

# UC Santa Cruz

## Oral History Collaborations

### Title

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## Estelita Tabios interviewed by Meleia Simon-Reynolds

**Speakers:** Estelita Tabios, Meleia Simon-Reynolds, Joanne de los Reyes-Hilario, Dan [Last name unknown]

**Date:** February 3, 2022

**Scope and Contents:** In this interview, originally recorded in-person, Estelita Tabios speaks with Joanne de los Reyes-Hilario, a close family friend, and Meleia Simon-Reynolds, a Watsonville is in the Heart team member. Estelita shares memories of her childhood growing up in Makato, Aklan, Philippines; the story of how she met and married her first husband, Clemente Tana; and details of her month-long journey to the United States via steamship in 1956. She discusses settling in Watsonville with Clemente and developing a network of relatives and close friends— including the Cawaling, Taytayon, and Tejada families. Estelita describes her and her family members' labor in agricultural fields; her work on the assembly line at Green Giant from 1962-1966; her job in the laundry department at Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz, CA; and finally her career as a caregiver for the elderly. She also speaks about her involvement in the Filipino Women's Club of Watsonville, the Filipino Catholic Association, and the Aklanon Association. Notably, Estelita provides first-person accounts of Filipino Women's Club members' various responsibilities and their efforts to build the local Filipino community. Throughout the interview, Estelita emphasizes her dedication to supporting the manong that she came to know in Watsonville as well as her family members in the United States and the Philippines. At the end of the interview, Dan [Last name unknown] speaks briefly. Estelita lives with Dan in Santa Cruz. Estelita and Dan met because she was the in-home caregiver for his mother.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 00:00**

This is Meleia Simon-Reynolds. It is February 3rd. I'm here with Joanne De Los Reyes- Hilario and Aunty Lita Tabios in Santa Cruz. Okay. So, could you say your full name?

**Estelita Tabios 00:19**

Estelita Tabios. You heard that?

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 00:23**

Yeah. Where were you born?

**Estelita Tabios 00:26**

I was born in Makato, Aklan, Philippines.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 00:31**

What year?

**Estelita Tabios 00:33**

19—it's December 30, 1931.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 00:38**

And what are your parents' names?

**Estelita Tabios 00:40**

My father's name is Jose Taytayon. My mother is Margarita Tagua.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 00:50**

Do you remember what it was like when you were growing up in the Philippines?

**Estelita Tabios 00:54**

What it's like?

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 00:55**

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios 00:56**

I'm a spoiled brat. I don't I don't go to school. I hate school. So, I just like to travel. So I jumped from here and there. I left my mom and I stay with my grandma or my aunt. I can stay anywhere because I'm the—In our family, mostly are boys. So, when I came along, you know, they were so happy I'm a girl, but then I have to wear their pants so I can go with them. Cause they go serenading those ladies or singing and then they won't let me if I'm a girl. So, it was fine it was a happy—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 01:31**

Mmm Hmm, and how, how come you decided to come to the US?

**Estelita Tabios 01:38**

Oh, it's a very good one because I got married and my husband brought me over.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 01:45**

When did you meet your husband? And what was his name?

**Estelita Tabios 01:50**

I met him in 1952 when he went home and have a vacation with his family, and then he built the house in there, but we didn't get married at that time because I was going to school and

then he's got somebody else in mind. And he came back with my cousin—Florencio— Loren's father, they came back for a vacation in 1955.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 02:21**

And this is Clemente

**Estelita Tabios 02:22**

Clemente Tana, yes. And Manong Encio, of course, we both got married. And the same year, only they got married in February and I got married in January.

**Joanne De Los Reyes 02:40**

So—

**Estelita Tabios 02:40**

So, after the wedding, after we got married, we were—we talk about it within me and my husband before we got married, really because I asked him if what will be—what would happen to us if we get married? And he says, well, I'll take you with me in America, in California. I said, you better because if you don't take me with you, I'm not gonna follow you. Or even if you come back and get me, if not now going home with you back there, then you can just forget it. That's because I have a boyfriend and—so anyway, that's what happened, we came over.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 03:32**

How did you meet him in the first place?

**Estelita Tabios 03:35**

Oh, um his brother and sister-in-law are related to me. And they know me there—I go home back on weekends where my grandmother lived. And then when he arrived in 1956 was almost Christmas, November, December. And when he saw me there at his house because they invited me and right away, the next morning he followed me up to where I live in [unknown] when he said that, you know we I didn't talk to you much last night. But he said now I have time

**Joanne De Los Reyes 04:15**

And you're so pretty I bet—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 04:16**

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios 04:17**

I'm just—there's a tomboy. Anyway, that's that's what happened. We talk it over, we talk with the with the family. His brother, especially, is close to me. [Unknown] and his wife is an attorney in [unknown] I family. So, we told them that that's what we have planned and we're on our own. We go out. We go to the movie and then we go—and finally he decided I think the best place for us to go is to the embassy. I said oh, whatever. I said, I don't know nothing about that. So, at that time we went, we went to the embassy, we didn't let anybody know, we just went, it was because it was my birthday. And when we went there with the—he just talked to them told them that he just want to let them know, report that he is want to get married, and that I am the woman that he want to married to. So all they do, they were really nice. All they did was this lady took me to the side and him. And we're just sworn in.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 04:17

He thought you were—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 05:35

Oh, wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 05:36

We're just sworn. He say that, him, you know, he just wanted— him as it being a citizen in here. And that he was getting married to me, and I gave them my name and my my age. And that's it.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 05:50

That's— easy as that.

**Estelita Tabios** 05:52

It's easy as that. I'm surprised about the rest now. And somehow they have a hard time. So anyway, that's what we did, we asked the lady says, what do you want us to do next? And she's, well, as far as I'm concerned, she says, you are married to him. I am? [laughter] Excuse my family didn't even know yet. But anyway, you said he's sworn, that he is marrying you and he is married to you. And we will send this to Washington DC when it comes to you in your address don't be surprised, because they they name would be Mr. and Mrs. already. So the rest is you to do it yourself. And that's when we plan a church marriage.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 06:32

Ah, I see.

**Estelita Tabios** 06:33

Yeah. With all the old folks, my tatay and all the family. Then we get read—ready?

