



WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies, other reproductions, and reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

- Brooklyn Historical Society is not responsible for either determining the copyright status of the material or for securing copyright permission.
- Possession of a reproduction does not constitute permission to use it.
- Permission to use copies other than for private study, scholarship, or research requires the permission of both Brooklyn Historical Society and the copyright holder. For assistance, contact Brooklyn Historical Society at library@brooklynhistory.org.
- Read more about the Brooklyn Historical Society's Reproduction Rights Policy online: http://brooklynhistory.org/library/reproduction.html#Brooklyn_Historical_Society_Reproduction.

GUIDELINES FOR USE

This transcript is hereby made available for research purposes only. These oral history interviews are intimate conversations between two people, both of whom have generously agreed to share these recordings with the Brooklyn Historical Society archives and with researchers. Please listen in the spirit with which these were shared. Researchers will understand that:

1. The Brooklyn Historical Society abides by the General Principles & Best Practices for Oral History as agreed upon by the Oral History Association (2009) and expects that use of this material will be done with respect for these professional ethics.
2. Every oral history relies on the memories, views and opinions of the narrator. Because of the personal nature of oral history, listeners may find some viewpoints or language of the recorded participants to be objectionable. In keeping with its mission of preservation and unfettered access whenever possible, BHS presents these views as recorded.
3. This transcript is a nearly verbatim copy of the recorded interview. As such, it may contain the natural false starts, verbal stumbles, misspeaks, and repetitions that are common in conversation. This decision was made because BHS gives primacy to the audible voice and also because some researchers do find useful information in these verbal patterns.
4. Unless these verbal patterns are germane to your scholarly work, when quoting from this material researchers are encouraged to correct the grammar and make other modifications maintaining the flavor of the narrator's speech while editing the material for the standards of print.
5. All citations must be attributed to the Brooklyn Historical Society:
 - Carino, Imogene, Oral history interview conducted by Patricia Carino Pasick, August 2004, Patricia Carino Pasick collection of Johnson Street Filipino-American oral histories, 2013.001.02; Brooklyn Historical Society.

Oral History Interview with Imogene Carino

Patricia Carino Pasick collection of Johnson Street Filipino-American oral histories, 2013.001.02

Interview conducted by Patricia Carino Pasick in August 2004 in The Villages, Florida

CARINO: My name is Jean Carino. I live in The Villages, Florida. I'm the wife of Ted Carino. I'm eighty one years old.

PASICK: Can you say when and where you were born, mom?

CARINO: I was born in Bon Aqua, Tennessee, [date redacted for privacy reasons] 1922.

[Interview interrupted.]

PASICK: Mom, can you tell me your first experience with a concept like race? When was the first time you were aware of the fact that a lot of people believe there are different races?

CARINO: Well probably it was, it was when I was a child. And we had a family, and I only knew the man that lived, we always say down the road, how far I don't know. But it was a Black man, a Negro we'd call him. And, uh, he would come by in his wagon, on Saturday mornings going to the market in Bon Aqua. And, so we knew he always came by on Saturday morning. And dad would always, he would always stop and talk to dad, and dad made it a point to talk to him.

PASICK: Did he come up to the house?

CARINO: Umm, on the way up to the Bon Aqua he did not come to the house, but he would say, his name was, we used to call him Old Barry, his last name were Barry Umble, U M B L E, and dad would say to him, Well, Barry, why don't you just stop by, on your way home, and I'll give you a bite to eat or some food to take home with you. And so he would stop by and then come up to the house from the road and sit on the porch and dad would make him a plate. And he would sit there and talk to us. And he actually looked like, what's his name in the movies with the beard, Rufus?

PASICK: Reamus?

CARINO: Reamus, yeah.

PASICK: Was he an older man?

CARINO: He was an older man. I think he might have been older than dad. And we were just children, so we children, really anxious to sit around and hear the stories he would tell. Now the stories I do not remember. All I know is he just tell us stories.

PASICK: Would they be like "Once upon a time," would they be fables, or stories about his own life?

CARINO: Probably stories about his own life. And then dad would give him food. A bag of food or whatever. He'd give him fresh veggies or whatever dad had. Dad was like that. And he'd be on his way and then the following Friday, Saturday, he'd do the same thing. So that's probably the only racial person that I was even acquainted with my whole childhood. We had no, I can't think of any other race being in our schools.

PASICK: Was he the only Black person in your neighborhood?

CARINO: He was the only Black person. Now I understand, like I said, he lived down the road.

PASICK: Down Missionary Ridge?

