

Filipino American Farm Workers Oral History Project

Oral History Interview
with
Jose Jazmin

February 13, 2015
Orinda, CA

By: Robyn Rodriguez, PhD
Transcribed By: Gerald C. Malixi
Welga! Filipino American Labor Archives
UC Davis Asian American Studies Department

RODRIGUEZ: So you were born in Mangatarem, Pangasinan in the Philippines, August 15, 1950. Was your name Joe or was it Jose also?

JAZMIN: I had a chance to change it to Joe, but I want to be different from my dad.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, so [dad] was Joe. Joe G. Jazmin. And then Rosita P. --

JAZMIN: Yeah, [she's] my mom.

RODRIGUEZ: And then you talked about your dad being in the military. He was in the Philippines Scouts?

JAZMIN: Yeah, when he joined during World War 2 he was part of the Philippines Scouts. The story was that he was actually captured by the Japanese. When he was captured, my grandma heard that he was passed away because he was captured. At the time they weren't very nice; if you were captured the Japanese did like [inaudible]. But he got away, he escaped.

RODRIGUEZ: How long was he in Japanese custody? Do you know?

JAZMIN: Oh, gosh, at least about a year or - you know - a number of months. And then word got around that he died. So my grandmother had a wake for him and the next thing you know he shows up. So he shows up, he was able to escape. The story was he hid and he basically disguised himself as a woman, or something like that. So he got away, but he showed up and he basically stayed away for a while. Our town at the time was occupied by the Japanese and they used the grammar school in town as their headquarter. So at night time, the story was that they would basically kill whoever they would interrogate and then they would burn them. And so there was flesh and stuff, it was kind of gory. So when my dad was in the Philippines Scout, my mother and my aunt.. this is a story in itself, my uncle married a Japanese woman from a southern part of the Philippines. He was a military officer, so he was in the southern part of the Philippines and he fell in love with a merchant.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, I see. So she was a Japanese merchant's daughter?

JAZMIN: Japanese merchant's daughter, right. So the family went back to Japan at the time, but she didn't want to go because, you know, she was in love with my uncle. So she stayed. Now, when the

Japanese occupation came they didn't want to be caught because if you're Japanese and... you know, you're dead. So her, my auntie [Luz], and my mom would hide at night. So they would go from one place to another place to hide during that time. It was very tough for them so they never stayed at one place at one time. So that was a fairly interesting story. Anyways, after the war, well my dad came back so he joined the military and..

RODRIGUEZ: So he joined the military after the war? So he was caught during the war.

JAZMIN: Yeah, after the war. He was part of the Philippine Scouts.

RODRIGUEZ: So he was part of the Philippines Scouts, then he joined the U.S. military after the war.

JAZMIN: Right. He got an opportunity to join the U.S. army.

RODRIGUEZ: And that's when he became a citizen?

JAZMIN: Yes. And then from there, they shipped him to the states. They transferred him to different.. he was in [inaudible] to Japan for a while, and then back and forth. And then he came to the United State and then it was at that time that he decided to bring his kids over. My mom was still in the Philippines so she had to do all the paper work. And so she had to go to the military base, Clark Air Force Base, to get our paperwork and all that stuff. But we had some privileges there because, you know, we were the dependents of military. And at the time, it was tough because there wasn't so much in the province and so with my mom's income from my dad's pay, she was able to do pretty good. And so we left, we turned over all our stuff to my aunt. She managed the home we're in and the investments my mom had. So we left that in 1959 and we came to the states. And that's where we are.

RODRIGUEZ: And so at the time, you only had your three brothers and one sister. Was your dad on the ship with you?

JAZMIN: No, no. He was waiting for us at ["Fort?".. inaudible]. When we arrived at San Francisco he was there.

RODRIGUEZ: Okay, so from San Francisco you went to Missouri. And you spent a few years there and then that's where you sister, Sonya, was born. And then after a few years there, your mom wanted to see

her kumadre in Earlimart and that's when she said, "This might be a good place to stay because there's lots of Filipinos and job opportunities." And then from there you ended up going to Delano.

JAZMIN: Yeah. From Earlimart (to Delano) it's only 7 miles. They're right next to each other.

RODRIGUEZ: And that's where she bought a home?

JAZMIN: Yeah, she found a home, she bought a home there and so we settled down in Delano. And from there I went to grammar school at the Fremont [Elementary] School.

RODRIGUEZ: On the west side of town. And then you were saying there was a big division between west side and the east side. With the west side being African American, Filipino and Mexican.

