were the plants. So I remember that the plants were in like corrugated wax boxes, and they would have to take those out of the boxes, and then they would have to get a crew to plant those into the ground. And so they had to buy all the fertilizer, all the tools, or whatever necessary to get those plants going. But, you know, the owner of the land, Reiter Berries, would say, okay you have to use my berries. And so they would— you would have to buy the berries from them. So and then they took a certain percentage of the profit also. And I, I could probably have calculated that but I'm not sure what it was. But in the it shows on the book, so how much they received in net profit after they paid all their employees, the taxes, the supplies. That's all shown in the books.

Dan Fallorina 04:50

So my— both my mom and dad, yeah, they were out there picking the strawberries along with the workers. So I know how hard it was for them to be out there working and picking those berries. But while my brother and I played. [Laughter]. Yeah, we would get in a little bit of trouble at times. I remember once, this might be digressing. I remember one time, I must have been about three years old and, and my brother and I were playing. And we were next to my dad's truck. And my brother, you know, takes this little cap off the tire. And he goes, you know, and he gets a stick. And he, he pushes on the little black thing, which is the valve. And he goes, "oh doesn't that sound nice?" And I go, "yeah, that sounds pretty cool." So he goes, "yeah, do this," you know. So, you know, we kept on doing that. And, you know, we would do one tire. And then we went to the next tire. And we went to the next tire. And we did all four tires. And, you know, and, you know, so this was during the afternoon or so and then, when it was time to go home, my mom and dad are ready to go home, and the tires are flat on the truck. Put it this way, I don't remember what happened. [Laughter] But my dad was not a happy camper.

Dan Fallorina 06:29

You know, we were kids, you know, so we got to go out and play in the fields and stuff, which was really a lot of fun. But, but that was— I remember that story. But I mean, they did the sharecropping from it was '56 to '62. So they did it for six years. And then I think my dad said, "well, it's time to move on." And I think maybe the profit wasn't good enough. Well, there was another reason why I think we left sharecropping. We lived out in San Andreas Road. And my brother had— Well, okay, we moved, I guess we'd just moved into that camp on San Andreas Road, the third camp, and my brother was taking the bus to school. And he also was supposed to take the bus home back. So the first day of school, you know, he takes about, you know, they catch it out there on San Andreas Road. He goes to school. He gets on the bus. And, you know, they're stopping at all the bus stops. And they drop off all the kids. And the bus driver gets back to school and turns around. My brother is still sitting on the bus. And she's like, "oh my god, you know, do you know where you live?" And I guess he had a little nametag and, you know, so they looked up his name and then found out where he lived. And then actually the principal who— went out and brought my brother home. And then so my parents said,

"Well, we should move into town after that." So surely, in '62, we moved into Holly Drive here in Watsonville. And we were like, probably maybe like a quarter mile from the school so we could walk to school. So my brother could walk to school. So I think that was one of the reasons why they decided that okay, we've been doing this sharecropping for six years, it's time to get back and go live in town and make sure the kids get a good education.

Ian Hunte Doyle 08:52

That makes sense. I guess I'm trying to think about the timeline. So did your mother start working in the canneries after you've moved into town?

Dan Fallorina 09:02

Yes, yes. So, so my mom, it looked like she joined United Foods around 1963. So it could have been between the '62 to '63 timeframe. And well actually it was called— at that time it was called Weston Frozen Foods of Watsonville. And it later became United Foods. But what— I had talked to my sister and I because I was still younger then and my mom didn't have her license at that time. She was still trying to learn how to drive and I have a few good stories about that. [Laughter] Oh, was that—did. I mention that about parking?

Ian Hunte Doyle 09:54

Oh when she had the plank. To sit and to use the pedals too I think.

Dan Fallorina 10:01

Anyway, but— So, so she didn't have a license. So my sister had said that, you know, when she would come home from school, my mom would be gone. And she said, my mom would walk to work. So she was working, like the swing shift. So it started around three, four o'clock or so my sister would get home around four or so and my mom would be gone. So she would actually walk from our house on in Freedom all the way downtown up to Kearney Street, which was like two and a half miles. It was 2.6 miles is what it was. And I don't know how long she did that for, you know, maybe she finally, you know, met up with some friends, and then started carpooling. But, you know, from '63 to '66 she didn't have a driver's license. 1966 is when she got her driver's license. So, yeah, actually, 19— yeah. 1967 is when she got a license. And in 1966 is when she joined Teamsters Local 912. And then she was a member up until she retired in 1987.

Dan Fallorina 10:01

Did I mention parallel parking?

Ian Hunte Doyle 11:35

Wow.

Dan Fallorina 11:37

So from 1963 to 1970, she worked at United Foods in the canneries. Now, so cannery work— she said it was very hard. It was hard work. So the process of the cannery work was basically the vegetables would come in, and then they would put them on a conveyor belt, and then she was in— on the line. So basically, the vegetables would come down the line. They would get washed. And then they, my mom

would, and people that she worked with, would have to, you know, cut off the bad pieces or thin out or, or do what they needed to do. And they had to do it fairly quickly as they're doing it. And then they quartered it, and then from there— Okay. So they got dumped, went through a wash, then they would quarter it. And then it goes through a blanching process where it basically steams vegetables. And then it comes out. And then it gets sorted again, and then it probably gets cut up again, and gets packed into that part. But— so there was a sorting. And I think there was like, a thinning portion also too. But what, what was really hard is because you had to, you know, stand the whole time. And then you —you're on a conveyor. You're — The vegetables are going by on the conveyor and it's, it's like the Lucy Show where—in the chocolate factory where were the belts going by and you take this stuff off the belt, and you got to, you know, cut it up and, and then sort the bad stuff into another bin, and then you put the other stuff back on the thing. But it was easier if you were towards the front of the line. Because, you know, if you miss some stuff it's not so bad. But if you're at the end of the line, then you catch what everybody else has missed. And then you got to be really quick at fixing things.