CARINO: Down Missionary Ridge. And I'm not sure how far down. But we always understood there was another family down there, but we never saw them. They did not come to our schools, they did not come to Mount Gusset, which was also south of us.

PASICK: Did you ever run into Barry in the store or--?

CARINO: No, never.

PASICK: Or, not in a church?

CARINO: No, they had no affiliation with the church. No.

PASICK: Now, do you think you got the idea, when you were a child that even as your dad was very kind and respectful to him, that he was not equal to your family?

CARINO: Oh, absolutely not. There was no, nothing like that. I was never ever taught, or even my father never discussed that we were better than Old Barry. Nothing like that. We just knew he was a different color. He could have been White and in the same situation. But we were never ever told to be disrespectful to any Blacks. That's why it's been pretty hard when I hear people talk about the southern people. Cause we were not raised that way. And I would say that for the whole community. It was just not a thing, they were so, I guess if we

had more Blacks in the neighborhood it might have been different. But we didn't, we just had that one family. It was just like he was a part of us.

PASICK: He was around every Saturday?

CARINO: Just about every Saturday.

PASICK: Did he work for your dad or work for your uncle?

CARINO: No, never. No, never. There was no work. No nothing.

PASICK: So what did he do for a living?

CARINO: I'm not sure. He may have just been a farmer. I never ever inquired as to what his life was like.

PASICK: So that was really your first memory of, with someone who was a different race than you?

CARINO: Yeah. Yes, yes.

PASICK: And your parents referred to him as a Negro?

CARINO: Uh-huh.

PASICK: So what was next? When you got to high school--

CARINO: Well in high school--

PASICK: Or in Dixon.

CARINO: Not, I didn't go to Dixon schools, I went to, I only went to Hickman County schools.

And that was our county, and my high school was in Centerville, which was in Hickman County. So I was only affiliated with that. But, uh, I don't recall any Blacks. And in my graduating class we had no Blacks, or any other ethnic people.

PASICK: How about in Centerville or in the larger towns, did you see other Black families there?

CARINO: No, no, never.

PASICK: Where do you think the Black families did their shopping, got medical care?

CARINO: I have no idea. I, and we visited and shopped in Dixon, we went to the movies in Dixon. Uh, I don't recall any other color. I'm sure there were some, because Dixon was quite large. And umm, but I never was, no, not in my childhood.

PASICK: How about when you were a teenager or an early adult, living in Nashville? What was that, how was that? Racially what do you remember, in terms of having contact with people of other races?

CARINO: None.

PASICK: No contact?

CARINO: No contact.

PASICK: Or did you ever see any Black people in Nashville?

CARINO: Nope. They were there. I would pass them on the street. Is that what you mean?

PASICK: Yeah.

CARINO: Oh yeah. I'd pass them on the street, but I did not know anyone.

PASICK: Not at the Y, or --?

CARINO: Not at the Y and, uh, I worked when at the health department, I never, except, uh - I, for years I worked--not even any race. Except for our own.

PASICK: How about Jews?

CARINO: No. I had a, hmm, I will say that when I lived at the Y, no I suppose it was in McGennet Hall, that, uh, Chris, my cousin Chris had a roommate, named Judy, who was Jewish. But, she was treated just like everybody else.

PASICK: Treated like a White person.

CARINO: Oh yeah [laughter]. Oh yeah. It's just like I was part Irish and somebody is part whatever.

PASICK: German, Norwegian, whatever. So how about Asians? Who was the first Asian person you ever knew or talked to?

CARINO: Probably, well you call father Asian, do you?

PASICK: Well, what do you, when you first met daddy -- how do you think of dad, let's stay in the present for just a second. When you think about dad, you think about his ethnic background, what words do you use to yourself to describe him to yourself.

CARINO: Well, actually it was not a question. It was like --

PASICK: How about right now, though? When you think about if someone said, "Oh, you're married to someone from the south? You're from the south, are you married to someone from the south?"

CARINO: Oh actually, I guess I'm been sheltered all of my life. So I really, had, I uh, race has just never ever been any part of my life. I mean I never ever thought of your dad being different.

PASICK: A different race.

CARINO: A different race. And, I mean I just accepted everybody as my equal.

PASICK: Sure, having been raised like that.

CARINO: Cause I was raised like that. Dad was more worried, I would say, for me. He would be worried for me when I came to New York City. Because of the race there. He was, uh, if I got on the subway and a different color sat down beside me, he would squirm. Or he'd sit, he'd push me over in the corner and make sure I sat over in the corner and he sat next to, you know. But there were many times that he was not with me when I was working, I would get on a crowded subway and where you had to hold on and not even sit. Hold on for dear life. And, uh, it has never ever been big in my life.