JAZMIN: Yeah, a lot of minorities. ["Worker Bees"]

RODRIGUEZ: Right, and then the other side was the east side. Which was predominantly white.

JAZMIN: Yeah, merchant class, middle class.

RODRIGUEZ: And then you described two distant neighbors: the Pickerings on one side and then a Mexican family across the street.

JAZMIN: Yeah, there was a Mexican family and a Filipino family across the street

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, that's right. You also mentioned, too, that on the corner - because you lived on the corner at Clinton [St.] & Cecil [Ave.] - was the Mrs. King, the mother of Leamon King, the league Olympic medalist.

JAZMIN: Yup, a very well known medalist.

RODRIGUEZ: Right, and then you were saying that your dad retired around 1962-63. He was in the (U.S. Army) Corps of Engineers and then he retired just before his battalion ended up being shipped over to Vietnam. You said that initially he worked here, at the Orinda Country Club, through a relative who was commuting. And then he eventually decided he didn't want to do this commute anymore so he ended

up working the fields with your mom, who at the time was working at the Vincent B. Zaninovich & Sons farms. Then you were saying, and this is where we left off, you actually were working the fields too. You were working since the age of 12.

JAZMIN: Yeah, as soon as I got my Social Security card.

RODRIGUEZ: Right, as soon as you got your Social Security card. And then you ended up getting the same pay as your mom and dad. I think you mentioned too, your brothers were also working?

JAZMIN: Yeah, my brothers worked for a while, they were. At the time, my oldest brother was in the U.S. Air Force. He already served, was joined in because at 17 he didn't want to be in town.

RODRIGUEZ: And he was shipped off to Vietnam right?

JAZMIN: No, as an Air Force he went to Thailand. Well, initially he was in the states for a while then he got shipped off to Thailand. And then we didn't see him for the next 15 to 20 years.

RODRIGUEZ: Wow, that's your oldest brother. What's his name?

JAZMIN: Roman P. Jazmin. So he was overseas, he stayed around in Asia. He was in Thailand, then he was transferred to Korea, and then from Korea he went to the Philippines Clark Air Force Base. He met a girl there and he married and stayed there for a good portion of time. Then he got transferred back to Korea, he was basically staying in Asia. Then around 1980s or so, they moved back to the states. He got a job in southern California, he was stationed in an Air Force base near Victorville and then that's where he retired.

RODRIGUEZ: I see, and then was your 2nd brother working in the fields?

JAZMIN: Yeah, my 2nd brother was there until he graduated from high school.

RODRIGUEZ: What was his name?

JAZMIN: Conrado. He's a member of the band too, he played the guitar.

RODRIGUEZ: So he was in high school at the time and worked a little bit on the fields, and you were there. Did your younger sisters work on the farms?

JAZMIN: One of them did, Evelyn.

RODRIGUEZ: Evelyn is the 4th [child] then.

JAZMIN: Yeah, but my mom didn't particularly push them to go work in the fields.

RODRIGUEZ: Right, but you guys worked and you were saying you worked on the weekends, or just Saturdays.

JAZMIN: Yeah, but except for some, you know, ... of course Saturdays or holidays. Especially the summer, that's where you make extra money to be able to go to school. Well, talk to you about my older brother, Conrado, he was a track star in Delano High (School). He set some track records in running. He was in the band with me and as a member of the band we used to travel throughout the area there and we played. And one of the things we did was we played at the Delano Filipino Community Hall. We played there Saturday night; they have social boxes for the manongs to come in after-- especially after the grape picking season. They would have some entertainment, they would have candidates and queens and stuff. They would have social boxes and stuff, whoever.. how they run that doggone thing is the one who generate the most income or is the one gets to be crowned queen.

RODRIGUEZ: So was this band something you formed in high school?

JAZMIN: No, I was still in grammar school. I was 15 years old.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, really? What was the name of the band?

JAZMIN: The Metros. My brother Conrado, me, Willy Mascurinas, and then a guy who was right behind him - his name is Chilly Nadal - and then you have Feliciano Dugenia, then you had Eli Miranda, he played the drums.

RODRIGUEZ: So all Filipinos.

JAZMIN: Yeah, Filipinos. We had two Mexicans.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, who were the Mexicans?

JAZMIN: One is Armando Gutierrez and then Frank Trejio, we used to call him “Pangas”.

RODRIGUEZ: So growing up, were a lot of your close friends Mexican?