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 06:44

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 06:45

We got married in a big old church in Binondo, Manila. But we're supposed to be married on a Wednesday. But the Pope came in and they weren't able to do it for us in Baclaran. So I said okay, if it's not in Baclaran, you know, Binondo Manila is the oldest church, I would prepare that. So that's where we got married. And a big party at the Maderna Restaurant in Santa Cruz.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 07:19

You had the party here in San—

**Estelita Tabios** 07:21

No—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 07:21

Oh, in Santa Cruz, Philippines.

**Estelita Tabios** 07:23

In Santa Cruz, Philippines. Yes. And then from there, because there are so many we only invite—and we only pick you know, who are we going to go with as the Manila Hotel? Because somebody is given me a party up there. My adopted father was gonna give us a party. So from the party at wedding, it was raining hard Friday night. So about 35 or 50 people went with us to Manila Hotel. And we have a show with Carmen Rosales singing for us.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 08:00

Oh my gosh, that's a fancy big wedding.

**Estelita Tabios** 08:02

Yes, it was it was a wedding. Good one. Big one.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 08:08

So what year was that, Aunty?

**Estelita Tabios** 08:09

That was 1955.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 08:11

1955. So you were 24 oh 23.

**Estelita Tabios** 08:16

25. 25.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 08:17

Oh, you were 25. Okay.

**Estelita Tabios** 08:20

Yeah.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 08:20

Wow.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 08:21

Did you come to leave to the US soon after that?

**Estelita Tabios** 08:26

No. It was January. We got married in January 19.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 08:32

My birthday.

**Estelita Tabios** 08:33

Oh, January 19 we got married and then from there, my mom we have to—she's got to stay in Manila for a while. So we went to a week in Laguna, Famy, Laguna with my uncle. We visited there because my husband likes it there. Never been there, but as we told him, you know, how the life over there is so nice. And people are so friendly in the whole town. Sure enough, when we get to Famy, Laguna, the whole the whole community in there welcome you. They are very friendly. Everyday. We have a lot of food, fru—fruits and whatever until we left. We have to go back to Manila in February 14 because my sister-in-law had a baby. Laurie had a baby boy. Valentine's Day. So we have to go home and see her in the hospital. And from that time we then, we prepare, we get ready to go to the province to see the old folks because my husband's parents still alive, but they didn't—they cannot travel except my father in law. So, we went home for a couple of weeks and then back to Manila to just get ready. We get the boat—a month to come over here.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 09:57

What year was it when you got on the boat to come?

**Estelita Tabios** 10:00

50—It was in April, I think April 20 When we left Manila, and then we went to Hong Kong, Japan for two weeks. I don't remember much of those because I'm not interested.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 10:18

You stayed in the cabin?

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 10:19

No, we stayed in a hotel.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 10:22

So when you were on the boat did you stay in a little cabin?

**Estelita Tabios** 10:26

Uh huh.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 10:26

Or did you stay—

**Estelita Tabios** 10:26

Yeah, we have a cabin. Yeah. And I now then finally they said, We—they cannot do that for two weeks because there's somebody else that they're gonna pick up in Japan. And I said, well, we're taking off in Japan. No, we didn't. We didn't go out much. The people in Japan don't understand English then. Every time we want something, it—we we have to have an interpreter. See the captain of the boat recommended us and then you have to have those because you wouldn't understand. And I got hungry. I went to hotel, I don't know what to eat. I don't know what to order. My husband he's just laughing. He said those are all rice. And just, oh, I said, how come different colors. And I don't like to taste, you know. But anyway, we always have that and I always go home to the boat and eat. So I'm friendly with the captain.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 10:27

He let you on right away.

**Estelita Tabios** 10:27

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 10:32

What was it like on the boat when you were on the ocean?

**Estelita Tabios** 11:12



It's fun, cause yeah, go— so we could go swimming. That's why I was so dark when we got here. You can go swimming in a day time. For some people go fishing. And the guys, a lot of the guys got sick. They're from San Francisco. They're sea—seasick. I said, How would you you're a man Yeah, yeah, it's fun you have to go so it was fun. And you know how it is when you eat on the boat is you go by, What is that I don't know, by number of your table. So the sittings are all like that. Yeah, so its nice, people are friendly. And then except when you get to the point when they're scared and at that time, you know, I'm not really happy because I'm homesick.

**Estelita Tabios** 12:24

I'm homesick. I wanna be home with my parents I was wishing I could have stayed. But then it was hard life back home. Yeah, very hard. So when we got—we stayed a couple of days in Honolulu. Oh, yeah, we stopped over I think in—in— Japan?

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 12:24

Oh I see.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 12:26

Guam, was it Guam?

**Estelita Tabios** 12:57

No. Um—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 13:01

Singapore, I know that—

**Estelita Tabios** 13:03

Canada.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 13:04

Oh—

**Estelita Tabios** 13:04

No, um.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 13:05

Alaska.

**Estelita Tabios** 13:06

No [unintelligible].

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 13:06

Vancouver.

**Estelita Tabios** 13:09

That's where [unintelligible]. Now this is um—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 13:13

Alaska.

**Estelita Tabios** 13:14

No, not in not in there that place, this is already here. Gee why did I forget about that time because we— Australia

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 13:23

Oh.

**Estelita Tabios** 13:23

Australia we were there we stopped by there we pick up somebody I think and then we stayed couple days.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 13:30

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 13:30

Yeah, go they go fishing all the port in there. They got all fish and crabs and remind me of home now that we have on all those fish in there and crabs in the—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 13:41

Basket.

**Estelita Tabios** 13:42

Yeah.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 13:42

They catch them in that.

**Estelita Tabios** 13:43

You can catch yourself. You can you can just tell them what you—who you want. You know.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 13:48

Thats a long journey.

**Estelita Tabios** 13:48

Its really nice seafoods. Australia and Canada. Thats not Canada, we never went to Canada. It's Australia. Anyway, it's a beautiful town and now I cannot remember it. Funny. I got all my albums home. I send them all home. They were [unintelligible] huge. I don't remember those. I have it all in there.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 14:15

Well, when you finally got to the US, was it San Francisco?

**Estelita Tabios** 14:19

San Francisco.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 14:20

What was it like when you first arrived in San Francisco?