PASICK: So what was it when you were first got introduced to dad, or danced with dad, I remember parts of that story. When you first saw him or you first met him did it cross your mind-

CARINO: Oh, I knew he was, he would have had a different background.

PASICK: And how did you know? Tell me that story.

CARINO: Well because he told me right away, the first time I ever danced with him.

PASICK: Do you remember what he said or what words he used?

CARINO: No, he just said, "My father's half, my father's Filipino and my mother's German." So be it, that's what I said.

PASICK: So what was your reaction, having been pretty sheltered all your life? Did you know what Filipino was or where the Philippines was?

CARINO: Not really. No, not really. I was only interested in him.

PASICK: Now when you saw him, did it occur strike you that he had a different look other White men to you--

CARINO: Oh yeah, absolutely. Very well know. He was a good looking man. As you it, I don't know, Patty, it just never bothered me that dad was half Filipino. It really didn't.

PASICK: I'm just interested in your impressions. So he identified himself right away as half Filipino?

CARINO: Uh-Huh.

PASICK: So over the years, and this is a big question, but when you have had to describe dad to other people or you had to think of him in your own mind, what adjectives or what descriptors did you use? Filipino, Asian, Oriental, of a different race?

CARINO: You mean describe the man I was married to?

PASICK: Sure.

CARINO: I don't even think I even mentioned that he was half Filipino. It's not that I that I was ashamed of it or I didn't want to do that. It just never occurred to me that it mattered, that it really mattered. I always said, "Well, he's from Brooklyn, New York." I think that was the most, you know, that he was from Brooklyn, New York.

PASICK: So let's go back to when you first met dad and he said he was half Filipino. You're not sure you knew where the Philippines were at that point.

CARINO: No I really didn't. I knew basically that it was an Asian race. But I remember, I remember when I told the family, that I was, I hadn't even become engaged to dad. But I had told them and they knew that I was interested in him. And I remember Irene, my sister-in-law, who kiddingly would say can't you just see Jean married to Ted, who is half Filipino, and see all these little Filipino little kids running around. I didn't consider that as a--

PASICK: A racial slur?

CARINO: A racial slur, and I don't think she meant it. But I think she meant it just to be funny, when she said it. But it's something that I never forgot.

PASICK: So do you imagine that a part of you was a little offended?

CARINO: Probably. Probably.

PASICK: Since it was in a teasing way.

CARINO: Yeah even though it was in a teasing way. But I'm a sensitive person. [laughter]

PASICK: I think from what you describe it sounds like anybody would be a little put off by the comment, because, what did it suggest to you?

CARINO: That what?

PASICK: Did her comment suggest anything to you?

CARINO: No. No, I just brushed it--

PASICK: About her approval or disapproval, not that it mattered, but.

CARINO: Not that it mattered. No it did not affect me at all. Really it didn't. It's just one thing that I remember, that she said. Where, I told my mother first.

PASICK: About dad or about him being from the Philippines?

CARINO: No, about dad. And then when I got a ring and I told her our intentions. And she said, "Jean, I just want you to be happy."

PASICK: Did you tell her about dad being Filipino before you were engaged or after?

CARINO: Umm, I don't know. I think I must have told her when I told her we're getting married. I'm not very sure.

PASICK: How about your dad? How was his reaction?

CARINO: Oh dad, dad, dad, you know. I remember mom said, "Well, Jean has some news for you." And I think she might have said that at the dinner table. It's one weekend that I went home.

PASICK: So are there other people there?

CARINO: My brothers and sisters were there. They probably giggled, as siblings do. But, no that's all mom ever said. And then I told them Ted was coming home with me one weekend. He's coming down Easter time, I think it was. And I said, "I want to come down and have him meet you." And mom said, "That would be fine. We'll have a dinner for him." And I guess they really went all out to have this dinner. So, umm, my brother Buck, Aunt Agnes, and Peggy. Did she have Peggy? Yeah. Aunt Peggy drove us down for the day. It was just one day. And Ted had a great time. He immediately took to the twins. And Joanne, Joanne was, she was always friendly to everybody.

PASICK: Did anyone ever voice any concerns to you? Like, "What about children?" "You don't even know his family?"

CARINO: No. Never. If they thought it they didn't tell me. They didn't, no. And when I got ready to -

PASICK: Cause he was also from the north, right?