JAZMIN: Oh yeah, all friends and girlfriends. Not too many-- didn't date too many Filipinas there. During the time we were playing, we were the only Filipino band. So we would practice at the camps and the foreman would invite us over to let us play and practice at the camp; and we would meet some of the old folks and old guys and stuff. On Saturdays we would play at the Filipino Hall for the manongs.

RODRIGUEZ: So did they congregate at the Filipino Hall on a weekly basis?

JAZMIN: Oh yeah, that was real. That was before the strike. That was the hangout. That was the hangout where all the Filipinos-- especially on the summer because that's where they all congregate. They would have the bands and social boxes. We would have to play all the old music, “Dahil Sa Iyo” and all that kind of stuff. We also traveled throughout different towns in the area and we were able to play after school, after din dances at the high school. So we got pretty much exposed in the music scene there. At the time, too, it was an opportunity for us to see what was going on. My Uncle Pete, I'll give you a little story of him:

He shared a house with one of our townmates, the Baceras. Uncle Pete and Max Bacera, that's the name of the gentleman, they were townmates. We were all townmates. And there was a gentleman who was Uncle Max's cousin or brother, his name is Candido Bacera. Mr. Candido Bacera was one of the carpenters and architects for the 40 Acres Ranch. And 'To (“Tito”) Pete, he's very much involved with the union, he knew Cesar.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, you mean your Uncle Pete, named 'To. So he was very..

JAZMIN: Involved with the strike with Larry and Philip and all that. They were all the same age, that was their group.

RODRIGUEZ: Maybe you can tell me about that a little bit. I think when we started I asked you if you heard much about the strike preparations since you were working in the fields. I think by the time, you said, the strike happened you were already in high school.

JAZMIN: Yeah, we were in high school at the time, just getting into it, but we never really got too much exposed to the daily grind stuff. We just heard what was going on. Uncle Pete would come in and tell us what was happening and he had some issues with the growers and we'd share with it. A few times, Uncle Pete would be joined by Larry (Itliong) - and then a few times Philip (Vera Cruz) would come over - to the house and would have dinner at the house. So they'd meet with us and we'd chit chat and stuff, but it was all basically high-level stuff. In fact, Philip was more pensive person. He was more very quiet to some extent, but Larry was more [inaudible]. Uncle Pete was too, he was so gung ho, he was very outspoken about his feelings and his knowledge.

RODRIGUEZ: What do you remember about those conversations? If there's a memory that pops out in your head.

JAZMIN: I remember sitting there talking and then, Uncle Philip, he would kind of low key share his ideas and thoughts. When you say something very offensive, he'd think about it. I didn't see him very emotional about things. I remember [Philip's] words were basically, "We're at our age where our time has passed. It's up to you young guys to be able to push yourself to the next level". So education was one of the key things they would mention, "Go to school, finish up. We don't expect you to go out there and walk around with a 'Welga!' sign and stuff, but the thing you can do is to improve yourself by going to school." That was the message: go on do what you're doing and get that education because they can't take that away from you.

RODRIGUEZ: So when they were at your house was it for casual dinner? Were they there to try to get your parents to support?

JAZMIN: Well, of course indirectly, they know sometimes there's nothing our parents - because we had to feed ourselves - they know that we were working, we had to work. They didn't try to push us. I didn't see them being pushy about that stuff. If you wanted to participate you could, but if you had to go to work, of course, you have to go to work. They did too because you had to support yourself.

RODRIGUEZ: Did you have a sense of what your parents felt about the strike?

JAZMIN: They didn't have too much strength, too strong of a feeling, about it because they were basically just trying to make a living. To them, they were just trying to make a living; enough money to be able to feed the family and survive. But they didn't have any strong, "Go go go!"-feeling about it, "We hate you, farmers", and stuff. We're just basically dealing with what they had in order to make a living. If they didn't have an income, how would you do? Although, we were a little better off because my dad had retired.

RODRIGUEZ: What was your sense growing up in that period? How was the town and how were the people - other kids and peers - affected by the strike? What was your sense of the general feeling living in Delano at the time?

JAZMIN: General feelings, you'd try to staying away from getting too dramatically involved. We had so many things going on. We tried to find a job, we didn't try to cross the picket line.

RODRIGUEZ: By "we". you're saying yourself?

