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Oral History Interview with Rita Steuer
Patricia Carino Pasick collection of Johnson Street Filipino-American oral histories,
2013.001.09
Interview conducted by Patricia Carino Pasick in August 2004 in Lady Lakes, Florida

PASICK: So you were born...what was your birth date?

STEUER: [date redacted for privacy] 1921

PASICK: Just going to make that record here, I have that in all my little genealogy records. So can you start off just telling me, Aunt Rita, about the kind of neighborhood you were born in, like you know, what were the different ethnic groups or was it a mish mash or whatever?

STEUER: It was mostly Irish, Irish people and it was near the Navy Yard in Brooklyn so there was a lot of Filipinos there, they came in on the ships, and that's how my father's sisters met them and eventually married them.

PASICK: Now, so is your earliest memory seeing Filipinos right where you grew up?

STEUER: No, because we moved to Jersey. My father worked for a paint manufacturer. We moved to Jersey, and I was in Jersey I guess 'til I was 8, 9 years old and then we came back to Brooklyn.

PASICK: Oh, I see. So you were born in Brooklyn, okay, and that's where your family had lived for...

STEUER: Maybe til I was 4 years old

PASICK: Til you were 4. Had they lived there before you were born?

STEUER: Yeah.

PASICK: They had. Your dad's family or your mom--?

STEUER: My mother and father and grandmother.

PASICK: Your mother and your father and your grandmother.

STEUER: They lived in one of the houses that was parlor floor basement.

PASICK: Parlor...

STEUER: Floor, that's the main floor, then below it was the basement, the kitchen, and like the dining room. And upstairs was the living room and the bedrooms.

PASICK: I've never heard it described like that.

STEUER: They said parlor-floor-basement.

PASICK: Parlor, floor...

STEUER: And Basement.

PASICK: And basement. Okay. On Prospect Street. And umm had this been your father's home or your mother's before they were married?

STEUER: Gee, I don't know.

PASICK: Okay. What was your mother...

STEUER: ...I think my father lived across the street with his mother and probably my grandmother lived there with my mother.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: That's my assumption, I don't know.

PASICK: Okay, alright. And your mother's maiden name?

STEUER: Anna Dougherty, D-o-u-g-h-e-r-t-y. I say Dougherty, but a lot of people say Dougherty.

PASICK: Dougherty, okay. D-o...

STEUER: We always said Dougherty.

PASICK: G-h-e-r-t-y. That's an Irish name?

STEUER: D-o-u.

PASICK: D-o-u-g-h...

STEUER: ...e-r-t-y.

PASICK: That's an Irish name?

STEUER: Yeah.

PASICK: Okay. And, umm, so they had been there for a while?

STEUER: I think so. Probably my grandmother lived there.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: With my mother.

PASICK: Yes.

STEUER: And my grandmother lost her husband, I don't know when, his name was Owen.

PASICK: Owen?

STEUER: O-w-e-n.

PASICK: Okay, alright. Dougherty?

STEUER: Yeah.

PASICK: Okay, alright. And, what did he do for a living, do you have any idea?

STEUER: No.

PASICK: No, not sure. Did your grandmother remarry?

STEUER: No, never remarried.

PASICK: Okay. And she had the one daughter?

STEUER: Just the one daughter. Well, no...she had a...I think she had a stepson. A [unintelligible] Dougherty.

PASICK: And that would have been her husband's...

STEUER: Husband's child.

PASICK: Child from...

STEUER: Before they were married.

PASICK: Before they were married. Okay. And, your grandmother's, your mother's name was...

STEUER: Anna.

PASICK: Anna.

STEUER: Anna Marie.

PASICK: Anna Marie, excuse me. And how did your grandmother support herself?

STEUER: [laughter] I don't know.

PASICK: She was alone.

STEUER: She was alone with my mother.

PASICK: With your mother, and maybe the stepson?

STEUER: I don't know. My earliest recollection of him was when he had something to do with the Navy and he was in the Naval home and my mother wrote letters [unintelligible], you know, when I was older.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: She got him a pension or something because he was in the Naval home.