**Estelita Tabios** 14:25

Not much, just that all my family were there already surrounding, saying hello, we're just waiting for our package and I made—I make a lot of friends that needed help in the in the in the boat. There I I can remember this nurse. But she was forced to come over I think told me theres uncle in here because they don't like the boyfriend back there in Cavite. I know the name. Her last name is [unknown], hes a pharmacist, But I don't know. I don't know where she is now. But she said she prom—made me promise that—she said don't tell anybody or say anything to my uncle. But he said, I'll just do what— this what parents want, but I'm going back. I have somebody to go back to.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 15:10

To her boyfriend.

**Estelita Tabios** 15:11

Aurora [Unknown], [Unknown]. So I hope she's got a happy life now and then I went home, was nighttime. Was nighttime when we arrived here.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 15:23

To Watsonville?

**Estelita Tabios** 15:24

Uh huh. My first house in Watsonville is 363 Casserly Road.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 15:30

Casserly Road.

**Estelita Tabios** 15:31

Yes, my husband and my sister-in-law and my and the cousin and my uncle, and Loren's father are farming strawberries there.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 15:41

Oh wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 15:42

And so, my husband and he said, You think I can do that? I said, no, you don't. I said, I don't even harvest rice back home. But anyway, yeah, all my my relatives too were there. And some of my husband's friends and relatives also, were there to meet us in the house and we have dinner. It's late already, but they want to see the bride so—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 16:08

Of course.

**Estelita Tabios** 16:09

Because they wouldn't believe you know, that my husband would marry. My husband is but 30 years older than me. [unintelligible] almost like your dad's age.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 16:22

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 16:23

So um [unintelligible] Okay.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 16:27

What was the house like on Casserly Road?

**Estelita Tabios** 16:29

Oh, it's like a camp. But then they—my husband and some of the Filipinos they come and built the house rebuilt it, because it was just a camp house, you know, for farmers. But then they have their family. I have my sister-in-law and two girls. And then I met 1, 2, 3, 4 houses, Japanese neighbor. All of us all [unintelligible]. But anyway, they're very friendly. And they watch me because it's summertime, or it's May, I arrived here, may 19, and it was warm, warm. So I play with the kids, right. My two nieces was seven or eight years old and the Japanese

neighbor, they also have small kids. We take a shower in the—outside in the yard with the hose. And the neighbors—the neighbor told my husband, she said she might get sick. She, you knows, it's too cold, and then you just laughs, No, I'm gonna be okay. And then we farm in there for 59—Hey, where am I? And I have a baby there. I have Liz.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 17:48

Okay.

**Estelita Tabios** 17:48

In February 12.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 17:51

I think I saw some photos of your house on Casserly Road in Liz's photograph album.

**Estelita Tabios** 17:57

Oh, yeah, maybe she did that to keep some of those pictures. It was a nice, it was nice, we were comfortable. We have your Aunty [unknown] and the two kids. We have three bedroom house. Yeah. And then your [unintelligible] uncle live with us. They work with us in the field.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 18:17

So did you work in the fields too?

**Estelita Tabios** 18:20

Not in the beginning. How can I go to work when I have—when I go to the field visit them or bring them some snack, I have my high heels on.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 18:33

Oh.

**Estelita Tabios** 18:34

My uncle and my my uncle and Loren's father said you're not supposed to wear like that in here, they laugh at you. And I said, well, I cannot walk, if I walk flat shoes. And so, I'm used to this. Not too high. But I said I cannot. So he said, Manong Encio, he said no. You just got to get used to it because these Mexican in here are laughing at you. So I did. I helped them a few but then I got pregnant and my husband didn't want me to be there. In fact, he managed to go to the field and get ready everything for the workers or water the the farm and then by morning he'll come home and pick me up because I cannot eat in the house. I threw up in the morning that's how sick I was with Liz—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 19:23

Oh my gosh—

**Estelita Tabios** 19:24

in the beginning to the end, until I deliver her I was sick I only have—I was only 105—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 19:31

pounds, Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 19:32

And you should see my face is so skinny.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 19:35

Oh my gosh.

**Estelita Tabios** 19:35

Yeah, I got—when I got pregnant with with her got sick all the way to the delivery. But with the boys, I have three boys but I don't feel any of those.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 19:48

So what year was she born?

**Estelita Tabios** 19:50

57.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 19:50

57.

**Estelita Tabios** 19:52

Yeah, and it was cold time that time. It's February it's just cold. Ice in the thing But that's good, cause doctor used to come to the house and check you up. Not Now but before Dr. Marshall comes to your house and check you after two weeks or a week you had come home. Yeah.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 20:16

What was it like to raise your kids in in Watsonville on Casserly Road?

**Estelita Tabios** 20:16

I didn't raise them—We didn't stay that long in there. After I gave birth to my my first son, Cris— Jr. was born January 3rd. And January, Feb— Then we move out there, because 1956, 57, 58 the farms slow down. They made their money when I—before I came in. They make a

lot of money. They make Mr. Yoshida vacation and in Japan being rich with all the the money that he make in the farm.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 21:05

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 21:06

Yeah. But then after that, slowdown, the market slowdown and the cannery, so they're not much so what we did is, my husband and my sister-in-law because we partner with the farm, you know, I don't care about it. My husband and her are dealing with it. I don't. So anyway, we decided to buy a farm of a place of our own on Tulsa Lane. That was an eight acre we have to clean and everything and farm a little bit in there. And we farm in there, vegetables, but you know, I didn't—My kids is not for the farm. I— From the beginning, we are farming we don't care for those, just like to play. Not like other kids, you know, they're interested in making money or helping, not my kids. They don't like farming. I even take them work with the, you know, raspberries because it's easy, you know, you're standing you just walk on, but no Liz's hands just swell up when it's wet. So not— it's not for them. So none of my three boys work— oh, Alvin did do gardening. Not gardening, it's just selling flowers and farm with the brothers and brothers. They just loved him. In fact, they spend the money for him because he got married. He is the one agriculture, he is interested but not hard work. I take Liz for picking strawberries and she's at the— couple hour she says its not for her. Not like the other girls, you know that they are so about busy busy. Mexican, they're interested because they get bonus in every crate, not my daughter. But—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 23:00

I saw some pictures of Liz. In— being crowned queen at some—

**Estelita Tabios** 23:06

Yes.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 23:07

Pageant.