JAZMIN: Myself. I didn't try to. I was, at the time, kept busy because I had music. I played music and I didn't have to do that. Some of my classmates, I was in a lot of the classes with Freddie Chavez, Cesar's nephew. In fact, he and I were in Algebra classes together. Fernando Chavez, Cesar's son; he and I were in study hall together. We didn't say nothing too much about it. As you can see in the pictures, Freddie became the student body president. He was very likable guy, but he was very knowledgeable of what's going on. For us, to some degree, we didn't quite understand what was going on because we didn't know all the details. So we would just basically see how things evolved, but we knew there was some friction between the growers and their kids; the whites and the poor side of town.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, that's interesting. Do you feel that, because you all went to high school together, there was some kind of tension affecting you?

JAZMIN: Yeah, oh yeah. You didn't interact too much aside from knowing them. I mean there was one time, I was studying at the library because I couldn't study at home. I was sitting with a guy named Mulligan and one of the guys, I know him. We were just chit chatting and next thing you know he was noticed by some of the white people sitting down with me. He got up and went to a different table. That

was one of the things I saw. Aside from that, we didn't see anything awkwardly. Of course, there was some animosity and feeling. Because we were Filipinos, there was some issue there.

RODRIGUEZ: So there was definitely a way that this strike affected the young people in town.

JAZMIN: Oh yeah, more so affected in the Mexican community. You got to understand, some of the Filipinos there were very much into the administration part. A lot of them were foremans. Their parents have some inroads with the farmers, so some of them were foremans. They didn't want to rock the boat. And, of course, there was an issue of those who looked up to their job and being able to maintain their lifestyles and there were those who felt they weren't getting enough. So there was a little clash there.

RODRIGUEZ: Right, so even amongst Filipinos.

JAZMIN: Especially Filipinos because a lot of the Filipinos didn't want to give up because they had a very strong tie to the foreman.

RODRIGUEZ: It's interesting that Larry and Philip would come to your house. What are your memories of them and how close were they to your family?

JAZMIN: Well, we spoke the language. We spoke Ilokano so I remember that they would speak Ilokano. The Filipino community was interesting; they know each other, they all work together. Sometimes you refer to the old manongs as your uncle, Uncle "So and so". Some of those guys would look at you and try to be attached to you because they don't have no other family.

RODRIGUEZ: You mentioned that before. You said how one of your friends was left a car by a manong. You can tell that story again because they sort of would adopt kids.

JAZMIN: Yeah, exactly. They would adopt, they would do that and give you presents and stuff. They looked forward to seeing young kids and kids improve themselves.

RODRIGUEZ: Do you remember any specific experiences yourself of, kind of, being adopted? You or your siblings?

JAZMIN: Yeah, they treated you nicely. Sometimes I go over there, they buy you something. Give you a present or something. I know there was the Ordiz; I heard that an old guys left them.. Benny Ortiz's family.. In fact, the mother.. They were very highly recognized in the community so some of the old folks that worked for their dad treated them very nicely because they didn't have enough [inaudible]. And there was this one guy who my mom told me he kept saying we were related. My mom couldn't recognize him, but when he passed away I think he gave my mom something.

RODRIGUEZ: So they really tried to create these ties and things.

JAZMIN: Yeah, they had nothing and so they wanted to have a family. They treated you as a family and you referred to them as Uncle "So and so" or Manong "So and so".

RODRIGUEZ: I don't know how often you were able to interact with any of the strike leaders. Your uncle was really involved in the strike. Tell me a little bit about him and what you know about his involvement.

JAZMIN: Uncle Pete would go to the meetings and he would tell us what was going on.

RODRIGUEZ: Pete Vergara

JAZMIN: Yeah, Pete Vergara. He was actually one of the pioneers in coming up with things to improve how you pick grapes. One of the things he came up with was the design for a wheelbarrow. In the old days, you had to carry the box. You pick the grapes, put it in a box, you carry it from the middle of the rope to the front. And at the front of the rope, that's where you pack the grapes so they know what you're packing. And then they would weigh it, then stack it and then at the end of the day you would count how many boxes you pick.

RODRIGUEZ: And get paid by that.

JAZMIN: Yeah, so when you pick you have a box and you put the grape bunches and you carry it to the end of the line. That's like 27 pounds and maybe, I would say, about 30, maybe 40 yards or longer. And you do that for every box, you gotta carry it out and you pack it. So Uncle Pete said, "Why you doing one by one?" So he came up with a wheelbarrow, so he designed a wheelbarrow that you can put 4 or 5 boxes

and you would wheel it out. From there, it has evolved into what they're doing now. So Uncle Pete was the first one that came up with that idea.

RODRIGUEZ: So he was always trying to find ways that people could work better.

JAZMIN: Yeah, exactly, because the way you make money there is you could get paid by the hour. Maybe they pay you \$1.10 an hour and 10 cents a box.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, so first you get paid hourly and then, on top of that, you get paid for box.