PASICK: Okay, because he was in the Navy or because her father may have been in the Navy?

STEUER: I think he was.

PASICK: He was in the Navy. Okay.

STEUER: His name was Bernard.

PASICK: Okay, alright. And you're...so, that's your mother's family. And then, you're thinking across the street was...

STEUER: My fathers...

PASICK: The Hylicks family.

STEUER: Yeah, the name was Riggs.

PASICK: Yes, I remember you telling about that. Okay.

STEUER: That's how I think my mother and father met. They were neighbors. Yeah.

PASICK: They were neighbors. Okay. Umm, and you lived there until you were?

STEUER: I think maybe 4 because I remember starting school in Jersey.

PASICK: Okay, and you lived in New Jersey...

STEUER: No we didn't, I started school, Catholic school in Brooklyn, by Prospect Street, St. Ann's Parish.

PASICK: Yes.

STEUER: And going there probably kindergarten, and then we moved to Jersey.

PASICK: Was it Jersey City or?

STEUER: No, Kearney, New Jersey.

PASICK: Kearney. And then, how long were you there you were saying?

STEUER: I think 'til I was probably 8, we lived in two different places.

PASICK: Okay. And then when you were 8, you moved back?

STEUER: Back to Pearl Street, in Brooklyn.

PASICK: Pearl Street in Brooklyn. Okay, now your father's sister...how many sisters did he have?

STEUER: He had Lily and Dani, brother Charles, and Gussie Gusling, three sisters. And one brother.

PASICK: Three sisters and a brother. So there were five of them? Or four?

STEUER: Three.

PASICK: How many kids?

STEUER: Four.

PASICK: There were four with your father. And how many of his, and you're saying, how many of your sisters married Filipinos?

STEUER: Two.

PASICK: Two. That would be Gussie...

STEUER: Gussie and Anna.

PASICK: And Anna. Okay. Umm, so he had a sister named Anna, and your mother's name was also Anna.

STEUER: Yes.

PASICK: So there were different Annas there.

STEUER: Right.

PASICK: Okay. And what's the story of how they, how they met Filipinos?

STEUER: I think cause they lived near the Navy Yard. I think my father's mother had a rooming house, and I suppose maybe they took rooms there whenever their ship was in, that's how they met.

PASICK: Okay, alright. Do you recall the names of the men your aunts married, so these would have been your uncles? I know one was Tony Adap.

STEUER: Tony Adap.

PASICK: Yes.

STEUER: And that was Gussie's husband.

PASICK: Yes.

STEUER: And, my father's sister Lily, she married an American, she lived in Jersey most of her life. And the other one was a Pacanza, don't know his first name.

PASICK: Okay, alright. It wasn't Felix Pacanza?

STEUER: It was Felix Pacanza's father.

PASICK: Okay, Felix Pacanza's father.

STEUER: And that was with Anna.

PASICK: Yes, okay. What is your first memory of being with Filipinos?

STEUER: Ohh, I guess growing up with them, I was always close to Nonny.

PASICK: Your aunt, your Aunt Nonny?

STEUER: Well, she's my cousin. That's Adap, Tony Adap's daughter.

PASICK: Oh, that's right. Okay, right.

STEUER: She was three years older than me, so we were always together when we were children.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: My mother used to send us to Connecticut to, umm, country up there in the summertime.

PASICK: Oh really?

STEUER: They'd come up weekends.

PASICK: Like camp?

STEUER: Oh, it was a farm.

PASICK: A farm?

STEUER: A farmhouse, she rented it, and sent my grandmother with us, and Nonny and I, and then our parents would come up on weekends.

PASICK: I see.

STEUER: And then she would rent a bungalow down on the beach in later years.

PASICK: What beach was that?

STEUER: Sound Beach.

PASICK: Sound Beach. Where is that?

STEUER: Connecticut.

PASICK: In Connecticut. So are, so would this be true that one of your earliest best girlfriends was, uh, a part Filipino?

