

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOMINGO S. DUARTE

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Domingo Duarte on February 25, 2004, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Nicholas Molnar: Nicholas Molnar ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: ... And Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Mr. Duarte, thank you very much for coming in.

Domingo Duarte: You're welcome, it's a pleasure.

NM: When and where were you born?

DD: I was born in Nasugbu, Batangas, which [is] a province in the Philippines, on October 29, 1936, and I'm the oldest of seven.

SH: Can you tell us a little bit about your family history? Had your family always resided in that province?

DD: My father came from the North, from Lallo in Cagayan Valley, and my mother is from the South, in Los Banos, and they met in the University of the Philippines, College of Agriculture, in Los Banos, where my father studied to become an agronomist and my mother, whose family lived in Los Banos, ... was studying, also, at the University of the Philippines. So, they met there.

SH: Were they the first generation of their families to go to college?

DD: Yes. My father, yes; my mother, no. She has brothers who went to college ahead of her. As a matter-of-fact, my mother, they were thirteen and she was the only girl. She was number four and she took care of the rest of the boys, and it's funny, you know, because the boys didn't call my mother by her name, Luz, but they called her, "*Babae*," which meant, "Girl," and they got married in Los Banos, and then, when my father finished his degree in Agronomy, Agriculture major in Agronomy, he was hired by a company that had vast land holdings in Batangas, and so, he was brought to Batangas, and, naturally, he brought his family with him, or his wife, as a matter-of-fact. I wasn't there yet, and so, he worked there until he died, and I was born there and the rest, and then, all the five other brothers and sisters were born there, and one was born in a *barrio* during the war. We all had our elementary education in Nasugbu, and then, we all went to Manila for our college. I went to Ateneo de Manila. I'm the only one who took high school in Manila. The rest took their high school in Nasugbu. I went to Ateneo de Manila, which is a Jesuit school, in Manila for my high school and my college. My other brothers, for their college, they went to La Salle, which was a bitter rival of Ateneo, but Ateneo was better, naturally. My sisters studied at the University of the Philippines in Manila and that's it.

SH: How uncommon was it for a woman of your mother's generation in the Philippines to be college educated?

DD: Let's put it this way; it's not very common, but there were a lot of women, at that time, that went to school or to college, mainly those in the upper class of society, and UP Los Banos, since it is a government school, is not that expensive to go to.

SH: Would your mother's family have been considered upper class in the Philippines at that time?

DD: No, not upper, but middle class. My grandfather, he was a pharmacist and they have, you know, some sort of a drug store in Los Banos. They could afford to live a little bit [of] an exciting life.

SH: What about your father's family?

DD: My father's family is basically farmers and they lived way up north. When I say way up north, they lived, like, two hundred miles from Manila. They're closer to Hong Kong than to Manila and they were mostly farmers and, of his brothers and sisters, he was the only one who went to college.

SH: Did they own quite a bit of farming land or did they lease it?

DD: They owned, you know, enough, maybe 10 hectares (20 acres), that sort of thing, not much, just enough to feed the family and have regular expenses. Again, the reason my father was able to go to Los Banos was, it was not so expensive at that time and I guess, I don't really know his background, educational background, in high school, maybe ... he was bright in high school and they said, "Oh, maybe he should continue." So, that's how it came to pass.

SH: You went to high school in Manila.

DD: Yes.

SH: Why did you go there?

DD: Because my father was interested for me to study, I'm the eldest and I'm the favorite, you know, ... in Manila, and so, I took an entrance examination to this Jesuit school, the Ateneo de Manila, and, luckily, I passed. So, that's why I went for high school there until my college. Ateneo, at that time, is exclusively a boy's school run by American Jesuits, basically from the New York Diocese.

SH: You mentioned that one went to school in the barrio ...

DD: No, no. One was born in a barrio.

SH: Anyway, can you explain what a barrio is?

DD: Okay. The set up in the Philippines is, okay, you have the Philippines and Manila is the capital of the Philippines. Now, you have, I don't know how many provinces, like, you have

Batangas Province, you have Zamboanga that you've heard so much about, Rizal, and each province is composed of several towns. Now, each town is composed of several barrios. So, that's the lowest unit in the hierarchy of the government and, in all of these, in all the towns and the barrios, there would be what they call the Barangay, which is an association; it's a public association of the neighborhood in an area. So, one neighborhood, depending on size, would have one barangay and, another neighborhood, another barangay, and these are run by barangay captains, and the barrios are run by barrio captains. The towns have a mayor and the province have governors.

SH: Was your family involved in politics at all in any of the places that you mentioned?

DD: Yes. Initially, the involvement was just helping a certain candidate run for office, and then, finally, my brother, Eddie, who was the fifth one in the family, ran for Vice Mayor, and he won, but, unfortunately, he was assassinated. He was shot in the terrace of his house in Nasugbu, together with another councilor. So, he died very young. He was, what? thirty-five. He was about to, ... it's political. The mayor and him were from different political parties, and they never saw eye-to-eye, because the mayor was of the old school and he's a new, idealistic, you know, man, and there was a lot of corruption going on, and he could stand to see it go. So, he started to fight the mayor, and he was going to expose the mayor for getting most of the money earmarked for the construction of the town market, and one thing led to another, and he was shot.

SH: Was there ever a trial or any justice?