JAZMIN: This is in the picking season.

RODRIGUEZ: I see, and so then he's trying to figure out ways to get people more money.

JAZMIN: Yeah, that's how you make more money. The more boxes you pick, the more money you make. So that's on a time basis, you work by the hour. And then you can work by piecemeal and they give you maybe 25 cents a box each box you pick.

RODRIGUEZ: So that's an option, it depends on the employer.

JAZMIN: Right, sometimes they do that. So that's piecemeal. People prefer that way because they make 100 boxes, they go home. By 12 or 1 o'clock, they go home. The other guys, if you're hourly, you got to stay there till [10] o'clock.

RODRIGUEZ: So you're saying he's a pretty outspoken guy.

JAZMIN: Oh, very outspoken. I mean, if he sees something wrong he'll let you know.

RODRIGUEZ: Was he a member of a union? Which union?

JAZMIN: Yeah, he was a member. He went with Larry and Philip. At that time, there was a separate piece: there was a Filipino part and there was a Mexican part.

RODRIGUEZ: Was he already part of the Filipino part before they merged?

JAZMIN: Yes, he was there with them from the beginning. In fact, the picture Marissa Aroy that put together, there was some pictures of my brother's boss. His name is Bill Tejano, he was one of the guys in there.

RODRIGUEZ: What do you mean by your brother's boss? He was a foreman?

JAZMIN: Yeah, he was a guy who was in charge. Bill Tejano was a foreman and my brother worked for him. I knew him and we used to go to his camp and we used to play music over there.

RODRIGUEZ: So how often would you see people, the leaders like Larry and Philip, around town?

JAZMIN: I would see Larry sometimes. If you wanted to see them, if you had a reason, you can see them at the Filipino Hall because that's their headquarters. This is when the transition was when.. remember I told you we used to play in a band every Saturday. What really ticked us off was we go in there and we used to see nothing but Filipino stuff. Then pretty soon when the strike took over, we saw Mexican stuff. And I said, "Hey, what happened? This is a Filipino Hall." Then pretty soon Mexicans taking it over.

RODRIGUEZ: Did that cause tension?

JAZMIN: Oh, yes. Why we giving this Filipino Hall to them? Why is it that? What are we getting for this?

RODRIGUEZ: How was it for you guys since it was a mixed band anyways?

JAZMIN: Well, it doesn't matter. They were token, they had nothing to say.

[End Audio File 1]

[33:58]

[Begin Audio File 2]

[00:00]

JAZMIN: I went to school at (California State University) Long Beach and I became familiar with the Asian American Studies class in Long Beach State. I used to go to the Asian American hall, they had a little room there and it was headed by a guy named Lloyd Inui, Japanese American.

RODRIGUEZ: So he would help with Asian American Studies courses?

JAZMIN: Yeah, he set up the Asian American Studies courses and I would go there at Long Beach.

They would ask me, "Where are you from, Jose?"

I said, "I'm from Delano."

"Oh yeah, Delano", blah blah blah, "you were part of the strike?"

"Yeah, but if you want to know about it I'd be more than happy to share with you what my thoughts are and stuff."

The Japanese had their own issues about racial inequality. They were still talking about being herded off to the camps in World War 2, talking about Manzanar and all that kind of stuff. You talk to the Mexican Americans, they had the La Raza, that kind of stuff.

RODRIGUEZ: When was your first year again at Long Beach?

JAZMIN: 1971

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, 1971. Yeah, just a few years after Asian American Studies is being established.

JAZMIN: Yeah, exactly, and they had EOP program. That's how I was able to get in.

RODRIGUEZ: The Equal Opportunity Program.

JAZMIN: EOP, yeah. That was one of the drivers that basically got us to setting up the club at Long Beach for Pilipino American Club.

RODRIGUEZ: The *drivers* was the EOP program or being exposed to some of these issues?

JAZMIN: The driver to getting involved was being able to organize and offer EOP opportunity to the local Filipinos in Delano or anywhere.

RODRIGUEZ: I see. So EOP got you in and then you started to feel like you needed to make sure this opportunity continued.

JAZMIN: Continued for others who didn't have the same opportunity.

RODRIGUEZ: So the formation of the Filipino group was with that vision.

JAZMIN: With that vision.

RODRIGUEZ: What was the name of the org again?

JAZMIN: It's called PAC, Pilipino American Coalition. At the time, we called it "coalition". However, I think it got watered down to be called Pilipino American Club because they didn't want to make it so [adequate]. It's still there. In fact, there's a picture in here of some of the guys in my group.