STEUER: Yeah, Nonny and I were very close.

PASICK: Okay, so your first contact really with Filipinos was through your father's family...

STEUER: ...yeah.

PASICK: And particularly through Nonny.

STEUER: Right.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: Of course I saw Felix's brother Willie, you know, as I was growing up, but I was closer to Nonny.

PASICK: Okay, alright. How did your father feel about his sister's marrying Filipinos?

STEUER: It never bothered him.

PASICK: Okay, you don't remember any...

STEUER: He accepted them. They were always with him. Holidays we always got together, remember how it was years ago? Every Thanksgiving is one house, Christmas another house.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: Not like it is today, you never see them.

PASICK: I know. I know about that. Do you have any stories or memories of your grandparents, how they may have reacted to their kids marrying Filipinos.

STEUER: I didn't have any grandfather, I just had a grandmother, and she was always with them.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: And she was always at the luncheons and the dinners.

PASICK: Alright.

STEUER: It was always part of her life.

PASICK: Always part of her life. Now, we're talking about your father's mother or...

STEUER: My mother's mother.

PASICK: Your mother's mother, okay.

STEUER: My father's mother was in Jersey. I mean, they always went over there to visit, but they weren't as close as the ones that were together in Brooklyn.

PASICK: And your father's family is German, is that what you said, Hylick?

STEUER: No, Bohemian.

PASICK: Bohemian, okay. What does Bohemian mean to you, if you had to name a country?

STEUER: Austria, she was from Austria in those days.

PASICK: Oh okay.

STEUER: Her mother came from Austria, and I don't know about her husband, my grandmother's husband, cause he was dead early too.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: I never had grandfathers. [laughter] Only grandmothers.

PASICK: Okay. Umm, so were there...when you came back to Jersey, you were 8, you had summers up in Connecticut at this farm, and was the farm, were there other children at the farm?

STEUER: Not that many. Somehow it was related on my grandmother's side.

PASICK: Which grandmother?

STEUER: My mother's mother.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: And there was another farmhouse nearby and the gas station, they owned a gas station.

Uhh, they were relatives, but not that close.

PASICK: Distant?

STEUER: We just saw them in the summertime, and now I've lost touch.

PASICK: So do you have any memories of you and Nonny being up in Connecticut in the summer?

STEUER: Normal things, you know. We used to...there was a railroad track that ran behind the farmhouse, there was blackberries that grew there, and we'd go pick blackberries. Of course, one time a train came, we didn't see it, and we tumbled down in all the blackberry bushes with the thorns. [laughter] Of course, there was an outhouse, you know no indoor plumbing, outhouse. Had to go out there, hold your nose, [laughter] full of flies.

PASICK: Yeah.

STEUER: Those things you remember.

PASICK: Now these relatives on your mother's side, do you remember how they may have reacted or felt about Nonny, who was actually not their relative, but their relative by marriage, right? In terms of her being Filipino-American?

STEUER: There wasn't any reaction.

PASICK: Or reactions among the people up in the town at the time?

STEUER: Well, we're pretty much to ourselves up there.

PASICK: Okay. Was this an inland town or was this on the sea?

STEUER: This was an inland town.

PASICK: So you can imagine up there, there probably weren't, there probably were not very many Filipinos, if any.

STEUER: No.

PASICK: Were you aware of Nonny looking different than, looking not White? Looking like an Asian, or was it not even, it wasn't really part of your experience that she was different?

STEUER: Well, usually if I had, as I got older, if I had any company coming, I would tell them ahead of time, so you know, I would say she's part Filipino, I didn't want them, you know, wondering what she was when she walked in the room, whispering behind her back and everything. That she's my cousin and I explained it, for her sake.

PASICK: For her sake. Okay. When do you remember doing that, how old were you about then?

STEUER: Oh, I was in high school.

PASICK: So by the time you were a teenager. And, that, how did your friends react when you prepared them in that way?

STEUER: They accepted it, you know, they didn't ... no difference. They were my friends and they were her friends.