CARINO: Yeah, yeah.

PASICK: And were you the first person from your family to marry someone from the north?

CARINO: Oh, absolutely [laughter]. And the first person to ever leave home, leave the state I'd say. But, uh, I don't know what I was going to say. But anyway, the day went off very good. And he liked the family. When I got ready to get married, I had like a hope chest, as all young women do, in those days. So dad and Snoops immediately made this big chest to put everything in. And I brought everything home and they packed it up, crated it all, a crate I should say, crated it all up. And it was sent to the -

PASICK: That's a great story. So let's go to, when you had not met any of mom or dad's family at this point.

CARINO: I had never met anyone.

PASICK: Or spoken with.

CARINO: Or gone to New York. I had never been to New York.

PASICK: Did you speak with anyone on the phone?

CARINO: No, but I had written, letters were sent. From grandma and from [unintelligible].

PASICK: They each wrote letters of welcome to the family?

CARINO: Right, very nice letters.

PASICK: And was there anything in the letters about the Philippines, poppa, Filipino, anything there?

CARINO: When poppa wrote to me he did say in a letter, he said, "You know we are a different race, I am a different race and I hope you will be comfortable with us." And he said, "Mrs. Carino is a very kind, warm person." He really praised grandma. And he said, "We welcome you into our family." So, and then grand mom's letters too were nice. She said she was sorry that she couldn't come to the wedding because of her legs and umm. And so no one came.

PASICK: So what were you anticipating when you got married and off you went to Philadelphia on a train, I know that story. I mean, in terms of the racial piece particularly.

CARINO: Well, I think, see we went to Aunt Katherine's first. She, Uncle Pete, I met Uncle Pete. He didn't look very Filipino to me, if you remember. So that didn't--

PASICK: So he was really the first? The first you laid eyes on, I thought Uncle Joe.

CARINO: No, no, no. This is in Philadelphia. But anyway, we went to Aunt Katherine's and stayed for a few days there. And then she had, one night, she had Filipinos there for dinner. And I wasn't impressed. I mean Ted hardly knew them himself. It was just some of, I think, Uncle Pete's buddies.

PASICK: But they were Filipino?

CARINO: They were Filipino, pure Filipinos. They insisted on taking us to Atlantic City. I'm sure you've heard this story from your dad.

PASICK: Tell me how you felt being, all of a sudden, you're quite in a minority. Right, of Filipinos?

CARINO: No, I didn't feel like that. No, I didn't feel like that, no because it was with grandma and Aunt Katherine.

PASICK: No, I was thinking of that one day, that first day.

CARINO: No. I was happy. I was so in love with your dad. Nothing else really mattered. But, uh, I. We went to Atlantic City, yeah. And dad and I sat in the back. It was two Filipino boys took us. And dad did not really want to go. And Aunt Katherine insisted, insisted that we do it. It was the wildest ride in the world. They drove so fast. And Ted was so worried that, gonna have an accident. I don't even remember Atlantic City at all. I don't even know that night at all. All I remember is the ride. I was so happy to get back and be safe. But Aunt Katherine would say to me, before we left. She said, she would say, "Ah, ha, you haven't met your mother-in-law yet. Wait till you meet your mother-in-law." But she would never say anything about poppa or Aunt Mamy.

PASICK: Now Uncle Pete had kind of an accent as I remember.

CARINO: Yeah, but not too bad.

PASICK: Did you understand him?

CARINO: Yeah, entirely.

PASICK: Did he seem different to you in other ways, than other men had ever treated you?

CARINO: Who, Uncle Pete? No.

PASICK: Uncle Pete. Thinking about how men in the south treat woman.

CARINO: No. In fact, if anything they were maybe more. Really. I'm not talking about family, I'm talking about outsiders. No, no, no. He gave me a big hug and a kiss. Aunt Katherine was so loving and so forth. No I felt very welcome. Very welcome.

PASICK: So what story do you want to tell me next about your introduction to the Filipino side of the family?

CARINO: Well either the, or just to Ted's family. Well, I did, I was a little apprehensive, I'd say, to meet them all. But uh, I think, I don't remember if we took a taxi or a subway or what from Penn Station, but we went by the train. And, I think we did, I think we did take a taxi, or, I'm sure. Or maybe the subway, but we must have had a lot of luggage [laughter]. Well there are things that really escape me - but I was, I didn't know what to expect. But grand mom greeted me with open arms. And Joey was there and he was babbling and, uh, Janet came, and then Janet came and I hugged her and she hugged me. "What's your name," being a three year old, "What's your name?" And so I remember poppa came in later, almost dinner time, probably from work. And uh, I--

PASICK: And Joey?