That was one of the focus of the group: was not only to form the group to offer EOP opportunities for the kids around the area, but also it was a social thing. You are among Filipinos, we would party and go out and enjoy, we had a basketball team. It was a number of things that got us together and we had a common cause and we wanted to get things done in the community. That kept growing, the enthusiasm kept growing, and pretty soon we had a very viable club that had a life on its own.

RODRIGUEZ: It started off as the Pilipino American Coalition? So you were one of the founders of that?

JAZMIN: Yeah, it was the guy who was there, Bon Montoya, me, Bob Cockland, Mike Dogganpot. We used to just hangout. As a deal, I was able to bring the group to Delano on the 1st inauguration of the Filipino Basketball League and it was held in Delano. I brought the team over, we played in the 1st tournament and we were the 1st ones that got on TV. That was in the 70s, like 1972 or '73.

So anyways, that propelled that group and it got tighter and tighter. As we finished off we had a guy, named James Constantino, and Maria Sahagun begin to put some meat into the group. And pretty soon we

got approved as a recognized club on campus and got funding. So that's how we formed the PAC of Long Beach.

RODRIGUEZ: So you actually took classes in Asian American Studies when you were there?

JAZMIN: Oh yeah, I took it with Lloyd Inui. In fact, another gentleman who was teaching at the time, his name is Danny (Kuramoto), he played saxophone for Hiroshima. His girlfriend, who played the koto, she was in that group. They were husband and wife.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh wow. So were they your peers?

JAZMIN: No, they were the teachers. Not much older than us. It was a young group, young club. We had a lot of support. In fact, we tried to integrate the Pilipino American Club and the Filipino experience with the Japanese experience; part of Asian American stuff. So that's how we got support from them. We started off as a social group amongst the guys and the girls. And through the projects we had - which was EOP from recruitment and fundraising for the uniforms that we wanted to go for basketball and the social aspect - it began to have a life on its own. It grew and grew. As we heard about a new Filipino kid that just came on campus, we'd go out and meet with them, bring them in and we'd try to have them participate. That's how the club grew: we brought the club from Long Beach to Delano and we had them interact with some of the people there, learn about the strike and learn about the Filipino experience in Delano.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh, so you actually brought people to learn about the experience. So when you were at Long Beach, people were curious about the strike?

JAZMIN: Oh yeah, they heard about it. There was enough knowledge that they wanted to help. There was some people that wanted to participate and help out because the strike got a foothold, it was very nationally visible. Filipinos were also there, too, because of the exposure of Larry and Philip and the Filipino experience.

RODRIGUEZ: So then you guys would organize trips of both Filipinos and Japanese Americans to come visit.

JAZMIN: Yeah, whoever wanted to go would come.

RODRIGUEZ: So how did students get involved with the strike apart from exposing each other? Were there other ways?

JAZMIN: Yeah, by word of mouth or through interaction, they came into knowledge.

RODRIGUEZ: So in terms of students, you would bring these people over. People at Long Beach, did they get involved more?

JAZMIN: Yeah. some of them would come in and wave the flags and they would go out and carry banners and participate. Whoever. And help out, we had fundraisers.

RODRIGUEZ: Oh really, so you had fundraisers to support the strike?

JAZMIN: Yeah definitely. We did as much as we could. I didn't get too much involved because I was working, I got a job and I was working so heavily. I knew what the issues were, but I was focused and trying to get my ass out of college and try to make enough money. I knew the issue. Like I said, I told everyone I'm from there, I know the issues. I know what it is and my parents are there, but I got my own journey to go through and complete my own path to be able to help myself. It would be no-good if I lose my education and not finish and not succeed and have to go back; which a lot of kids did that. Those who were given an opportunity to come - some of them were actually recruited and had the opportunity to come to Berkeley, but failed - they came back and they didn't get their education. So I was focused on trying to finish that. Thinking about, you know, the words that our parents share with us when we are young: get that education, finish that, get a good job and take it from there.

RODRIGUEZ: And you were also saying that even Philip was saying you need to focus.

JAZMIN: Yeah, exactly. That was the mantra that you heard all the time: *Finish your education and improve yourself*. I knew: by going to the strike what can I get? I'll be out there - yes, helping - but when am I doing for myself? I think a lot of kids felt that way, but some had a little bit more opportunity than others. When I say, "opportunity than others", when I left Delano to go to college things were beginning to get more recognized. There were some mothers got through their knowledge and experience began to get involved with their upper education because you never got that guidance from their counselors in high school. They never painted a picture. Who do you use as a doggone model to follow when there is really

no one that you can use to say, “Okay, he did it this way, I’m going to follow that”? You never had that. When I go to Mr. [Selent], was one of my counselors, what would he tell you?