Dan Fallorina 13:51

But, you know, it was a lot of work. I mean, she, you know, they would, you know, they would give rewards for the crew that didn't have any accidents for the longest period of time. So it was like that. And I think well, one—her group did pretty well. I think they won a few awards where they get injured for like, you know, 60 days or something like that. I mean, I guess it could have been like a [inaudible] against your record. But at times, she said that, you know, they would— when it was like, like the high season. You know, they would bring in a lot of vegetables and sometimes they would have to work overtime. And I remember, one time, going with my dad, I think it was probably around 11 o'clock, to go pick her up. It might have been on the weekend. And we got there and they were still working. And back then there's no cell phones and, you know, you had a pay phone, and they're not going to let you get off and go make a phone call. And so I remember we were sitting in the car waiting for the shift to end. And I think we waited maybe an hour or two hours. So it was like maybe midnight or one o'clock before they finally finished. Because they had to get all this stuff, all the vegetables, processed. And I don't know how many times my mom did that, you know? So, so, you know, okay, you walk two and half miles to work, work all day, standing, you know, and it's wet, and it's cold. You're wearing this little hat with this plastic apron and you got a sharp knife. And that's all you're doing is cutting. Yeah. Yeah, we don't know how well we have it compared to that.

Ian Hunte Doyle 15:57

Oh, my God.

Dan Fallorina 16:00

So that was what she was doing there. And then, so she worked from United Foods—She was there from '63 to 1970. And then in 1970, she went to work for Green Giant. And then Green Giant was bought up by, I believe it was Birdseye and then— or was Birdseye- Pillsbury? But she ended up staying with them for 18 years. And this is the plaque that she received after 18 years of service from Pillsbury- Green Giant. Now, she— so in '87, December 31, 1987 is when she retired. And at that time, my dad had a couple of strokes at that time. And I think she was thinking, well, I want to, you know, be home for your dad. And it was two years after that, that's when my father passed away. So he passed

away in '89. So, so that's basically started on that. So basically, she worked in the carriers for about 24-25 years, you know, in '63 to about '89.

Dan Fallorina 17:33

And then, after that, she, you know, took care of my dad for a couple years. And then after that, she, she just enjoyed retirement, she just, you know, she, you know, spent time with some of her co-workers. Some of coworkers just lived a couple blocks away so she'd go visit them. And she was heavily involved with the church. So she would be singing in the church choir. So she really loved that until she saw her hearing and started going and then she could hear her pitches. And then she couldn't sing as much.

Ian Hunte Doyle 18:13

I think I remember hearing in your interview that that was how your dad even saw her in the first place, right? She was in a church choir?

Dan Fallorina 18:22

Yes, yes. She was in the church choir in the Philippines, and she was singing, and my dad was with my aunt at that time. And he was going, "who's that woman singing?" She actually had a very, very good voice, you know? It's like she was a soprano And my dad was asking about her. And then my aunt goes, "oh, I know her, you know, I could, you know, we could go— I could introduce you." And that's how they were introduced to each other. Then my, my dad continued to court her and stuff, you know? And she was going, "yeah, you don't, you know, you say you want to marry me, well, you gotta come here and marry me." And he goes, "okay, I'm coming." And she goes, "no, I won't believe it until I see you here." And then he popped up— [Laughter].

Ian Hunte Doyle 19:15

Well that's amazing that she continued to do. Good for her, you know, even into her retirement.

Dan Fallorina 19:22

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, yes, she was— She was really a, you know, part of the Methodist church and she was the oldest member before passed away. Yeah, the oldest member and the oldest continuous member at that church because— when she— when my dad and my mom moved into Watsonville they were looking for a Methodist church. And they heard that they were building this one. And she had— my mom and dad had gone by and they had some strawberries. I don't know if I told you this story. She had some strawberries and she saw one of the workers, you know, helping build the church and they were laying— it's like cinder block. And she goes, "oh, hello, my name is Angelina Fallorina. And, and I had some strawberries and I wanted to give it to the minister." And, and the guy that she was talking it goes, "well, I'm the minister." [Laughter]. And she goes, "oh!" You know? So, you know. So they started talking and she goes, "well, we're Methodist. And we're looking for a church." And, and that's how my mom and dad got involved with the church. There in Watsonville. And that was the church that, you know, they stayed at. The church I was baptized at, and my brother was baptized, and my sister got married there. And my dad and my mom were— they both had their funeral services there. And they actually, my mom had a stained glass panel made when my dad passed away and had that put over

there. So yeah I should take a picture of that. Yeah, so so. Yeah, so there's a little memorial. Stained glass memorial. What else?

Ian Hunte Doyle 21:35

Well, I guess, thinking about the canneries, so you said your mom would start work at around three or four. And if he was going over time, it would last until 11?

Dan Fallorina 21:55

It was— I think it normally was probably like, probably, maybe four to midnight probably. Yeah, I'm thinking because that'd be an eight hour day, you know. So, the time starts were a little different also too because depending on the vegetables. You know, for brussel sprouts, it could be— start at [indiscernible]. And sometimes, you know, it depended on when the trucks came in. Because, you know, since she was working the swing shift, you know, so they're picking it out there. And then the trucks have all the vegetables, and they're bringing them in and it's like, okay, well, you know, are they on time? Are they not? You know, so I think that there's a time that sort of shifted in there. But they processed brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower. What other stuff did they have? Broccoli. That's all I can remember. Oh, spinach. So I also heard like, when they like were doing spinach, that as they're going through it— Spinach, I guess, is really hard to process because there's a lot of things that are in the spinach, you know. It could be sandy. And also, there could be little critters in there. Stuff that we don't want to hear about. But they had to sort through that. And as they're going through and getting leaves out of there, they'd go, "oh, this isn't supposed to be here." So they'd have to take those things out. So that also made it challenging. Yeah. Do you— I guess I'm just wondering, did you notice or do you know of any real difference between working at the United Foods and Green Giant turned into Pillsbury?