CARINO: And Joey. Oh yeah Joey was there. I said he welcomed me and, very much, yeah.

PASICK: What do you mean by babbling?

CARINO: Oh, he did, you know Joey always talked a lot. And he said, "Hope you'll be happy here. We're glad to have you." And grand mom said the same thing, they were all welcoming, very well. Very welcome. And, so it kinda put me at ease.

PASICK: So what was your experience with poppa?

CARINO: Well poppa I didn't expect him to be a small man. That's the only thing. And he did look very Filipino. I guess I didn't expect him, since I'd seen Uncle Pete and I'd seen Joey. But then when I saw poppa, poppa did look more Asian than they because his skin was darker and he was smaller. But he was very warm and very courteous and welcomed me to

the family. So, uh, we just went back there. Then I started - then Primo came that following night as he always did for all the years. He would come after dinner and have coffee with grand mom and Joey. And I liked Primo right away. He was very, very welcome, welcoming and very warm.

PASICK: So when did you discover Primo's race?

CARINO: I think one time, oh one time dad and I, we would go to New York almost every night. Not every night but every other night or so. We'd see all the plays and all the band music and everything. We'd just take, right after dinner we'd go, or have dinner over there. But this one night I came out and Primo was there with Grand mom. And I said, I didn't know that he was part Black, so I said, "Ted is always trying to protect me from the Blacks." And I said he, "Tonight we sat by one and he was very uncomfortable until we got off the, off of the train." So later that night he said, "Jean, I have to tell you this. Primo is part Black." I said, "Oh." And I felt really bad for what I said. But he said, "Oh, that's okay." He said Primo accepted that. He didn't know that I knew. So it was all a really big experience for me. A big city and a new family.

PASICK: When you think about the adjustments that you had to make and the effects of all that newness, and I don't know how you could rank this, but I'm thinking about living in the north, living in a large city, and living with another race of people, as you did right away. Which do you think was the biggest change for you? The biggest adjustment between those three; north, city, and Filipino.

CARINO: Oh it was the big city, absolutely. Pat, I guess race has never been a big factor in my mind.

PASICK: I'm not suggesting that you, coming from the south, that you had to be prejudice. I'm just saying that living with another whole -

CARINO: It didn't bother me.

PASICK: I'm not saying negative, I'm just saying adjustments.

CARINO: I know what you're saying, I know what you're saying. It was more of an adjustment to just live in the big city and learn my way around. And I didn't learn my way around until about three or four months, it took me. And when I first got a job - well I wanted to. I got

bored. I didn't know what to do with myself. However, grand mom would invite me to go shopping with them or whatever they did. And there were times I would go and times I wouldn't.

PASICK: Shopping with them meaning you and--?

CARINO: Joey. Joey had the car. So it would be grand mom and Janet and me. And I got bored, I got bored. And I started looking at ads in the paper. And when I, when I first went for an interview. Where did I work first? Well that was way over on Fifth Avenue. And so dad would go with me to tell me, help me out on what subways to take. I had to take many to get there. So he would, we'd leave early, and he would do that and then he would go on to Brooklyn, to his job. He did not work for Sperry then, he worked for the Company. So then I finally found my way and I was not the least bit frightened. I, I just was fine. Really. Along with the crowds, and I just, I thought I adjusted really well. And I had a friend but then she lived near me.

PASICK: And how did people handle the fact that you came to the north, and this is a slightly different topic but it is related to the idea of difference. Here was the north, and you from the south, deep south, no less.

CARINO: Well Tennessee is not considered a deep south, it's border line.

PASICK: How did people react to your southern accent? What was that like for you?

CARINO: Well at there was not - rats, where did I go from there? I got it out of my head. I went to the liners, yeah. The United States Lines. And, this man that hired me, I guess, liked me right away. He thought - it was just clerical work. So, the girls were very nice to me and invited me to lunch. They 'd say, "Come Jean, come with us to lunch." And they would say something about my southern drawl. Yeah, but it was not - it was in such a nice way that I didn't feel offended at all, not a bit.

PASICK: I was just wondered if you ever felt self-conscious, as a southerner in those first couple of months.

CARINO: Well the only one who ever was, was - Well he actually, I don't know what term you'd say. Made fun of, made fun of my accent. And sorry to say but Rita would go along with it and laugh.

PASICK: And that would be in family gatherings or when you were alone with them?