He said, “Junior college.”

“Okay fine, what do you do in junior college?”

“Major in Business.”

“Okay, what do you do after that?”

What height can you go to? What kind of vision do you have? If you went to junior college-- some didn’t. Some did went to junior college, came back and ended up working on the fields. You go back to Delano today and you’ll find out that a lot of people that come back and now they’re working at the prisons. It’s a great place to be. I mean, it’s very comfortable. It’s a community that you can be comfortable with, but is that the future you want to have? So, for me, when guys tell me, “Aye, Jose, we’re going to go down to Delano, go out and do this this this this”. I say, “Go for it. Go for it. I support you guys. Go for it. Let’s make it happen, but I got something else to do”. Later on, when I finally got out of college, I tried to go back and tried to share with the kids what I went through. I say, “Hey look, use me as your role model. See what I’ve done, listen to what I got to say if you want to listen.” This is the thing that you should keep in mind: that you can make it. There is no roads that is going to be closed to you, just go for it. I did go back a number of times, I talk to a lot of Filipinos. They had a career day so I prepared a slide presentation on a career that I had at the time. I think I went way above the heads of the kids and they didn’t know what the hell I was talking about. That was okay, but it was interesting because coming from there you lust for things materialistically. I walked from the house to high school, it was about like 2-3 mile walk. I walked it everyday; going there, coming back. Until I was able to afford a car and then I could drive. Then when it was time to go to college, luckily I talked with Roger (Gadiano). Roger can give you a little story about him and I spending evenings sitting there talking about the future. If it wasn’t for him bringing back the application for EOP, and me filling it out and getting accepted into Long Beach, I didn’t know anything about Fresno State. I didn’t know anything LA, all I know is Long Beach State and the reason I knew was because Roger came and gave me an EOP application form and said, “Joe, fill this out. I’ll take it over there and, who knows, you might get a grant and be able to go to college.” Then when I did get the grant, I talked to my mom about it and she told me, “No, you can’t go.” That’s my mom. “Why?”, she says, “You’re going to help me around the house. We need you here.” I had to talk to my Uncle Pete, my Uncle Pete talk to her and says, “Let him go. He wants it, this is his education. Let him go.” So she let me go.

RODRIGUEZ: So you do feel like struggling and working on the fields really was--

JAZMIN: Oh, definitely. If it was 105°F outside, the temperature was 105 (°F), but you're being in the sun, it could be 120 (°F). You're sweating and then you come home.. Here's the deal with working on the fields: it's a seasonal thing. During the winter, you have to prune the grapes. You got to cut the vines. So you got to go out there and prune. You got a pruning shear, you're out there and it's freezing out there. It's cold, your toes are freezing, your hands are freezing and it's cold. You're out there pruning. You go and, I mean, lines and lines of grape fields. You got to do that. Then in the Spring time, you have to tie the vines. What you cut, you got to now tie it along the wires. You're still out there, no shade, and it's cold. Then, again, later on in Spring when the leaves grow, you have to go in there and take the leaves away from the fruit so that they can get some air circulation so they would grow. That's called "pulling leaves". You're underneath there, pulling the leaves from around the fruit. All that doggone Sulfur that they spray to kill the bugs gets in your eyes. That Sulfur gets in your eyes and eyelids and about 9-10 o'clock at night you're falling asleep and you're crying all night, you can't sleep. Then when that's done, there's a thing called "girdling" where you got to cut around the grape trunk. You got to cut a ring around it. When the sugar comes from the tree, goes up to the vine, goes up to the fruit. By cutting a ring around there, the sugar doesn't come back down.

RODRIGUEZ: So it keeps the grapes sweet.

JAZMIN: Yeah, keeps the grapes sweet. After that, you go into picking. And then the picking is you're out in the sun and then your 27 pounds you're carrying it for, like I said, a day. And then at the end of it all, that's your future. Annually, that's your future. The amount of money you make is \$1.10 an hour and maybe 10 cents a box or 15 cents a box. I remember getting paid 90 cents an hour and that's nothing. So how can you feed a family with that kind of stuff, you know? So it was that the driver is that I got to get out of Dodge, man. I get to get the hell out of here. So what's a *driver*? The driver is those things I just mentioned. There's no future there. There's no future. So you work and you try to strive. You push and you try to pull through. Luckily, for me, I was able to finish my education, got a good job, get the right kind of people and they were able to give me the opportunity. Here we are.