PASICK: Now that, that particular very gracious thing that you did, did other people in the family do that similarly, for example, going places and so forth, sort of a, do some explaining?

STEUER: Not that I know of.

PASICK: So you were among the first to do that.

STEUER: Yeah.

PASICK: Was Nonny aware of this?

STEUER: I don't think so.

PASICK: Yeah.

STEUER: I don't think she knew, you know, that I did that.

PASICK: Yes, right right. And what was your concern there, that someone would make a comment or ask too many questions?

STEUER: I figured they might, you know, look at her differently or do something to make her feel uncomfortable, so I try to warn it off.

PASICK: By then you were in high school...

STEUER: High school or junior high.

PASICK: And that was, by then you were back in Brooklyn. So what school did you go to?

STEUER: I went to PS 12 in Brooklyn, and then I went to Nathan Hale Junior High.

PASICK: And what was that like racially there?

STEUER: I guess a lot of Italians and Polish. It wasn't right in...Nathan Hale wasn't in the immediate neighborhood, quite a ways. Had to take the transportation, but usually I walked to save the fifty cents.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: Same with high school, Girls Commercial. I'd walk so I could have fifty cents at the end of the week.

PASICK: Those high schools...were there any other, were there any non-Whites in the high school?

STEUER: I guess there were, but I don't remember. My eyes keep watering.

PASICK: Okay, that's alright. Did you and Nonny go to school together?

STEUER: No.

PASICK: No...she went someplace else?

STEUER: Nonny took general courses. I don't know what school she went to. When we got to be teenagers, I had other girlfriends, and I wasn't that close to Nonny, more in the younger years. And then after I got older and married, we were back together again. [laughter]

PASICK: When you thought about Tony and Gussie, and Anna and Mr. Pacanza, we don't have his first name, was there any talk or awareness in any part of the family that this was a racially mixed marriage. Thought of as a marriage that was unusual or didn't seem perfectly natural?

STEUER: It seemed perfectly natural because that was their own little group.

PASICK: Tell me more about that.

STEUER: Well, you had Gussie and Tony, and Anna, and I think some time along the lines, she divorced Pacanza, and this other fellow, Leon came into.

PASICK: Was Leon Filipino?

STEUER: Yeah. He's Filipino. He was, I guess, Anna's friend. I don't know just how far things went, but he was around instead of Pacanza, so Leon was in there.

PASICK: Now, was he a boarder? Was there still boarding going on? Your grandmother...was there still boarding going on?

STEUER: No, this was later on, when the children were bigger. But I mean, it was just their group. They more or less stayed to themselves, with their families. I don't remember a lot of outsiders coming in ... on their side. My mother had her own friends.

PASICK: And, did they live near each other?

STEUER: Yeah.

PASICK: Where did they live?

STEUER: Well what I remember, Nonny lived on Myrtle Avenue, and Felix and Anna, Felix's mother, she lived on Sands Street down in the Navy Yard... 'til later in life. Those are my memories of where they lived.

PASICK: So they didn't stay hooked together like the Carinos did, they were often all among each other?

STEUER: Well, Carinos were in there, but my mother mentioned Carinos...she knew them, but I didn't know them until I was older, sixteen, when I met Fred at one of the dances.

PASICK: Okay. What kind of dance was this?

STEUER: Well, they had a youth club, they had a Filipino club, down in Brooklyn.

PASICK: Yes, yes, right on Fulton Street.

STEUER: They had dances, and when I was around sixteen and my mother let me go with Nonny. Nonny was three years older, and that's when I met Fred.

PASICK: Do you think of your, before we move to talking about that next phase of your life, do you think in hindsight now looking back, that your parents were particularly special in this kind of tolerance and acceptance for a whole entirely different group of people?

STEUER: Well, I know my mother never wanted me to marry one because she said it's hard on the children.

PASICK: Okay, tell me a little about that.

STEUER: They always feared I might, being in with them, she feared marrying a Filipino, and she said, think about it, because it's hard on your children as they're growing up. Of course, today it's nothing, but in those days...