CARINO: Oh, Ted and I would stop by their apartment, for a cup of coffee. Anytime I was ever with them he would make remarks about my accent. And I know he didn't mean it, I don't know, I think he just meant it to be funny.

PASICK: And do you think that really was a long lasting affect for you, in terms of your trust of him and your trust of Rita?

CARINO: Probably. Probably.

PASICK: Because of feeling as if he had some prejudice against southerners.

CARINO: He may have. Maybe that was the -

PASICK: Well I'm not suggesting that he did, but he certainly made fun of the fact that you were from the south.

CARINO: Well he, he was just like that. When we got our own house and we had our, we had our furniture. And we had dark furniture. We had a bunch of Wanamaker's and bought the best. And it was not modern furniture. And I never forget when he, he and Rita came to visit us, and he said - made disparaging remarks about the furniture. "Where'd you get this stuff?" You know and, this is old fashioned." That sort of thing. And of course Rita, I think she was embarrassed by all the things he said. And for our wedding gift Rita gave us the two end tables, and I was very thankful that they did that. And I chose 'em. And she paid for 'em. And that was their gift to us. So that was very nice. But I guess, I don't know, we just never became friends.

PASICK: How about other people who made a point of pointing out your southern background?

You know there's all the things associated with being from the south like hick, farmer, barefoot, that kind of ignorant -- that kind of thing. Did any of that ever come your way?

CARINO: No, no. All of the all of the people from Philadelphia, liked me, they never would say anything, ever. The Jartins, Laura, they would come to New York and they always had a party at grandma's house. No, no, I was very well accepted. I was given gifts. Aunt Katherine was the best, she'd always give gifts.

PASICK: This is a sort of a jumping ahead question, a little bit. It's a question like, did you ever think that you were in a racially mixed marriage?

CARINO: No.

PASICK: That's a concept that doesn't -

CARINO: Didn't even enter my head.

PASICK: When you think now about race -

CARINO: No.

PASICK: --in this country do you now think of yourself in a mixed marriage?

CARINO: No, no. Never. And I don't think when I raised you kids that we ever talked about it. I don't think. Now, Philip is certainly ignorant about it, more than even Peter. It was just never a big issue.

PASICK: So when I had some of my difficulties, racially, when I first came to Grand Rapids, was that a surprise to you?

CARINO: Yes, yes it was. Yes and I felt sorry for you, you know that. And, but it was from mostly the Dutch people, who are narrow minded. The Langs, the Newmans and all of the others was never ever, never made a difference.

PASICK: It actually wasn't from the Dutch people per say, it was just from kids. Just random kids really.

CARINO: Well kids can be very, very mean.

PASICK: When you thought about having kids, did you think about how having Asian heritage in the family would affect the way the kids looked?

CARINO: No. Just like babies [laughter]. No, no, never did.

PASICK: How did the idea, did it ever come up to think about having Filipino relatives and coming to the house and that kind of thing?

CARINO: No. Never affected my life at all. Really didn't.

PASICK: And then moving to Grand Rapids, any differences there? Where there were many fewer Asians in the Midwest. Do you remember being struck with more questions from people or more funny looks from people, not nasty looks, but just sort of quizzical looks from people?

CARINO: Not really. No, no. No I never, not even in the schools.

PASICK: And then you had to meet a whole set of new girlfriends and so forth. How did you introduce, how'd you tell them about dad or did the idea that dad is Filipino did it ever -

CARINO: No, never told 'em. I just, I guess in my mind I never considered him being part Filipino. I really didn't. Maybe I should have. I think I would never, I'm sure dad would disagree with me, but I think the early years of dad's life in Grand Rapids, I don't know if he was good at what he did, but I always thought maybe the reason he didn't get to the top was maybe because he was - it kinda was in the back of my mind. That maybe it coulda been because he was racially mixed. However there were many that year that were, and got to the top.

PASICK: Many?

CARINO: Men.

PASICK: Right, but racially mixed men?

CARINO: Mm-hmm.

PASICK: Racial in what ways?

CARINO: Well they would have been, not Filipino. Other races like, I really can't think of what race he was, but he was a big shot. And he was like half American and half -

PASICK: Asian or-

CARINO: Uh-huh. And it could be because dad did not have a college degree. He didn't.

PASICK: So it did cross your mind that it was a possibility. Even as race was not in the forefront of your mind it might have been in the background.

CARINO: Right. I know, I never mentioned it to dad. And I'm sure he would disagree.

PASICK: Did you and he ever talk about race together? That he was Filipino, did that ever come up in conversation with you together?