RODRIGUEZ: Right, yeah. So you graduated and then where did your career path take you to now?

JAZMIN: Yeah, I graduated Long Beach and then right before I graduated junior year I get a job with Rockwell International in their Space Division in Downey. From there, I was working as a Plant Engineer type of deal. We designed office layouts as well as laboratories and manufacturing for space division.

RODRIGUEZ: You graduated with Engineering right?

JAZMIN: I graduated in Industrial Technology, electronics. This particular program had an *in* with a lot of space programs like Rockwell, they had (Howard) Hughes, they had McDonnell Douglas, TRW (Thompson Ramo Wooldridge) and Northrop (Grumman). So right before you graduate, they would try to place you to get you a job. Luckily, I had an opportunity to work for Rockwell and I got exposed to this kind of work, Plant Engineering, although my background was in electronics. Rockwell Space Division had the doggone contract with the government to build the Gemini space capsules and also the space shuttle. That was their primary when I got there was space shuttle. They basically created the first space shuttle. When I graduated they gave me an offer to work as a telecommunication engineer or interface for NASA in Downey as well as in Palmdale where they were assembling the space shuttle. So I used to fly to Palmdale ever Tuesdays and Thursdays, or at least go there for the meetings. That's how I got into telecommunications. So I was responsible for all the telecommunications, services and all the data communication facilities for Palmdale. Then word got around and one thing or another through some people I know that I was capable of doing "this this this". Someone in Bank of America (BofA) corporate office in San Francisco sent my name out and the headhunter called me and says, "We got an offer for you to move to San Francisco if you want it and it's a one year contract", because they want you to help them do something, "Would you be interested?" Yeah, I never been to San Francisco before so I said, "Fine, I'll go." So I came in, took the job with Bank of America and got into telecommunications. We were the first group that BofA had to support all their telecommunication and information technology and stuff. That thing grew to 2,000 people, there was 6 of us. One thing led to another, and as you move on you get a little bump in pay. You get a little bit more here and there so it got a little bit more interesting. So I stayed in the telecommunications and information technology. I moved throughout and worked for different banking institutions. At one time I worked for Lawrence Livermore (National) Lab, I was in charge of their secure column as well as their operation stuff for about 2 years. That got old, I just didn't fit in. I didn't graduate from high-- like MIT or Stanford or Cal. So I didn't see my future there. Then I also worked for a company here in Oakland, for 10 years actually, my longest time with American President Lines, APL. So I did travelling around U.S. and Asia doing that for them. Throughout the times I was there in the industry, I got to meet a lot of good people, good directions or at least guidance. And here we are.

RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. So while you were at Long Beach, were your parents still working at the fields?

JAZMIN: Oh yeah, I wouldn't be able to go to Long Beach if I didn't get the grant. How could they afford to send me to school?

RODRIGUEZ: Do you remember what tuition was like there?

JAZMIN: Yeah, I got a grant for \$900 a year and they would pay me for books. That would help me pay for my dorm and then for my books and tuition. So the only thing I had to take care of was my clothing and my doggone travel, so back and forth. Then I also got a loan, in addition to that, so I had a little bit of spending money in my pocket. The loan I was able to pay back, so that got me off. Then, of course, working for the big industry companies I was able to continue my education without having to pay for my tuition because BofA picked up the cost for any of the classes I took for my masters degree. So it worked out pretty fine. Again, aside from that then, I wasn't at all hesitant about doing any hard work, I was from the fields. I was really, really focused and trying to get something done and I'm not at all adverse to working. I was working 8 am to 5 pm, I would also work on my investment stuff. I purchased houses and apartment buildings in Alameda and I fixed them up and turned them over and stuff like that. Then through my post-graduate degree in Finance I learned that why spend your own money if you can use someone else's money? The power of leveraging came into play. It was the right time. You buy something here, 2-3 years later, Jesus Christ the damn thing-- real estate right? The next thing you know it go up, refinance it, take some money out, invest it in something else. That's the power of leveraging. That's basically the story there. That's how we are who we are today. I have no hesitancy in doing work, I have gone through that stuff since I was 12 or young. Everything is sort of easy

RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. Thank you so much for spending these couple of hours and sharing all of these experiences.

JAZMIN: Yeah, I wish I can give you more because I really like this idea that you're doing.