PASICK: Well, no, I think it's still a deal, I think your mother had some wisdom there, I mean, it is a special challenge. And what do you think your mother was thinking of there, was she thinking about Nonny and Felix and his brother?

STEUER: Well, I think Nonny had a little problem, Nonny always said she wouldn't marry a Filipino, I don't know why, and she didn't. Maybe she felt it growing up as a child. But I always remember my mother saying that. I figured I'll marry who I want, who I fall in love with, but as it happened to be Fred.

PASICK: Sure, sure.

STEUER: Cause he was right in there with the group, and in a way it worked out well, because we both had a Filipino side to our family. It was a good marriage, that way.

PASICK: How did your mother feel when you started to fall in love with Fred, and of course, she would know, that he was very involved with Filipinos?

STEUER: She just didn't want me to get married that soon, you know how mothers are. But I was 21, and I figured it's time to get married.

PASICK: So, her concerns were more about the children than life for you?

STEUER: Yeah, children in the marriage having a hard time.

PASICK: So, you met Fred up at the Filipino Community Center, and then you went out for...how long did you go out together?

STEUER: Well, I was 16, and was married at 21, and there was some time in there when I didn't see him, I dated some others.

PASICK: Okay, alright. And how did that go? I don't know how aware your other friends were about the connection between your family and Filipinos, did you ever get any remarks or any flack for that...from boyfriends or whatever...that Filipinos had intermarried in your family?

STEUER: Well, there was no boyfriend that I really liked that I brought to any affairs.

PASICK: Okay, alright. So you and Fred went out for quite a while and then you were married... how old were you?

STEUER: ...when I was 21.

PASICK: When you were 21. And by then, how much time had you spent with...then you were getting to know another Filipino family, right? From 16-21?

STEUER: Well, by then Felix married Pet, and that sort of brought us into the family more.

PASICK: That's right.

STEUER: Got more involved with the Carinos then because of Pet, Felix marrying Pet.

PASICK: Right, so your boyfriend and then your husband's cousin had married your cousin.

STEUER: Yeah.

PASICK: Cousin marrying a cousin.

STEUER: It got us more involved together. Families mixing.

PASICK: Yeah...the two families mixing. And...

STEUER: We were close, you know, there were others friends at the community center, Stanley, [unintelligible], Primo, they were all part of Fred and my life as we were young before we got married.

PASICK: How aware were you in general, and these are years now, you're an early adult now...how much racial awareness you think you had, like when you go places or...I don't know what I'm asking because I don't know enough about this topic yet, it's what I'm trying to learn...how aware were you of the fact that you were White and some of the people you hung out with weren't? How much did it enter into your consciousness?

STEUER: I don't know. It didn't bother me ... they were our friends and we palled around with them. It was our group. I never looked at it that way.

PASICK: Did you feel on the outside because you weren't Filipino?

STEUER: No. Fred was there, and this other girl, Janet, she used to go out. I think she...Peggy and she dated your father once or twice.

PASICK: Okay.

STEUER: And Janet used to date Eddie Espejo he was part of the...not always in our group, but he was part of it for a little while. So we always had some other people, White girls... it didn't bother us, it was just one group.

PASICK: Yeah, it was your group, it was your group, it was your social group. People weren't paying much attention to...

STEUER: Didn't feel different about it. It was just our friends and we hung out together, just as they do today.

PASICK: And that was mainly in Brooklyn, or did you go to Manhattan?

STEUER: No, Brooklyn.

PASICK: All Brooklyn.

STEUER: Mostly but we'd go to Manhattan after a dance, to Chinatown. And for a while we came out to the island. They had a good band out here, sounded like Glenn Miller. We'd drive out here, weekends, Saturday nights.

PASICK: Okay, and did, as long as you were with your group, it didn't really matter if you were places where there Asians or where there weren't Asians?

STEUER: No.

PASICK: Did you go to the Filipino picnic?

STEUER: No, I didn't go to the Filipino picnics...Navy Yard things, but that's where we went when we were older. Navy Yard dinner dance, but that was during wartime, and after that, when we lived in Bellrose, but not when we were younger.