Dan Fallorina 24:03

Do you— I guess I'm just wondering, did you notice or do you know of any real difference between working at the United Foods and Green Giant turned into Pillsbury?

Dan Fallorina 24:06

I think— my mom really liked working for Pillsbury. We got, I mean, she has she got a little Pillsbury hat that I have here. And she got a little Pillsbury a sweatshirt. And she seemed very happy to be with Green Giant/Pillsbury. I think, to me, it sounds like they took care of their employees. They were able to, I believe when the strikes were happening in the '80s, that the Green Giant wasn't part of that strike. And, and so that tells me that they were probably taking care of the employees. They were probably paying them a decent wage, and so I think she was happy there. Yeah, I think she would, unfortunately, when my dad passed away, my mom was going, "oh, maybe I should have worked longer because, you know, but I wanted to be home for your dad." Because she goes " well, now, I don't know what I am going to do now that he has passed." But, I mean, she she was already, you know, 60 something at that time. So it was it was time for her to retire. So yeah. So but I think that working at Pillsbury versus United Foods—Yeah, because you United Foods was still around and she made that jump from United Foods over to Green Giant. And there was a— Richard Shaw and there was another canning company, and those—I believe it was Pillsbury, which is Shaw. And the other company I can't remember their name off hand, but they were three biggest in the world.

Ian Hunte Doyle 25:58

Wow.

Dan Fallorina 25:59

And, yeah, so at that time, Watsonville was the capital canning of the world. I mean, all the canneries would do things here.

Ian Hunte Doyle 26:10

I mean, I'm always amazed. Watsonville is bigger than you think. I mean, I've been drinking Martinelli's my entire life, and I didn't know it was from here.

Dan Fallorina 26:20

A lot, a lot. A lot of people don't know that. Actually. I went to school with John Martinelli. Yeah, so yeah, yeah. We actually are good friends. Oh, I can't say real good friends. But we're, we know each other and we had like classes together. And while you know, we're, we had some good— we had some stories together.

Ian Hunte Doyle 26:46

Well, you mentioned that it was the canning capital of the world. I'm wondering where— could you tell me where the canneries were in Watsonville? And what they looked like maybe?

Dan Fallorina 27:00

Actually— where United Foods is, I believe was at the end of Kearney Street and it's no longer there. The building's no longer there. I think that's probably about where the slough is. Coast Produce is out that way. And I think it's just beyond the Coast Produce. And it's part of the wetlands right now. Wrapped around there. So that's where United Foods was. Then Green Giant is actually where Martinelli's Apple Cider is right next to— close to Harvest Drive. That, that that big building was like, at that time, was the largest food processing plant in the world. And actually when they closed, I think they closed in the early 90s, the building was vacant for a while. And then the Martinelli's struck a deal with Pillsbury and they bought the building from them. So they do some production there. And I think they did some storage there at that point. But again, yeah, from what I remember, most people that I know that worked at Green Giant. I know of a younger woman at that time that worked at the front of the office, and she seemed to like Pillsbury. So I know, sometimes you, you wonder about other companies, but it seemed like they were a good company to work for.

Ian Hunte Doyle 28:44

Yeah.

Dan Fallorina 28:46

I'm trying to think of where the—I don't know where the other canning facility was. But those are the two that I could think about. Oh, well, there's Del Mar— or Del Monte. And that's on Lee Road and Beach Road. And that's still there. They used to do a lot of strawberries. Remember, the wooden strawberry crates, you'd see those stacked up there. They were there until probably the early 90s also too but—

Well, I think they're still functional because there is a cannery there, but I don't know how—how much of it is like it used to be. Because when I was growing up there was a lot of people that worked at the canneries or supported the canneries like, you know, engineers and mechanics that would service the equipment. When I was working in Santa Cruz there was one guy that had worked at Green Giant and had come to work in the electronics industry, but he was a mechanical engineer. So he probably got tired of working on food processing equipment and wanted to get more into the electronics portion of it.

Ian Hunte Doyle 30:07

I guess it kind of makes me wonder when, I guess, when did it start, I don't know if declining is the right word, but or why do you think canneries kind of went downhill and Watsonville?

Dan Fallorina 30:24

Okay, so part of the reason why is the strike— I think it was between '85 and '87. The owners of Richard Shaw and the other company they were, they were trying to reduce their wages and the benefits. And that's why the workers really got upset and started striking. And I believe what happened with Pillsbury—well, the whole thing is that, you know, around the early, you know, early 90s, and stuff, and I believe, by the late 80s, a lot of companies were starting thinking about going offshore. You know, and I think Pillsbury might have had some stuff in Mexico, and they started moving stuff in Mexico and, and other areas that were less expensive. I mean, at that time, well, you know, the Watsonville area wasn't really that expensive. But I think a lot of it was starting to outsource to offshore. And my opinion about offshore is not a good thing. And I mean, I, I worked in the high tech industry, and they started offshoring. And I said, this is not a good idea. And of course, the pandemic and stuff we saw that, you know, and I'm hoping— Well, I'm hoping that they bring start to bring back. The chips. Were they going to—Intel— oh no Applied Materials, I think is putting a big plant back in the Santa Clara to help with that. But we need to become self sufficient again. That's, that's a whole nother thing to talk about the politics of what's going on. And—

Ian Hunte Doyle 32:34

Believe me. I guess I'm going to bring it back to your mom. What was her role within the Teamsters?