CARINO: It may have. But it was not a most, it was - I don't know- but off hand I can't think of anything. It was just not that important. My family had accepted him so well. God I think my mother loved him as much as she loved me, really. And so did my family, Joanne. Joanne today. So I don't know, the race part never was a big factor, never.

PASICK: Did you consider Grand Mom and Poppa's marriage a mixed race marriage?

CARINO: Well I knew it was. I think. I just knew it was. I didn't know what effect it had. I knew he was never home, he was in the Navy. And he was never home. That was about all I considered.

PASICK: So this next question may not be very relevant for you, but some people talk about if they're White and they intermarried, racially, that their sense of being White is somehow highlighted for them. In other words they understand more about what it is to be White now that they've married someone of color. Can you relate to that at all?

CARINO: No. Can't do it. It's irrelevant.

PASICK: What you're saying, I guess is that you never spent much time as thinking of dad as somebody from another race, or part race.

CARINO: No never. I guess I just accepted it so easily. Like Poppa being Filipino, I just accepted it so readily that I - it just wasn't important.

PASICK: Are there any other stories about the family or race? There are other people we haven't talked about, for example there were people who had even darker skin than poppa, like Mathew, like the Venturas and the Gomezes, and all Filipinos are not alike, right?

CARINO: Yeah but I understand they're from different provinces. So that's all I ever considered that Mathew and some of the other ones that had different skin was a different, uh, different-

PASICK: Do you think that, while every one of your family members was - even thought they had had opinions or concerns or comments to make about race, dad's race, they never did to you. Do you have a sense that some of them were more comfortable than others with dad, with you marrying someone from the Philippines and dad being a Filipino?

CARINO: Well, my family you mean?

PASICK: Yeah. Of your brothers and sisters and in-laws.

CARINO: No, they all accepted him so readily that I don't think they did. I don't think so. Now they may have behind my back. I don't know, but I never sensed it. And, just uh, never heard it. So, I don't know, they just totally accepted him.

PASICK: Do you think racial intermarriage is a good thing? I mean what are the good things about it?

CARINO: Never thought about it really. I really haven't. I suppose to get on, when this world, that there would be more racial marriages, interracial marriages.

PASICK: I'm just wondering if you thought about it as a more positive thing.

CARINO: Because there are so many races here now. It's so obvious that the Black people are going to marry into a different race. But it's no difference though, Pat, than me marrying an Irishman.

PASICK: Well I wondered because you've had this very, I guess for your time, unusual experience. You really were in the minority of White woman, particularly from the south, who married outside, really quite outside their own kind, whether because you had that experience whether or not that leads you to feel more open to the idea of interracial marriages?

CARINO: Probably. Yeah. Mine worked. A few of kinks now and then.

PASICK: But I'm sensing from you that that didn't have as much to do with race as with other things.

CARINO: Oh not with race. None. I don't think dad and I ever, I really don't think we ever discussed it.

PASICK: But because you've had a positive experience of racial intermarriage, you're saying you're more likely to be open to it - open to the idea of it than other people?

CARINO: I think so. I think I might be. Well here's the southern part that comes out, that I would probably be more against any of my family marrying the Blacks. But I think that's not only southern, your father especially would be more so than I.

PASICK: Would it depend on the skin color of that person or the class of that person?

CARINO: Class. That class.

PASICK: Then will you for example, fell in love with a Black lawyer, would that be-

CARINO: No that wouldn't make any difference really. It wouldn't make any difference. I shouldn't have said that class. I suppose it would matter eventually.

PASICK: You're saying you think you're more of the exception to the rule?

CARINO: Yes, I have. That actually it just never bothered me.

PASICK: So what is that quality that you think you have or what is that attitude or that value that you have that made it such a non-issue for you?

CARINO: Well I guess I just accept people for what they are. I don't know, it's just my nature I guess.

PASICK: You said something earlier about I was so madly in love that nothing seemed to matter. Do you think in this case love was truly color blind?

CARINO: Color blind?

PASICK: In other words you were not paying attention to difference you were paying attention to being in love. Yeah right, right. Yeah I think that's true. That's true.

PASICK: And if you hadn't been you had been more tentative?

CARINO: Yeah, I don't know I guess I still would have married your dad. For sure I would have.

PASICK: But did that help ride you over a certain amount, all this newness and all this difference?

CARINO: I guess it too sound very exciting [laughter], adventurous. Yeah of course. I went to a different part of the world, different people. I'm sure I worried about that. I'm sure I did.

PASICK: In which sense, going to New York or marrying into dad's family?