PASICK: Did you have, did you hear any stories from Filipinos that you hung out with that wartime was a bit of a challenge for anyone who was Asian?

STEUER: No.

PASICK: Fred was overseas, wasn't he?

STEUER: He went out to the Pacific, he was in Japan.

PASICK: Japan. That was after you were married?

STEUER: Yeah.

PASICK: So, can we talk about Fred, you and Fred, a little bit? Now, he was in the family as a cousin...

STEUER: To Pet and Ted...he lived with them.

PASICK: Yeah and raised by Flo. So in that particular family, as I think about it, until Janet was born, the only people that weren't Filipino were Filipino-American. [unintelligible] So now I'm asking you to think about what you know about Fred's experience of growing up in a Filipino family, so this would be stuff that you either have theories about or that you've heard about directly. What do you think it was like for him to grow up in this racially mixed family?

STEUER: Well, he told me was that when he worked, he used to come home and give his pay check to Aunt Flo, and she would give him back some money for the week. He thought of her, you know, like a mother.

PASICK: Yes, right. Did he ever talk about what is was like to have a parent who was Filipino or?

STEUER: Never mentioned it. Just normal way of life for him.

PASICK: Normal way of life for him.

STEUER: Grew up that way, she raised him, his grandmother raised him for a little bit, and she died. Aunt Flo took over, of course there was Aunt Mamie and Aunt Cath. And he never thought anything about the Filipino part of it.

PASICK: Never talked about it much.

STEUER: No, no.

PASICK: I'm trying to imagine what it might have been like for him to go out places where, you know, where he was with Pop Pop that clearly looked Filipino, and Pet and Ted looked fairly Filipino, and you know, then there's him and then there's Flo.

STEUER: He never talked about his childhood life.

PASICK: And what was it like for you, as a new wife and mother, to have this pretty regular now connection as part of that family. Sounds to me like this was pretty normal for you?

STEUER: Pretty normal. You know, I didn't think anything of it, I was used to it all my life, so it made no impression on me one way or another.

PASICK: How about your friends and your neighbors, and so forth...this was something that was very rich about your life, a difference from lots of other people, especially where you were living at the time. How did people handle it?

STEUER: Well, usually if I expected them, I said they're family members, and my father's sisters married Filipinos during the wartime. They're just family members and I expect them for dinner or something.

PASICK: So again, that kind of preparation?

STEUER: Prepare them so they didn't look and wonder what's going on.

PASICK: And it sounds like you did that in just a very matter of fact way.

STEUER: Yeah, just told them, how the family was, and this is it. Don't stand there and look. I didn't say that, but...

PASICK: That is your hope.

STEUER: Yeah. They'd understand why they're here.

PASICK: Without that kind of preparation, what would be your worry...that they would make the wrong assumption about their ethnic group?

STEUER: I thought that they might stare a little and make them feeling uncomfortable, so I tried to avoid that.

PASICK: Okay. Were you ever aware of stares just being public with Flo, Pio, Tony, any of your uncles?

STEUER: No.

PASICK: How did you handle yourself going out with an obvious group of Filipinos as an adult? Were you aware of anything?

STEUER: It just never dawned on me, I'm so used to it ...it was such a part of my life.

PASICK: Right, right

STEUER: It never bothered me, and I never looked at other people to see what they thought.

PASICK: Yeah, yeah.

STEUER: I was so used to growing up with it.

PASICK: Yes.

STEUER: It was a normal thing for me.

PASICK: Yes, yes. Are there any other people in your family, this would be your father's family, or your mother's family, where there was any kind of intermarriage? Religious intermarriage, or ethnic intermarriage...you know, pretty different folk?

STEUER: Um... no... I don't think so... You know, most of our lives were around those who intermarried, most of our family and friends, they were our whole life. The rest of them, on my mother's side, my grandmother would go visit them. But they never came to the house, my grandmother would go to her sister, in Flatbush. Sometimes she'd take me along with her.

PASICK: You're talking about your mother's side?