**Estelita Tabios** 23:08

She's the first and the only one I think and a Filipina and she's only 14 or 13 years old in there, when she was crowned Miss Philippines.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 23:21

Was that for the Caballeros de Dimas Alang—

**Estelita Tabios 23:23**

Yes, Caballeros de Dimas Alang, the women's club. We're—we belong to almost, how many organization? Catholic Association, the division of America, Women's Club, Filipino community. It's just all the same members in there. We just want to, I don't know why because maybe because of the different places where people live.

**Joanne De Los Reyes 23:49**

The Visayan Association, that's probably it.

**Estelita Tabios 23:49**

Yeah, yeah, we have, we even have the Aklanan, Aklan association. And then we have to shorten that because it's hard to be the the Aklanan is mostly in San Francisco or Stockton and it's hard for a meeting and we have a meeting every month. So I have to do it at my house there in Buena Vista. So no, it was—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 24:13**

What was the Filipino Women's Club like? This [refers to a photograph of Estelita at a Filipino Women's Club event] is a Filipino Women's Club event right?

**Estelita Tabios 24:18**

Mmm Hmm

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 24:19**

What was it like to be in that club?

**Estelita Tabios 24:23**

Well being the youngest of all them, it it was fun. They gave me mostly the running thing because you know I did figure it out. It was fun to be with the kids and then besides we were trying to help the place the Santa Cruz here is a small only a small unit they only have a few, Mrs. Bingua, some of these Filipino here [refers to photograph]. Then we tried to do with the organized the one in Salinas, Mrs. Reyes, but still didn't didn't have enough. Mostly are married to, you know, American and that some of them don't want to be in. They only like to go to the dance and then we tried to develop them after to help that that we can combine until your Aunt when we have the Catholic Association she it's it's up so many organization that have the same members, they're tired yeah, and you know, with the— with their husband is in that category already that they don't want to be out, out like that so, it's hard for us. I—that's why I have to learn how to drive because I have to go. This one here [referring to a woman in the photograph] don't drive. She—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 25:44**



Who is that?

**Estelita Tabios** 25:45

This is Mrs. Tabasa.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 25:46

Oh yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 25:47

She does not drive so it's always dependent on me and it is all you're the secretary, you're the assistant treasurer, you do this and that. She cannot get them. She cannot get Mary because Mary is busy in the laundry, and this one does not drive either. Mrs. Tabancay.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 26:09

And so you were driving people around?

**Estelita Tabios** 26:12

Yes, from then and then on from all the kids. Ready when they were—They were all in here.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 26:18

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 26:18

Yeah.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 26:20

What were the dances like? Can you—what's your best memory of a dance?

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 26:25

Right, They have to come to a dance

**Estelita Tabios** 26:25

Of the dance?

**Estelita Tabios** 26:25

Because I have, I have to prepare. There—the orchestra is my compadre in San Francisco, "The Islanders." And you know how it is. They have to come and stay with me so they have—making sure they have fun because we can get them all the time. Mrs. Sulay and her son Mario. Mario grew up in making coffee with the mom at the veteran hall— what the auditorium in there that's where we have our dance. We do our dance in almost every month because we

have the Filipiniana. We have the Hawaiian dance. Just to make money. Just we have to make some money and that's the only way we can gather this boys, the boys were not married. Then some of them come from Delano, Stockton and that's the only way we can have them here and get their money they work hard.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 26:25

Mmm Hmm

**Estelita Tabios** 26:32

Yeah, you have to come to the dance and dance with the young girls and give the money that's why Liz won that Miss Philippines because their uncles are all in there to support her. Yeah, it was nice, it was nice and it—I mean even our Catholic Association we were able to—the officers or the consulate officers, we were able to invite them in our installation sometimes. The Coconut Grove one year. And then your mom we have the— mostly the father that came, the archbishop, even that archbishop in in Kalibo. It's already gone, but he was with us, yeah. He promoted us. It's a good, very good gathering because we were able to reunite, you know, some of the other people in there at Salinas didn't succeed much because Mrs. Reyes don't drive either, and her husbands old too. He cannot drive around and every time there are things going on and they call us. And I say, I cannot drive that, I cannot go around that one since I'm already working too so—

**Estelita Tabios** 26:35

Where did you get your dresses to go to all—

**Estelita Tabios** 28:52

Oh,

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 28:52

of those dances.

**Estelita Tabios** 28:53

I got lots of those. I got a sister back home that passed away three— two years ago in [Unknown], that every time I have anything going— in this [referring to photograph] at the Coconut Grove, I have a first prize on my clothes, my dress, because that dress that your Auntie Meady I loaned it to her, she wore it in her wedding and Connie's wedding and then she wore it in her funeral, I think, so I give it to her. That was a Imelda's clothes because your mom what used to write the Malacanang you know the she knows secretary [Unknown] that we can have some of the the First Lady's clothes then she find out that they cannot give it away because it has to be donated or put away in a secure place. But those dress that I have the

black one, but because they are friend, so they have it made for me from her, cut it from one of her dresses. So I won a prize for that.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 29:54

Wow.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 29:54

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 29:55

And I was I was skinny then.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 29:59

And they got— The dresses were sent from the Philippines?

**Estelita Tabios** 30:02

Yes, yes all my all my shoes that I wear. All these shoes I got lots of those but when we move out of Trembly Lane and all my things and there's I don't know where they put them everybody's interested and when they come. She's oh ,you know where you can get that, it over there, over there. They didn't even tell me. So, I don't have much left of it but anytime I have something going I just call my sister and right away she'll send it.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 30:31

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 30:32

Yeah, I have that. She shop for me for my clothes.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 30:36

I think looking at these photos like this are so fun because everybody looks so fancy.

**Estelita Tabios** 30:42

Yeah, I have I have those picture every time we have party and I have it all different kind of dresses. Even Liz wear them after that because she catch up with me she—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 31:00

fits in your clothes.

**Estelita Tabios** 31:01

Mmm Hmm

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 31:01

Yeah. Did you say that you had to arrange the musicians for the dances?

**Estelita Tabios** 31:06

Yes, I invite them or let them know that we are having—gonna have a dance that time then you know they'll they'll come.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 31:16

What were the names of the bands?

**Estelita Tabios** 31:19

Umm see, see, when I don't think about it I can't remember those, umm, it's just it's only the, what do you call that—and we have Mr. Tumbaga is always every every time Mr. Tumbaga and his company he's always there Benny Tumbaga is our regular orchestra. But sometimes we want to be sure like the Hawaiian dances and because they have the organ that this San Francisco one provide so it's like you know—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 31:26

A different sound.