CARINO: No, just going to a different world. Going to a big, going to the biggest cities. And I was smitten, I was smitten by the city, by Ted, and I was. I was really carried away.

PASICK: Now here's another thing. Did you find the Filipino men, did you find them a different kind of man? Were the qualities of these particular kind of men, how were they different from the qualities of men you were more used to?

CARINO: Well, actually I was just with my family mostly. My bosses. If you think about it I did not know any man outside of the family.

PASICK: But you had dated, you lived in Nashville for four years.

CARINO: Oh I dated other men. Well, I think they were more exciting or interesting.

PASICK: Can you say in what ways?

CARINO: In what way? Well, umm-I don't know. A couple of fellows I dated who were from in our area in from Bon Aqua were so boring, boring. I'd say boo. I liked a little more excitement in my life. I like dancing and music.

PASICK: There was a lot of that among the Filipinos, right?

CARINO: Yes, yes. A lot of music and it was just more exciting.

PASICK: More laughter?

CARINO: Yeah.

PASICK: Some people have said Filipino men are more demonstrative, more and more affectionate. Then many of these men are also used to cooking and cleaning.

CARINO: Oh yeah, yeah.

PASICK: Did that surprise you, I mean this wasn't the traditional only woman in the kitchen kind of a group?

CARINO: Well that was, yeah. To learn that they were fine cooks and - but then after learning that his father was a cook and Uncle Joe was a cook, I understood. You know that most of the Filipinos that came here, joined the Navy were cooks.

PASICK: And helped teach you cooking?

CARINO: Sure, Uncle Joe did. Taught me to drive.

PASICK: And taught you to cook?

CARINO: Taught me to cook. Yeah, yeah. Yeah he and, umm. Poppa never taught me. Well he did cooking but I don't think I learned much from him. He was, and actually he didn't cook until after we had moved out on the island. And he came along, he did not do cooking. We were living there, but it was always Uncle Joe.

PASICK: How about Uncle John?

CARINO: No. No, no no. John didn't. John would cook when he had over, that was it. But I would just clean up. I would clean up. That was another loving man. Was John. And I, I didn't know some of the other men, Filipino men, like Amelia's husband, Herman. No that was Matthew, I didn't know him. He was always nice to me though. He would be friendly and I would understand - I'd understand a lot of them. They'd talk to me, I'd understand.

PASICK: You mean you learned to understand some Filipino words?

CARINO: No, no, no. I would just try to figure out what they were saying. Hello, how are you.

PASICK: I'm getting the sense from you, as you many of the Filipino men in the Carino family gave you a lot of positive attention.

CARINO: They did.

PASICK: Really liked you and respected you and admired you and complimented you and that kind of thing.

CARINO: Yeah, I think they did. That was this couple in Philadelphia, Maurangue. M A U, what was it? Dave, Darcy, yeah that's right, and Maurangue. They were a very nice couple and they were both Filipino. And, and then there was a musician and his wife, they had many children. He was a musician that played for gat, I think, Filipino. And they were friends of the Carino family. Her name was Clara. Do you remember that?

PASICK: No, daddy might.

CARINO: Oh dad, very much. Yeah she walked out on the family. She just left all those children. I have memories of meeting so many of them.

PASICK: Your parents came up to New York and met the Cinos. What was that encounter like? Because that was right after I was born?

CARINO: When you were born.

PASICK: Was that the first time your families had met?

CARINO: Yes, yes it was.

PASICK: So this was the first time your parents had encountered not only New York but all these Filipinos. Do you have any stories about that, about what that was like?

CARINO: No, not really. Not really. No, I remember the, Jack Reamer went to pick them up. And I think he must have taken them up to New York too with Ted sightseeing one day. But it was Jack it was not, I mean a Filipino.

PASICK: I'm trying to picture your parents sitting around that little table on 251st street with Grand mom and Poppa. There's a picture of the two grandmothers, well when I was a little girl and Janet was a little girl, your mother must have come for Peter's birth or something like that.

CARINO: She did. She came with all of them all three of them.

PASICK: Right, but there aren't any pictures of your family with Poppa.

CARINO: I have pictures of Joanne. See mom came when you were born and dad didn't come.

But he came later, he and Joanne. Joanne took time off school and they rode train here, up to New York. But I have pictures of them being in New York City and Rockefeller Plaza.

Dad loved where we lived because they were doing construction work over across the field. And I remember he'd walk over there to see how they were doing. And he got interested in their-cause he was a builder. And he was interested in that. So we take a break?