Dan Fallorina 32:45

I think she was just another Teamsters member. She wasn't—I can't say she was active while I was going up, you know, trying to get more members or whatever. But she was a team member. Since 19—I believe 1966. I do have a card that Christina is going to be scanning in. So yeah, so she was an active member. So she paid her dues and did that, but she wasn't running up and down.

Ian Hunte Doyle 33:19

I mean, would she ever talk about it?

Dan Fallorina 33:24

She would, you know, mention that she would pay her dues and stuff. They were, they were good. I mean, they had a pension fund. And my mom did have a pension with them. So she was able to get some money when she retired. So they paid up, up until she passed away. So that helped with her Social Security that she had, I mean, that was her income, Social Security and a pension. And that was

enough to keep her going. She had—so would— I think she was happy that she had the pension with the union, you know, because nowadays, you don't get a pension. And a little of something, it's better than nothing. And she was a union member from '66 till 1987. So she was there for quite a long time. And they, they had death benefits and stuff that we're still waiting to go through and get for my mom.

Ian Hunte Doyle 34:39

Yeah. Yeah. Well— trying to think more about well, do you think you could walk me through a day and in her, I guess, a day in her life but working in the canneries? What she would do?

Dan Fallorina 35:02

So I would think that, that probably prior to go into work, she would probably, get dinner ready for us. And— Or at least have it all prepped so that when my dad got home that, you know, he would just go ahead and heat it up and feed us. And then she would walk to work. So we lived out on Freedom close to the airport. And at that time there wasn't a lot lot of roads. In fact, where we lived on Holly Drive, probably about five hours down, that's where the road ended. And there was a white fence there and then it was like a cow pasture there. And my sister was saying that she would go ahead and walk through that cow pasture out to, at that time was Main Street which is well at that time was Highway One also too. And then she would follow along Highway One out to— She could have went through Lee Road also. No, no, no, she wouldn't. No she would have went out to what would have called the Ohlone Parkway, which was Walker Street. That part, I believe, was still Walker Street. So she walk from home along through the cow pasture out to Highway One, and then she would walk out to Walker Street and then out to Curtis Street and then to where United Foods was. And then I assume that she probably would have carried her stuff with her too. So it would have been just to like an apron, and her hat, and her lunch.

Dan Fallorina 37:05

And then she would go, go to work. You know, they would go ahead and start processing the foods. So she'd go ahead and sort through the vegetables, and cut the bad stuff out, and quarter it. So they would have lunch. And I had talked to one of her friends about, you know, how they, you know, what they would do when they would, you know, have their breaks and stuff. So they would have like little groups of them, you know, it was just like, you know, when you go to school or work or whatever, you know, you have your little groups of friends. So they would get together and they would, you know, share food. They would go, "oh, what do you have? Oh, I like that. Can I try some of that?" You know, and so they would have bring enough food for, you know, and a little extra. So, you know, other people could try, you know, so and they would tease each other. They would make jokes. So they would have fun. Like there was one woman, her sister was a little bit younger and, and they would tease her they'd go, you know, they would be talking about something and, and they go "you wouldn't know. You were just in diapers." You know, so they, they would, you know, poke fun at each other. You know, so, so I think that probably helped relieve the stress of, you know, that hard work. So, you know, they would, they would have fun during the breaks and, you know, tease one another and help support each other.

Dan Fallorina 38:47

And she actually had a lot of good friends that worked at the canneries that she stayed friends with for quiet— yeah, I think she's the oldest one I know. All those people that I remember, all of her friends had

passed away and she was like the last one. I remember one of her other friends lived a few blocks from her house. And she would go over there and she would get her to go out walking with her. She would go, "Come on Maria. Let's go walk," you know. And she'd go, "Oh I'm too old." And she'd go, "Come on, it's gonna be good for you." And she get her out there to walk. I would— I see, actually, her son, Frankie Madalora. It was his mom. We called her Maria. And she— I see Frankie, every so often and he goes, "yeah, you know, it's great when your mom would go over and see my mom and get my mom to go out and walk." And she goes, "I really like that." And then she also had another friend that lived a few blocks away. Her name was— actually John Ventura, I think you guys have talked to him and her— his grandmother, we called her Panya. And she worked with my mother also at the canneries. I think that they were part of that little group, you know that that hung out together. And, and then there was also another woman, Japanese woman. I can't remember first name but she was— I used to call her Mrs Krause. But maybe she didn't hang out with me. She hung out with the Japanese, but my mom was good friends with her also because she would come over the house and drop off persimmons.

Dan Fallorina 40:50

So I got off the question.

Ian Hunte Doyle 40:53

That's fine. I mean, was asking you about a day, a day's work.

Dan Fallorina 40:58

Yeah. Yeah. So yeah, so I think then, you know, they would have the breaks. And then she would, you know, go through, you know, going through, you know, cutting up the vegetables and going through that. And after that she would probably either—Okay, so I don't know exactly when she—you know, the three years from '63 to '66, she didn't have a license. I assume that she probably, my dad had picked her up for a while. And then I assume that maybe she got together and started carpooling with some friends and I was able to catch a ride with some friends until she got her license.

Dan Fallorina 41:54

She was really thrilled when she got it. [Laughter]. But I mean, she really tried really hard for many years before she got it. I actually found out when I was talking to my sister about this, that actually our neighbor across the street helped my mom get her license, you know, because I think you know, my dad would sometimes get frustrated with her, you know. And then our next door neighbors across the street, they were really nice people. I believe my sister said that they took my mom to get her license when she finally learned how to parallel park. [Laughter]

Ian Hunte Doyle 42:38

I know your dad loved to garden but if you tell me more about your mother's?