STEUER: Um Yeah. We were never close to my mother's side, like we were to my father's side. We were very close to my father's family.

PASICK: Do you have a sense of-I don't know quite how to put this---I mean, intermarriage was a normal part of your life, on your father's side, less so on your mother's side, but they kind of put a stamp of approval?

STEUER: Um well, we never saw my mother's side of the family, not that much.

PASICK: So do you have a sense that you think there was a real benefit for intermarriage? What was good about it for your own life experience, knowing your experience and others?

STEUER: Um...well, those that had intermarried had always had a good life. They were well provided for, they had a good life, and had nothing to be sorry for. Just a good life for them. They were all happy with the ones they married. Except Aunt Annie, she divorced Pacanza, but I don't know the story behind that.

PASICK: So it didn't look like anything that was permanent to take care of. And, has that affected how to think about racial intermarriage today?

STEUER: Um racial intermarriage is fine until you get to real Blacks. I don't see that.

PASICK: So if Lou had married a Filipino woman, for example...I know it's hard to speculate like that, but I mean, how would that have been for you? What do you think?

STEUER: Um it would have been alright. I guess today they married a little Chinese girl or something, and I think they are very happy together.

PASICK: And your mother's caution that it is difficult for the children...is there anything about that?

STEUER: Um well, like when they see in the store and you see a Black man and a White girl and she's carrying a baby, and the baby is usually Black. I think it's very hard on the child when it goes to school.

PASICK: Because they have Black blood or because they are racially mixed?

STEUER: They are racially mixed, and the child shows it. I think the chances of having a White child [unintelligible]

PASICK: It sounds like Ted and Pet also had... Asian mix, but not Black, and it sounds like your fear would be having the challenges of being Black in this country would be...?

STEUER: That is too much, going too far.

PASICK: So, Filipino and Asian or White are acceptable.

STEUER: Yeah. That's acceptable.

PASICK: And Spanish and White?

STEUER: That's acceptable too, you see a lot of that.

PASICK: Yes, you do. And from your point of view, is that because of the, like your mother said, because of the challenges that children would face or more because of right and wrong?

STEUER: Well, both...I think when you get to the Black, it's right and wrong. She also has, the wife also, and it's a difficult time, her friends. Too much of a difference there.

PASICK: So in this case, to a brown skinned person from Asia, it's a bit of a difference, significant difference, but it's...

STEUER: ...acceptable... but not the Black. Totally Black. I don't even like calling them Black. I don't like that word.

PASICK: What word do you prefer?

STEUER: I prefer Negro or colored. I don't like Black, to me it's almost like an insult to call them Black.

PASICK: It's a descriptor. It's like calling Filipinos brown or something like that. So personally, do you think that you personally have benefited from having a lot of contact with racially mixed families...what has that done for you?

STEUER: I think when you first started to change, to change now, I don't think much of it, but I think in those days it helped me to accept what other people were. Years ago, 25 years ago, people didn't accept the intermarriages. Since I had it in the family, I accepted it right away, I didn't think there was anything wrong with it, and a lot of people didn't like it.

PASICK: So you've been able to make...

STEUER: ...the adjustments.

PASICK: Yeah, that's interesting.

STEUER: Years ago, people would look at you, and think, why, it's common, years ago it wasn't.

PASICK: No it wasn't ...that's partly why I have interest in it.

STEUER: Having grown up with it, I accepted it and thought nothing of it. I wasn't afraid to introduce my family to anybody. I just tried to make it easier for them, when people would wonder why or look at them in strange way.

PASICK: That was a nice gesture on your part. Let's see if I have any more questions---oh, just one. Given your life long history, really, growing up next to another race of people, if you want to call Filipinos another race of people, would you be able to describe Filipinos--how would you say Filipinos are different from Whites? If you think there are any differences, just in terms of personality or cultural practices or?

STEUER: The only differences I know if are some of their foods. Joe used to cook these other foods, otherwise I didn't see any differences.

PASICK: You didn't see any differences.

STEUER: No.