**Estelita Tabios** 31:59

Different sound, and so, but regularly it's Benny Tumbaga's boys, the three of them they were close to us and provide us because we had to make money. We have to make money for everybody.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 32:15

At the Hawaiian dances did people do like a hula?

**Estelita Tabios** 32:20

Uh huh.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 32:20

Wow

**Estelita Tabios** 32:21

Yeah, I have—the daughter of the orchestra that I have in San Francisco dance the hula. So, she provides an entertainment for there for extra.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 32:33

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 32:34

And and we are— we wear all Hawaiian Hawaiian dresses and flowers.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 32:39

Really? I haven't seen any pictures of those dances yet.

**Estelita Tabios** 32:42

Oh, we even have the light in our head. I don't remember anymore. I left all all my albums are all in the Philippines.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 32:52

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 32:53

I left it there. Yeah, we all have those.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 32:56

That's interesting, you know, Virginia Sulay's daughter is a hula dancer now and she always tells me about how she was inspired by something—

**Estelita Tabios** 33:06

You know, I don't, I didn't— I haven't met her. It's only Mario all the time because Mario is always with the mother. They make coffee and Mario just sleep there in the bins and then when when I was working in the— when I opened that home in Corralitos we have problem and then he came, and I said Mario, already? And he says, Yeah, Auntie I'm already a policeman. Yeah, yeah, he was just—and always with the mother. He always help the mother carry those coffee thing. Yeah, they're all good. I love Ginny. She's always there to help.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 33:46

Yes, there were some, like several white women like her in the club, right?

**Estelita Tabios** 33:51

Yes. Yes. The Roberantes— they're the husband of the this this guys that work with us, they they all mostly join us. Mostly they started from the Filipino community, and then because there's not much members in there, except all of us the same. So, they go straight to the Women's Club and the Catholic Association. That's the two strong one that we have because it's hard for me too, when I start working already when my kids will be growing and still drive her all the time. Drive me nuts, my poor comadre.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 34:37

What about the parade? Do you remember the Fourth of July parades?

**Estelita Tabios** 34:42

Um, remembers but twice I think since I'm here because we do the Compadre Pio decorate the float, and it's a really really nice one from San Francisco. A lot of the company it come over here Watsonville. They like the parade in here. From that country store in here, that Mexican thing, all the way to Watsonville the high school. That's where we start, and all the way up. Big, big, what you call—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 34:58

a parade

**Estelita Tabios** 35:17

a parade.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 35:17

How long did it take to decorate these floats? They're so ornate.

**Estelita Tabios** 35:21

Um, if they do that, and you're on July 4, then we we have to do it at the beginning of June because compadre is the one who is very, very— yeah, he's very good. Pare Pio but but he lives in Seaside and that's where we park the, um, we park the float at Mr. Ragsac's place, and then we decorate.

**Estelita Tabios** 35:49

Mm hmm. Lots of flowers and a lot of the Filipino, the kids.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 35:49

Wow.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 35:55

Yeah, and people came just from everywhere to watch the Watsonville Parade.

**Estelita Tabios** 35:59

Oh, yes. Mostly our big crowd is from San Francisco. Chinese. They come all the way and they come to the Oriental Cafe for— we make good money. Yes, it was fun. it was really nice. At that time in here in Santa Cruz, and Watsonville, Salinas, which started to Castroville, but it's such a small place. There's only a few Filipinos in there, so we tried to put them in Salinas.

Then they they get tired that way, they will have no driver, but it's really nice. We think of each other. We help each other, especially my kids. They're all my kids, when they come along. You are you thinking about them on a weekend, Oh, where are they gonna be going? Are they coming in here we have a barbecue or all that, and as they were just growing up. They were late, you and your sisters, and who else were late? The Cawalings, yeah. They were also late, they started in the 1960s. Yeah, I think Junior is in the 1960s. Yeah. So only me and [Unknown] Tabasa, Junior. That's the only one and Jeff Tabasa. Those are the oldest kids in here, and now I don't think they even kind of get together.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 37:27**

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios 37:28**

Yeah, If you met my junior. When he came over three years ago, when I was sick. Before they before this—

**Joanne De Los Reyes 37:37**

Covid.

**Estelita Tabios 37:38**

Covid. Anyway, he wants to see all the boys, all the cousins, because they were the oldest, you know, among them, so they're just like brothers. They take care of each other.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 37:50**

That's what it sounds like, that there was a really tight knit community.

**Estelita Tabios 37:54**

Yes, because we worry. We think about, okay, where is her mother gonna bring them in the weekend? Or what are we gonna do? If we're gonna stay in Green Valley Road, then we'll just have barbecue in there and we'll invite some of our relatives from Valejo just to get together.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 38:11**

What were the barbecues like?

**Estelita Tabios 38:13**

Oh, very good. They all barbecue corn and, and pork. A lot of food.

**Estelita Tabios 38:19**

That's what we always had. Fish. She is a fisherman.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 38:19

Yeah

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 38:23

Yeah.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 38:25

And they would play mahjong.

**Estelita Tabios** 38:27

Play, we play mahjong, but that's lately, late already. And besides, we let the kids have their own time, but when they were young, you know, they're all my kids.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 38:39

Yeah. That's what it sounds like from the way people have talked about you to me, when I interview them. They say you're so important for the family for keeping everyone together and making sure everyone's on the right path.

**Estelita Tabios** 38:54

Yeah, because Loren's father cannot drive out of town. So mostly she's hospitalized in San Francisco so, it's always me who would go. Yeah, and then I bought the place and then I want them—everybody buy a place close to me. So we live in Doring Lane for close to each other, and then Trembly Lane and then now they are their own so, I am just happy for them

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 39:21

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 39:22

We'll—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 39:23

all within a small walking distance almost.

**Estelita Tabios** 39:27

Yeah.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 39:28

There off Green Valley Road.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 39:29



Wow.

**Estelita Tabios 39:30**

Yes, we want this way, to be together that way it's easy.

**Joanne De Los Reyes 39:35**

Yes, the Cawalings, the Taytayons, the Tabios family and the Tejadas.