Dan Fallorina 42:38

And then and then— So yeah, so she would come home in the evenings and of course we would see her, you know, until maybe we might see her in the morning before we would go to school. And then again she'd be gone by the time we got out of school. You know, I mean, but again, the work was seasonal at that time. So like, you know, in the winter times, we see her and my dad more often

because they're home during the winter times. But, you know, during the summer when the canneries were working [indiscernible] and the cops were growing, you know, we would see less of my mom at that time, because she'd be working the canneries. But, you know, even when she wasn't working at canneries like there would be some times when the canneries was so, I remember we'd be out picking strawberries, or we would be up picking cucumbers, or apples, or beans. So I do remember her not only working always canneries, but that also could have been at that time, you know where she was still, you know, trying to decide what she wanted to do. So, some of the days in her life, that's probably what it would be and then come back home. You know, get things ready for the day or for next evening. You know, she come home, probably work on her garden a little bit. She liked to garden. She liked to have flowers so she'd work in her garden and my dad would also— my dad had tons of fruit trees in the backyard.

Dan Fallorina 44:42

She loved roses. So she grew—she had—in the house right now she has tons of roses going. And—She would she loved the plant, in fact, the loquat trees in our front yard, when I moved in here, she planted those. And they were like little trees like the little tree that Christina is getting. And actually, that's from one of the loquats from the trees that she planted. So

Ian Hunte Doyle 45:22

Might have to pause for one second.

Dan Fallorina 45:28

I know.

Dan Fallorina 45:31

He goes crazy with that.

Ian Hunte Doyle 45:43

That's great though. All right.

Dan Fallorina 45:51

Yeah, but, but she loved to grow vegetables. She would grow tomatoes and like she tried to grow paria which is a bitter melon. What other vegetables? My dad liked to grow garlic. And she, you know, plums— in the backyard she planted palm trees. She loved persimmons. So she had a couple persimmon trees in her backyard and they produced really well. Over there and she had a plum tree, persimmon tree. She had a lemon tree back there also. Yeah. She really liked vegetables and fruits. So we always had vegetables and fruits when we were growing up.

Ian Hunte Doyle 46:49

Now you just made me think what kind of things would she make for dinner?

Dan Fallorina 46:53

Oh, okay. My mom was not the cook. My dad was the one that really did all the cooking. And my mom might have did some of the prep work. My dad did all the cooking. My mom would always go, "I can't

cook." Yeah. And we'd go, "Okay mom. We'll wait till dad cooks up everything." But I mean, she would cook, you know, chicken adobo. I mean, the basics, but she was not the best cook. And she, you know, I remember she would make kakanin, the brown rice cake. Puto which is the— That's what we call it, t's puto. And then she would put coconut in it. That's, you know, that's some of the things I remember her baking because we always liked that. But, for her cooking, her cooking wasn't the best.

Dan Fallorina 48:03

Sure. She would always agree with that.

Ian Hunte Doyle 48:08

Yeah. Well, we don't need to dwell on the canneries too much if you don't— but I was just thinking while you were talking. So it's mostly women working in the cannery—

Dan Fallorina 48:19

Yes.

Ian Hunte Doyle 48:22

I was just gonna ask, you know, what kind of people she was working with?

Dan Fallorina 48:27

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, the, there was a lot of Filipinos working in canneries, as well as Mexicans. And there's a lot of Japanese there too. You know, I know. A few Japanese people that worked there. I think that was probably the majority was Filipinos, Mexicans, Japanese. There could have been, there could have been Croatians also, too. But I think the bulk was between the Mexicans and Filipinos and probably the Japanese.

Ian Hunte Doyle 49:09

And I think you mentioned she was the oldest, at least out of her friends.

Dan Fallorina 49:14

Yes, yeah. She was one of the older ones that was there because, yeah, yeah. Because my mom was 99. And, and some of the people I talked to some of her younger friends had passed away. You know? So she, yeah, she was, she was she was there. So she was pretty well experienced. She, you know, she, when she would, you know, she would talk about work sometimes. And she she would yell, "Some of those operators" or, you know, you know, "When we would get behind, they would speed up the belt to make us peed up and then you know, would that to yell at them and say, no, you got to slow down the belt because we can't work that fast." "And if you speed it up like that, we're gonna get hurt because we cut ourselves" You know? So, you know, I think my mom was sort of a— she would tell her mind, you know? Like, you know? If they were trying to pull something on, on them as she would go, "What? Why did you do this? You know this? This is a right." So she, I think, yeah, my mom had, you know, would speak her mind if she didn't think things were right or wrong. You know she would say something.

Ian Hunte Doyle 50:39

Well she knew what she was talking about.

Dan Fallorina 50:40

Right. And then she pulled that card, "well, I'm older than you. You were just in diapers." [Laughter]

Ian Hunte Doyle 50:52

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I don't know. Is there anything else about the canneries, specifically?

Dan Fallorina 51:02

That I can think of offhand right now? Yeah.

Ian Hunte Doyle 51:06

Well, you touched on sharecropping a bit at the beginning. Your mom did mostly the bookkeeping.

Dan Fallorina 51:14

Well, she, I can't say she mostly did the bookkeeping. She did the bookkeeping, but I think that was, you know—I know that during the day, my mom and dad were out there working. It's not like my mom was sitting home, not doing anything. No, she—they were out there working, picking the strawberries. So I think, probably, in the evenings, she would probably tally things up. But you're sharecropping too, so there—you'd have a little card. And the card had like, I believe it had the, the days of the week. And then there was numbers on it. So basically, there was like, how many crates, so you punch the number of crates. So I think what she probably did was either on the weekend or in that evening, she would take that information and put it down on the books. Like if you look at this stuff, it'll say, you know, May 1st and such such, five crates at 55 cents a crate and then give a total. And then it shows how much tax they took out. So I believe that she did the books, like either in the evening or on the weekends.

Dan Fallorina 52:40

But the sharecropping was—I think was a lot of work. Yeah. And I think, you know, of course, the, you know, the grower's getting all the benefits out of it. The sharecroppers are doing all the hard work. And I think, I don't know how the housing situation worked. I don't know, like in the labor camps, I don't know if they provided the housing for free, or if there was a nominal rent. Yeah, I did see something in the books about rent, but I'm not too sure what that that—oh, man. So I don't know if they were charging for it. I'd probably need to look at the books a little bit more closely. But, you know, I think, so my dad, and mom owned some houses in Soledad but they came to Watsonville and they still own the property in Soledad. So they were collecting some rent from those two properties, or actually, it was one property with two houses on it. And, and so they were at the labor camps. So when I was— I'm thinking this is probably between 1955-1966 or between '55 and '62, because 62 is when we moved from the labor camps, so I think those six years, I think what they did is they probably, said, "let's do the sharecropping for these many years." And then then my brother got lost. They said, "Let's throw the towel in. Let's move to town." And we have enough money saved up from, you know, living in the camp, so wouldn't have to pay exorbitant rent. And then I think what they did is they took the money they had saved up and then they put on a down payment to buy a house in Watsonville. I think that the house on Holly Drive wasn't that much. I think was like 15,000 at that time, which was even—That's nothing. I mean—but again that was probably the going rate because I think the house wasn't that old either at that time, but you know, houses back in the 60s, you know, they're a dime a dozen, you know. So I think

that's, that's why they did the sharecropping. It was looking at, okay, we could collect rent, we could pay a lower rent at the labor camp or get free housing, and that'll give us enough money to buy a home in Watsonville. And then we'll have a roof over our head. I think they went from, I think that's how they started going. Because I think just— Yeah. Just before we moved into Watsonville, my dad had an older truck and he had traded that in for a new truck. And I think— I think he said, "It's time to get a new truck. I think we have enough money to buy a home. Let's do it." And then I think, I think a few years later, I think they sold the property in Soledad also. Because that wasn't panning out. And the landlord-tenant laws weren't that great at that time. And I know that the tenants weren't paid at times, and— My dad actually had to evict the tenants because they didn't pay and they had to pay the sheriff to go out and evict them. So it was a mess. And then after that, my dad said, "no," you know? So he sold the property to one of his friends in Soledad. So actually, I'm trying to see if I can locate the house. But I think for some reason, I think that the area got redeveloped and everything got torn down. But I got the address and stuff but I can't. I can't find the street. Well, I found the street. I can't find the address. Yeah, the house doesn't look familiar.

Ian Hunte Doyle 57:06

Yeah, yeah. Well, this might be a bit of a tangent. But you just got me wondering, do you know if your dad ever got any compensation or anything from his service in the military?

Dan Fallorina 57:22

I know he got the military benefits for— Oh, yeah! Yes. He, the house that he bought in Watsonville was under a VA loan. Yeah. So I did find paperwork. For the— Yeah, I just came across that a couple of days ago. That it was— I didn't read it thoroughly, but we might be I'll look through that. But it was something like a VA loan. You know, it's like, okay, your VA loan has been satisfied. And, you know, and it's this property on 123 Holly Drive in Watsonville, California. So yeah, so he did get the G—well the GI Bill is schooling, but he did get the VA to help them buy the home. And I think at that time, I think that's when they were letting Asian people or Filipinos buy homes, you know, in early 50s or early 60s around there. So, yeah. So that was the benefits he got. Did you get anything in the—? I think that the VA went ahead and gave, you know, they gave a flag and a plaque. Yeah. Yeah. So yeah. So he did get something, a benefit out of being in the military. Plus he got his citizenship also too.

Ian Hunte Doyle 58:53

Right. Yeah. And so that was what helped your mother naturalize, right?

Dan Fallorina 58:59

Right, right. Yeah. So once he became a citizen, and then they let Filipinos marry, he was able to bring my mom and at that time. I assume that he'd been wanting to be married, but it didn't, you know, the laws wouldn't let that happen. And I, my dad, I think wanted to be married to a Filipino woman at that time.

Ian Hunte Doyle 59:29

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I like to think about— your mother's obviously much more than just the work that she did. Can you tell me maybe one of your favorite memories with her?

Dan Fallorina 59:59

Favorite memory?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:00:00

I'm putting you on the spot.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:00:00

Yes you are putting me on the spot.

Dan Fallorina 1:00:10

Maybe like, so, you know, we really didn't go out on a lot of outings or anything like that, you know. We didn't go out to dinner. But, I remember, you know— Well, when we would go up to like Palm Beach and go, go out clamming, we'd go out as a family. So those are, those would be memories that I remember, you know, going out with my mom and the family and just going out there digging for clams, and finding clams, and being able to eat those clams right there on the spot. Clamming was a thing that I remember liking to do with my mom. We would go down to— down by Carmel, more south of Carmel, it's probably, I think is by Garrapata State Park, and it probably wasn't a state park at that time, and, and we would go out there and get mussels. We'd be able to pry mussels off the rocks and we would get some huge mussels, you know? So the thing is, you would have to go out during low tide to get this stuff, you know, so when you would go out, you know, you go out there and try pry the mussels off. But I remember my mom would always say, "do not, you know, have your back turn towards the ocean." Because as she said, "The ocean would come and knock you over and take you away." So she said, "Always, you know, have you're—always face towards the ocean never have your back."

Dan Fallorina 1:01:57

But—At the same time when we would be, you know, getting mussels, my mom would be looking for seaweed because she she knew what types of seaweed were good to eat. So you know, she'd be picking seaweed also too. And, you know, some good fresh seaweed is pretty good. And so that was a thing that I remember going out with her to Hawai'i and meeting up with relatives and, and my mom would just be thrilled going to the beach and looking for seaweed. And I remember we got a lot, lots of seaweed and he wanted to bring it back and I go, "Mom. It's gonna spoil." And she goes, "No well, we should bring some back." And sure enough for some back and it had spoiled. It was pretty stinky. But that I think that was probably one of the fun times.