**Estelita Tabios 39:42**

Yes. Yes the Tejadas are left now its only Junior in here. The girls are all got married and stay away. So, even me I hardly see them already. But then that last three years ago when I went home and come back sick, they are mostly in here. That's why, that's why sometimes its sad. It pays that they remember you. Loren was even then in my birthday, and they are far away and then he was he was here because Junior, my Junior wants to be all together. So, we have dinner with them here in their house before they left for for Hawai'i. Yeah. Yeah, it's nice that they remember you and that thing where just okay, mom, your auntie is already old, so it's okay. As long as you folks are alright, that's all I care. It counts.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 40:48**

Yeah. I wanted to ask you about your your job. Did you work at the canneries?

**Estelita Tabios 40:54**

Yes, I work at Green Giant

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 40:58**

Oh.

**Estelita Tabios 40:59**

Green Giant for, let me see—we were the one who opened the Green Giant line in Watsonville. Five of us Filipina opened that Green Giant line because we didn't have before, it's only Sterling Industry —or dont know what else any any of them but that's where we work is Sterling. The owner is from San—Sacramento. And then Green Giant become popular so we tried. We opened up one lin—one lane to run it, and then my, my boss—my boss—he said looking at, watching all the time, that he said, that one over there— did they think that I'm bad because it just for fun. I don't think about my job as you know a hard one because it is really hard, it's cold out there, but we have friends that work with us. The boys, that Arabian guys, you know, prepared our—where we stand up and when we seal that Green Giant bag of fruit, fruit products, frozen from Minnesota, and butter. Well, we opened up and as only five Filipinas open it and run it. It was October 22nd I can remember that. I was still in Gin Gin Road, 1962.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 42:25

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 42:26

And that's when we have the the party at the Coconut Grove. It was it was fun. I work in there I worked only for— we open it may, june, and then I in 1966 I had to quit because I was gonna have a baby. Alvin my youngest boy

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 42:51

Yeah. How long a shift did you have?

**Estelita Tabios** 42:55

I mostly I mostly work eight hours or nine hours on that line of the Green Giant. But if we don't have any and I always tell the manager says no, you know give it to this people that wants to work. So, I can rest and I can always can work anywhere I can go to the field and and work with the strawberry and raspberries with Mrs. Kuma, but the people in there, you know like the Mexican, they're really hard time so, give it to them. But they cannot run where I work because I'm mean. That Green Giant line is run by, okay, weighing, you weigh that and put it in the bag. Okay, and then the next one is the butter, and then the two machine was the flux that sealed the thing, and only two of us girls the weigher, butter, then the one that cut checked and put them in a tray. Well I'm mean, you know, sometimes, you know, I like them it's fun to have the girl get squirt of the butter. So I don't open the bag, and I said I mean [unknown], she got back on me—still my best friend in Watsonville, the two sisters. She said you're mean so we are friend. She will put this bags far up, you know, from close to each other or sometimes she put the other one in there so I cannot catch up and then they told us I'll put that meter in there, the timer, I'll put it fast so I can [unintelligible, laughter] sometimes like even if even if it's not sealing good because we had to be cleaned up by the mechanic, you know, a good time, but what I do is I just swap it with my finger and then keep on work.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 44:42

Oh [laughter].

**Estelita Tabios** 44:42

I was young then, I was just yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 44:47

It was fun. I worked from—and you know, you know the stupid thing that I do is. we know how many bins, you know those boxes, this carton, how many that we're gotta start with to work with, if you have ten make it sure that you work eight hours or more because there's some

[unknown] that you have to redo, but we—I'll ask the the, what is this now, what they call them now, but the manager— no, not the manager—

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 44:47

It was fun.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 45:18

Foreman.

**Estelita Tabios** 45:19

Foreman. I said, Leonard I say, we only have nine bins or eight today—tonight. He says if I deal with you, okay, all of us, what it says, the weigher, butter, and the two of us— it's about five or seven of us girls. If you give us eight hours each we'll finish it in earlier. He'll take his tobacco in his mouth and go, what did you say? I said, we only have this much and if I managed to run it in this much hour will you give us our eight hours or else we're gonna make overtime. He said, okay, but once he said okay don't tell anybody else okay already I'll fix the machine or make it you know a timer in there and that's we're gonna finish at that time.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 46:16

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 46:17

And he just hate me, I know he just hate me. And especially the mechanics, he said, we can—he said Lita, you can do that, but not enough days, we need our money. You know, I make sure we have ours.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 46:17

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 46:25

That was fun.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 46:33

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 46:34

And then finally I managed to change life. I went back to the farm and do check-in, you know, you check up to those—you know, we have this card that we punch. We just stand there on the line and watch this people or I do inspect their strawberry line if they pick a lot of berries. That's what I do. How many— five of us girls do that. Then finally, I talked to Mr. [Unknown]. I said,

you know I think it's stupid. Why should I be working in here like this and watching these people having a hard time? Maybe I'll find a job that's steady work for me. Oh, that's nice. That's good. Since your kids are grown up and I said yeah, and we need security. So I applied in the Dominican Hospital. At that time they don't pay that much. Tell you, the nun that interview me in Soquel, she said, you must be stupid. They laugh I think so sister Anne So, you paying good job in there in the farm, and why do you come to here that we cannot even pay you half of what you're making over there. Well, maybe I should just—and maybe I don't need that much money. And she—she must be really stupid. But because they don't pay that much at Dominican at the time. So, it's about \$5 or \$5.75 an hour. And in the field, we make more because we have bonus with all the boxes. So, okay, sit down you can see the manager and then you can start anytime you want to except you have your physical. I was so happy. I was so happy I have a steady job, but I said you know if—well I stayed in job in there five days a week, and weekend if I really want to I can still go back to the farm and work and that was good.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 48:35**

You were working as a nurse?

**Estelita Tabios 48:37**

No, no I work—we work we open the the linen department of the laundry department of Dominican Hospital, and every time we have a party, those nuns are in there and if they have company upstairs that unexpected they don't like the food in the cafeteria. So they said go downstairs and see Ms. Barbara says the laundry department, they said, they have food, good food. So we have pancit and we have mostly are the lumpia. So okay, bring it up. Even the fish that we barbecue, that your uncle go fishing, we even cook that and bring them upstairs. Yeah, remember the in Green Valley Road, me and Aunty Nila go visit and then we'll have dinner. They like fish.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 49:27**

Nice.

**Estelita Tabios 49:28**

Fresh one.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 49:28**

What year did you start working at Dominican?

**Estelita Tabios 49:31**

Oh boy [unintelligible]. Alvin is 67, I think that's when I start in there. 67, 68 so that long I worked there but 18 years and then I retired.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 49:49

What year did you retire?

**Estelita Tabios** 49:52

I was 65 years old then. I retired because my manager passed away and they are talking about putting me in the position and I don't want to.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 50:04

Was that 95 or 96.

**Estelita Tabios** 50:09

When did your mom work with us?

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 50:11

Oh I don't know.

**Estelita Tabios** 50:12

Because I got her put in there.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 50:14

Yes, Nanay worked with you.

**Estelita Tabios** 50:18

Yeah, I did my 15, almost 20 years that I wanted to get my pin for 20 years but I didn't because, you know, I cannot stay when it's it's bugging me. I don't get along with and if somebody is there looking at you thing, I cannot stand that. I want to be—where I work with just family because we're only in the group and help each other, but some people cannot accept that. They say, who you think she is? Who you think she is? I work—I used to come there midnight and random machine, if we need we need the linen for surgery. See I fixed the linens for surgery, and that start eight o'clock, and before there's no, what is it now, what that we're using—disposable, all before are all linens. We fold them nice and everthing. And total hip surgery that is 175 pounds of linen.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 51:20

Oh my gosh.

**Estelita Tabios** 51:21

Yes. That's the one that we make. We pile it up. Can you imagine just putting that—

**Estelita Tabios** 51:27

on the table folding, we are folding because we got some for people fold, and then but when you put all the ingredients together and tape them and put in the [unknown]. That's that's good, but I was happy. I was happy to do things that I learned fast, and then I do more and then the rest of the workers didn't appreciate that because I come in in my own time. I don't care what time it, it's needed. That's what I do, I jump in. I'd come in at night, I went in there, I can run the machine. I think it was known that Dominican was the first one in the Bay Area—the first laundry department, doesn't have any anymore now—that had that machine. I forgot the name of the machine that we bought for a million dollars.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 51:27

Yeah

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 52:23

Oh.

**Estelita Tabios** 52:24

Million dollars.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 52:25

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 52:26

For Dominican Hospital. We got it in New Orleans.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 52:31

And what did this machine do?

**Estelita Tabios** 52:33

Everything [unknown] did everything. Only the people that go and run it. It does some some folding, some of the uniforms that we do we run in your nurse's uniforms. We just run them and dry it and no hanger and then didn't have the iron

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 52:52

So its like a steamer.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 52:54

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 52:55

Just like like that. Even the doctor scrubs and all that.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 52:58**

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios 52:59**

Yeah, but then they burn it and then no more now they are sending their laundry. That's why it's hard for the hospital because they spent that— we need lots of linen. Now that it's disposable, it's easy for them, but in our time, but at least I learned.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 53:18**

Yeah. I was born in Dominican in 95. That's why I asked if you were still working there.

**Estelita Tabios 53:25**

95. No, when was Clint? Clint is 45 years old now with his son. I forgot already the—

**Joanne De Los Reyes 53:40**

Well, when did you retire? You were 65?

**Estelita Tabios 53:44**

No, I was 55.

**Joanne De Los Reyes 53:45**

You were 55.

**Estelita Tabios 53:46**

Yeah, I qualify. I make sure that I qualify for that before I run away.

**Joanne De Los Reyes 53:52**

So it was 86.

**Estelita Tabios 53:55**

I think so. Yeah. I did that, and because of, you know, when you're not happy anymore, and when you're working and you're worried about, you know, people in there, then better go away.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 54:09**

Right.

**Estelita Tabios 54:10**

Yeah, that's what I— that's me.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 54:13**

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios 54:14**

I'd rather give them the opportunity, and then—it was nice, it was a happy 18 years.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 54:24**

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios 54:26**

18 years.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 54:27**

Can I ask how you came to be with your new last name, Tabios, your second husband?

**Estelita Tabios 54:34**

Ah you—well, we made it here. We're already here at that time, and he's not the only one, I got lots of admirers that want to jump in before I get rid of my husband, but they didn't realize that it was maybe time because I send mostly my relatives that are here or related that I know has to be home because I feel sorry for them. That's my my dream when I came in this country, that the old folks in here that's already been working and working and like I said, if they go to the dance they spend their money all in there for the young girls that are making money at the dance. So, I managed to help them up and send them home and then some of them got married, your Uncle George got one daughter who's a nurse now in in Florida and who else? Uncle Coro. Always helped Liz when she become—uh when she ran for Miss Philippines. There's all these uncles and then they managed to go home to their family and I'm happy for them. Every time I go home, because I managed to go home before when my mom is still alive, I go home every year. Or sometimes one month in here, if I get mad I go home because I miss my mom. So that's it, we—I see them, some of them are gone already. It's different now the life back home there. Yeah, but I managed to visit mostly his mom and my—her auntie that are very close to me here. I manage when I go home that those are the people I'm gonna see and then come back I only have two weeks.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds 56:26**

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios 56:27**

Yeah with the family so, some of them might have to have fun with them. With Boracay, before the building, their building that Boracay. We get a walk in the mountain, oh my God.



**Joanne De Los Reyes** 56:39

Yes, it was beautiful and clean back then.