Dan Fallorina 1:03:03

Well, then we we also took my— my mom went back to the Philippines for like, it was early 2000. It was first time that she had gone back and 50 years. I think, I believe was 2000. 2000, 2002 somewhere around there. So it was like 50 years because she came in '52. And that was, that was a good thing. Because it was interesting because we went to a friend of hers and just looking at her friend that her friend looks so old and my mom looks so so much more peppier than her friend, you know, just you could see the hard work that her friend had gone through and, and just other relatives and how hard it was for them. And then I think of, you know, my mom and you know, living in the United States and, you know, eating more healthy and having a better life, you know. Even though she did hard work in the canneries, I mean, it's not as tough as it was there and, and then, you know, and I know that my mom

and dad realized that and that's why they were they sent money to my aunts and uncles and nieces and nephews to help them out.

Dan Fallorina 1:04:31

But I think that was you know, Hawai'i, and spending time with my mom in Hawai'i and in the Philippines and and, you know, going clamming, and getting mussels were some fond memories of my mom. Yeah, yeah, I think those were the things. And, you know, the she— my parents were nurturing for us, you know. They, they wanted us to do well in life and they, they encouraged us, you know, to go to school. And they, they always said, you know, "You want to work hard when you're young and then when you are older you could relax and, and take it easy. Because when you're older, you're not going to have the strength to do the things that that you could do when you're younger." And, you know, put a roof over your head. Make sure that you have a roof over your head and still try to buy a place. That way you don't have to pay the landlord or have to deal with bad roommates.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:05:41

Jeez, yeah.

Dan Fallorina 1:05:42

Yeah. I mean, the takeaways I get from my parents, and, you know, my mom was, you know, hard work. You know, respect other people and, and, and their values. Put a roof over your head, save your money. And those were the main things. Take care of your siblings also too.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:06:22

How do you feel? You want to keep going?

Dan Fallorina 1:06:27

I don't know what else.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:06:31

I was thinking about your mother's involvement with the church or anything else in the community?

Dan Fallorina 1:06:39

She was, yeah, she was heavily involved with the church. And I guess she was involved with the United Way. Because she, there's a picture of her helping with the United Way and, and helping them get money for their drive. She was also part of the Pajaro Valley Historical Society. So she, she was a member there, and she would go to that. I don't know how involved she was, but she must have been, you know. When I grew up and left, you know, she was doing their own stuff. So in her retirement, she was helping out I guess, at the Pajaro Valley Historical Society. And she had donated, I believe, some of my dad's clothes from the military to the historical society. So she was involved with that.

Dan Fallorina 1:07:41

She was involved with the church. Again, like I said, she was in the church choir. She also attended several of the Methodist—she belonged to the Methodist Women's Club. So they would have like meetings in different areas once a year. I think she was like— I think there was one that she went up to

in Merced and Sacramento. So she'd go in there and they would discuss different ways how—what they would do for the churches, like for scholarships, or how they would try to help the communities.

Dan Fallorina 1:08:30

And there was one where she got involved with, I believe, was something about immigration, and, you know, why, you know, people should be able to immigrate, you know. I mean, yeah. But, you know, my, my parents, or my mom, you know, believed in immigration, and she believed in legal immigration because, you know, the thing is my sister and my cousin immigrated to the United States, but my mom had to apply for them. So, so the process is you apply for them, and then, and then, you know, the governments, the US government and Philippine government agrees, okay, you can let them in. But the process takes a long time, you know. And it's like, you know, my sister was able to come like within a couple of years, but then my cousin, it took him 20 years to get here. So, so there's this discrepancy. So, you know, so, you know, it's a little hard to see somebody just walk over the border and, and say, "hey, I want to be a citizen." And when somebody else has been in line for, for, you know, so many years and then gets, you know, and has to go through all these hoops, and this other person gets in so, so there's this situation that, you know, if it's ,you know. Yeah, you you want to help these people out, but then there is a process to go through that, you know, should be also followed or if you go through this other process, well, then there should be a certain type of—the whole political situation needs to be dealt with and figured out.

Dan Fallorina 1:10:31

So, [indiscernible] my mom was really heavily involved with church. She, she would bring flowers quite often when her garden was going to bring roses or whatever flowers she had grown in the garden at that time. And she was always known to bring flowers. And, in fact, when she passed away, I don't know if I had mentioned this, but when she passed away, my brother and I were at the mortuary and they go, "Oh, do you want to bring—Do you want us to bring flowers?" You know. "You have this option and we could bring your basket of roses or whatever." And I was thinking I go, "You know, mom had flowers in her backyard. And she would bring them to church." And I said, "You know, let's just tell people bring a flower from your garden." And, and that'd be a great way to honor my mom. Flower from your garden.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:11:42

It's beautiful.

Dan Fallorina 1:11:48

So we asked people to bring a flower for her. And people did and that was really nice. It was really special, because they were bringing something that she'd appreciate.

Dan Fallorina 1:12:12

Yeah, so that was nice.

Dan Fallorina 1:12:21

That made it special, though. And I think people really liked that, you know? I don't know why people don't do that more often. It just makes more sense. Yeah, you know, it's like, you know, it's, it's, it's something that is from their garden or something that they have that they can share with her.

Dan Fallorina 1:12:46

Yeah, so, yeah, so she was— like I said, just really involved with the church. She would bring flowers there. Every Sunday people would like bring coffee or there would be a coffee hour after the church on Sundays. And different people would like bring things to eat or whatever, like she would bring some cookies or homemade things or, or sometimes they were to have like a potluck and so she would get involved with that. So she should make rice or to bring out like fruit. She would bring a lot of fruit. Persimmons. She would always bring persimmons. She's always going, "Have some persimmons."

Dan Fallorina 1:13:54

So yes. So she would always like to share her fruits and vegetables that she had with, you know, with their neighbors and also bring those into the church.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:14:15

Yeah, well, is there any one thing you'd like to come away having put on the record?

Dan Fallorina 1:14:31

Well, you know, my parents, you know, coming to the United States, and making a life for themselves, and bringing up a family, I know that they went through a lot to help my brother, and I, and my sister, you know, succeed in life. I feel that they gave us all the right tools to, to make the right decisions for ourselves. And they really stress getting an education or some type of vocation or some type of skill. And they said, you know, "Save your money, you know, don't spend it unwisely, you know. Buy what you need and don't buy what everybody else is getting." You know, put a roof over your head. That way, you know, you'll be safe when you get older, and you don't want to have to worry about, you know, having to pay rent. I mean, yeah, rent goes to go, somebody else doesn't go to you. And I just, you know, I— It was hard growing up, being an immigrant child. You know, there was a lot of challenges and things, but we grew up in a good neighborhood. It was a diverse neighborhood. Everybody is middle class. Everybody, you know, was either working in fields, canneries, you know, I can think of one engineer that lived on our street, but there, they were great people. They're the ones that showed my mom how to drive. But I think they did a good job. You know, and, you know, I feel like, you know, I've been successful because of my parents and what I learned from my parents. And I guess I would—even though there was a lot of hardships when we were growing up, I don't think I would have changed much of that. I mean, I, of course, wouldn't want more. But, but the childhood I have, you know, I learned a lot. And, and it was, it was a good thing. And I guess I wouldn't trade that for something else. It was a good childhood. We have a lot of fun doing a lot of crazy things, you know, things that, that a lot of kids don't do nowadays, you know. Hunting for frogs, you know, getting out on a reservoir on a pallet and floating, you know, thinking, hey, this thing can sink and we can drown, you know, but you know, things like that, you know. It's, it's a different, different way to grow up. It's a different situation now too.

Dan Fallorina 1:18:04

That would be my take away.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:18:09

Yeah. I didn't give you a very easy question. Yeah. I don't know. Is there anything else you want to cover?

Dan Fallorina 1:18:23

I can't think of anything offhand. Right now. Yeah. [Indiscernible]. Any more that you'd like to ask her?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:18:42

I was thinking, I mean, I think we can wrap it up soon. I was thinking, did your mother ever talk about any, any discrimination that she faced?

Dan Fallorina 1:18:59

That I—She was always worried about if people were to hear things, you know, so she would always go, "No, talk quietly, you know, because people might hear you," and you know. We had a diverse group of friends and they also had a large diversity. The church community that my parents belonged to was really diverse and they were, they're very, very helpful. So we didn't feel any discrimination at the church at all. And my parents spent a lot of time with the church and the church people were always very helpful all the time. And so we didn't feel any discrimination there. But I do you know, an instance where my mom and I were walking and, and this kid was a bully. And we were walking, and my mom is 4 '8 or something like that, really small, and, and I was a young kid. And I remember this kid threw a rock at us and hit my mom in the back. And, it was a good sized dirt clot. And it hit her in the back and, and, and my mom, goes [indiscernible], you know, which means hurt in Ilokano. And as she goes, "Just keep on walking, you know, don't don't stop," you know, "you don't want to get involved and get into escalation."

Dan Fallorina 1:20:52

And my, my mom and dad would always say that, you know, "If there's ever a fight or anything, turn around, get out of there, don't stick around." Because my, my mom had said that my dad had a good friend and there was a fight somewhere. It could have been part of the riots, I don't know. But his friend was watching and somebody came over and hit him in the head with a pipe and killed him. So my, my dad was not— didn't want to be around for violence. He was very peaceful. He used to not get mad at all. It was really hard to get dad's temper up. But that one instance was always time I can really think of discrimination being one of my parents.

Dan Fallorina 1:21:51

Yeah, I, I can think of a couple of times. But it wasn't here like I was down in Disneyland where I was in line. And I was a line. I was in there to get a t-shirt. And, and this, I kept on getting passed over. They kept on helping somebody else, you know, like what I've been here for, you know, before these people. Why are you helping these people? And so I got a little irritated. That's, that was a one one time I can really think of, you know, real— there was probably discrimination going on there. And but the majority of the people I hung out with, we had a diverse group, so I didn't really feel a lot of discrimination. Which was good, you know. I mean, I grew up with Japanese, Filipinos, Mexicans, Croatians. It was

just just, it was just a melting pot. Watsonville was a melting pot. So there was a lot of different nationalities. And it seemed like everybody worked well together. Even out in the fields, it was diverse. And we all seem to get together or get along really well. But I can't really feel like I was discriminated against. But, you know, my parents could have been, you know, when we were growing up, but we just didn't know about it. Because they're of that age where there was still a lot of discrimination going on. And I think things started getting better. You know, the 60s and 70s.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:23:36

They never really talked much about it.

Dan Fallorina 1:23:38

Right. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:23:49

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Well, it's not a very good—it's not exactly a high-note. I don't think I have any more questions. Do you feel we've done it justice?

Dan Fallorina 1:24:07

Yeah. I don't know what else to say. And if there's more things that you could think of, you know, I can talk about them as much as I know.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:20

Yeah, well, it's always I think better to— we've got to come back here again and do something else. But yeah, I don't think I have anything else.

Dan Fallorina 1:24:33

I can't think of anything else more to say.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:39

Alright, well, thank you very much. I'll end it now. Thank you very much. I hope you feel okay with that.

Dan Fallorina 1:24:54

It's like what it is.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:25:00

Got the technology here we are.