**Estelita Tabios** 56:44

Yeah, but that's that's my dream that's to help, make use of myself. So, up to there to the hospital I find my job that I love, caregiving. Caregiving, I passed that because I took care of most of the folks, did take care of them like my own. Of the 10—10 I started when my husband died, my my second husband died also so, when Tabios—we're always mostly working in the farm already so as old as they are and he got sick. So when he's gone I left the kids and Liz had a baby then. I said, you know, your folks manage this place in here because that your Uncle is gone now, so I'm alone. So, I went home to Vallejo to my cousin just to get air out just to to be free. I don't want to go home because my mom is also gone. So, I went—I stayed in Vallejo for a while and then well people are they're all working so why don't—so, I did I went two years and I home in Napa and then I said well can I work and he says you have two hands. Of course you can work, so I did apply for work and right away the first week I was interviewed for to take care of this English lady and the thing and then she don't like colored people, she scared, the they scared her. She's an English is from somewhere here, from Santa Barbara, and she got married in Napa. So I took care her until she wouldn't let go of me. She just said that why can't you just stay here all day? And I said well because I'll just cook your breakfast your to breakfast, I'll prepare your lunch, then I'll go home, and then you—I come back for you at night for your dinner. For what she said, okay, I watch TV anyway and that's all she does, until the end in my, in my hand at the hospital there. They just told me that you know she just went for a checkup and the doctor said that you know, that's it. So. just wait So Florence is gone that's my first. So we live in a mobile home where her mobile home in Napa, and she only have one daughter in her life so they give me a lot of things in the house and then part of whatever the cost, you know, they sell the um the house. Can I—well they put me somewhere else and then I says well kind of lonely you know we are first time taker somebody and then left you like that, but it wasn't that soon you know was about two years or so that I was taking care of her. Then I went back here in Santa Cruz. Then when I came back here was October. My girlfriend was working there and that Corralitos, De Un Amor. She said, the the owner is a single guy with a son, and he's busy in the beach. He's a beach comber. So she said that, you know, I can manage. You're going somewhere?

**Dan [Last name unknown]** 1:00:41

I have my meeting tonight.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:00:42

Oh, thats right. You gonna have dinner?

**Dan [Last name unknown]** 1:00:44

Yeah—

**Estelita Tabios** 1:00:46

And then that that's it. I work in there at the home. I put a lot of patient in there, and then after that, I leave it again because I hired a lot of Filipina to work with me, Stephanie and the one from [Unknown]. But finally there's always something wrong.

**Dan [Last name unknown]** 1:01:06

Did you offer them anything to drink.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:01:08

No, yeah.

**Dan [Last name unknown]** 1:01:09

Are you guys thirsty?

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:01:13

I'm good.

**Dan [Last name unknown]** 1:01:13

You sure?

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:01:14

Yeah..

**Estelita Tabios** 1:01:15

So anyway, I work and then then then I was hurt, so I went home again. My boss, the owner of the place, give me money, pocket money, so I went home. When I came back, I told him Trigg, I'm not coming back to work in here anymore, and as he said, Why me I said if I tell you, I don't want you to fire them because I set the place in there. I opened that for him. I drilled it, I put I fill it up with patient, but you only have two or three in there when I come in. And I fill it up to thirteen. I begged the fire department to give me a permit for another bed, and I did it for him. So a bit —everytime time I go in there she said, are you ready to get a bed in here. Trigg, You're so mean. He's a Norwegian, but he's very playful. So then I continue already this is my maybe this is my destiny. I took care of them and all mostly of them went through me passed on me.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:02:26

Even though it's hard to work as a caregiver because people pass on, you still loved it?

**Estelita Tabios** 1:02:34

Yes, three years ago was my last one [unknown] got sick, and Gertrude also want me so I come over there until she passed away, but I can't do it any more Dan won't let me.

**Dan [Last name unknown]** 1:02:48

Nope too old. She retired.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:02:53

Yeah. So I took care of his mother so now he says he's gonna take care of me. I'm very very blessed.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:03:04

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:03:05

And thankful.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:03:11

Wow.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:03:11

Yes.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:03:12

Do you like living in Santa Cruz and being close still to where your whole family was back in the day?

**Estelita Tabios** 1:03:20

Yes, sometimes I do. Sometimes, you know, I just see, visiting them or them visited me. We'll see each other sometimes in parties, but I don't go partying anymore. I don't anymore.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:03:35

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:03:37

Yeah, those are the things I miss this kids when I see them.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:03:43

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:03:45

Reminds me all over when I came here and had my own kids, and then The Taytayons, The Cawalings they all put them in my station wagon and it's all mine. Yeah, all the outside driving, it's always Lita to take them San Francisco or wherever you need to be. Yeah, I'm happy for them now look at this. She was just little.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:04:12

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:04:13

She was so little, I said I was surprised when I saw her again because she's she's just a little one. Janice is bigger than you and you were growing up.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:04:21

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:04:23

I don't know how did you make it?

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:04:25

I don't know how I survived.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:04:27

Yeah, she's she's really grown up. I thought she was just going to be like her mother, but no she get the other side. So, is there anymore that you—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:04:40

Um I think I think that covers most of it. What about you Joanne, do you have a question?

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:04:47

I really don't. I just thought Aunty would be a great—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:04:51

Yeah.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:04:52

Person to share because she, as you can see, knows all her dates.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:04:56

She knows it all.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:04:58

Yeah because we're very close with these people [referring to the photograph of the Filipino Women's Club].

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:05:03

Yes.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:05:04

This one we didn't see lately, but this is the—I work with her at the hospital.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:05:09

Oh, really?

**Estelita Tabios** 1:05:10

Yeah, Mrs. Bingua and Nena is always close because we just—her first husband is from Aklan.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:05:17

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:05:18

The doctor, and this one is a Visayan, and she's a—Comadre. She had two— she had two kids, and also I heard what happened to the girl, Nancy passed away also. And this one always come, they always referred her to me because they say that I'm young, you know, I would understand her situation.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:05:18

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:05:38

Because well, her husband, husband was almost dying when I came here. When I arrived here, they they work together with Mary's husband in the laundry, their partner, and something happen I think that he cannot accept and he did something wrong, so I finally find out later on.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:06:06

Yeah he did something—

**Estelita Tabios** 1:06:09

Yeah. He died. Yeah, he just can't—that's why she did she never changed her name, her last name.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:06:16

Yes.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:06:17

She never did. She was—

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:06:19

Tabancay.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:06:19

Tabancay, yeah.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:06:21

But she had a partner, Uncle Emilio.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:06:24

And then another, another before that, Emilio stayed with her, but she's got some. That's why they always referred her to me because I'm young, and my husband and her same, you know, they are elderly than us, but I said, My husband is my town mate and we understood. You know, he understand my life, and he said because before I marry him, I told him that's the way I want. But I am very loyal to my my people. I do care for them once I care for them. I go all the way.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:06:59

Yeah.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:07:00

I don't give up.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:07:02

No.

**Estelita Tabios** 1:07:04

So that's the only thing I have.

**Joanne De Los Reyes** 1:07:08

Well, a lot of people think of you with love, Aunty.

**Meleia Simon-Reynolds** 1:07:12

They do and they're really loyal to you.