DD: Oh, yes, yes. The perpetrators were caught, and put on trial, and convicted, but there [was] no real evidence that the mayor was connected, although everybody knew that, you know, he was in on it or he even instigated it, but there's no evidence to convict him, you know, even to accuse him. So, he wasn't tried at all, but the real perpetrators were sent to jail. Well, the mayor is dead now and all the perpetrators are also dead.

NM: What was it like growing up in the Philippines?

DD: Oh, great. Yeah, at that time, we had fun. Well, I was too young before the war, but, during the war, during the Japanese war, you know, I was old enough to remember what was going on, and instead of living in the town, we moved out to the farm, in the barrio, and we lived there, and, you know, it was so peaceful. We were playing and, at the same time, at that time, ... people living in Manila was already having a hard time because of, you know, rationing and all that, and, in the barrio, where we were, we had a farm there, we had all the food that we can eat. We had, you know, poultry, pigs and everything. So, our relatives in Manila started to move to us, but the thing is, they didn't only move their families, even their friends went with them. So, our place in the barrio was like a camp, and so, there were many kids and, you know, it was fun to have other kids to play with, and we did this until the liberation in 1945. In the meantime, my father was with the guerilla movement over there, and his group was the other farmers around our farm, and, as a matter-of-fact, we had a house on top of a hill in that farm, but towards the end of the war, we moved to a valley and left that house, because ... the Japanese took over that house and the main house, the commander of the Japanese Army took it and made it his quarters, and, you know, that's where he slept and all that. So, we had to move and his soldiers were all

around the house, so, we had to move down, but, then, he would send his soldiers down to get me, and he would have me take a bath with him, and you know how he takes a bath? There is a drum of water, the fifty-five-gallon drum, and there's fire underneath it, and it's hot. When it's hot enough for him, he'd go in there with me and that's how he would take a bath, okay, but, then, towards, like, in '44 sometime, or close to the American occupation, since my dad was with the guerilla outfit, when MacArthur already landed in Tacloban, he radioed somebody there that there was a Japanese garrison in that house and pinpointed the location. This was the day before and what happened was, the night before the planes came in, the Japanese moved out, for one reason or another, we don't know, but, then, it was too late for my dad to radio back to stop the raid. So, they actually bombed the house, the whole place, and there was nobody there. Our cars in the garage, two cars, were all blown to bits. The only thing left with the house was the bathroom. That's it, but, you know, too late.

NM: I have a question about your father's involvement in the resistance. Was it a given that all Filipinos would join the resistance? Was it his choice to join?

DD: I don't know. I won't say it's a given, you know, but, like, he was the head there, but, you know, like I said, this Japanese colonel lived in our house. He said, "I like your house, so, can you find someplace else to live?" and so, he was also friendly with them, and that's why they probably didn't really examine whether he was a guerilla or not. As a matter-of-fact, this Japanese officer, he is very good, because he is one of those intelligent officers. He was an architect and, on Sundays, he would go with us to hear Mass at another town, which was like twenty, thirty kilometers from our place. On Sundays, he'd go with us, but, then, he will just stay outside, he won't go inside the church, and he will start drawing. He drew the church and everything. My father even said, you know, "If this guy surrenders to me, I'll not give him to the Americans," but, we never saw him again after they left. So, I wouldn't say that, you know, everybody was in the guerilla movement. It's their choice if they want to and, also, you know, they can't be too obvious, because they'll kill you. As a matter-of-fact, there were quite a few, about twenty, twenty-five people from Nasugbu, because, at that time, there is what they called, ... these are like the Japanese spies, these are Filipinos, okay, and the Japanese sometimes would go to a town, gather all the men in the plaza, and there's this one guy who would be wearing, like, a paper bag over his head, ... with just his eyes showing, so that the people won't recognize him, and he'll just start pointing, and if he points at you, the Japanese will take you. That means you're a guerilla or something, and there was one time they pointed to about twenty-five or twenty-six of these people, and they took them out to, as a matter-of-fact, ... our barrio, where there was a school building. They kept them there and, finally, shot them all and buried them in a common grave. This was towards the time of the liberation. As a matter-of-fact, I was there when they dug up that grave of these twenty-five people and they were still fresh. I'm sorry, you know, they were still fresh. So, there were some, too, who collaborated with the Japanese. They were called *Makapili*. That's a *tagalong* word for collaborator, "*Makapili*."

NM: Would you say that, for the most part, the Japanese treatment of the Filipinos was similar to how this officer ...

DD: For the most part, it was rough, and, also, we were told that those rough officers or soldiers were Koreans, because a lot of the Japanese soldiers were Koreans, because, you must

remember, Japan occupied Korea and they took over Korea and had most of their men into the military, and they were the cruel ones. Oh, they'd slap you, kick you or anything, for any reason whatsoever. There were a few good ones, but just very few. Everybody was scared to death of these people.

SH: With the Japanese living in your home and camped around your main house, how did they treat your family, since, now, you had this extended family?

DD: Yeah, but, as long as they belong to us or, you know, they're within our camp, so-called camp, then, they don't touch them. No, they don't. I don't know, maybe this officer had a lot of respect for my father.

SH: You told us a story about how the officer helped in getting medical treatment for someone in your family.

DD: Yeah, my mother, at that time, couldn't walk and she had something wrong with her knees and she couldn't walk, because she was even in a hammock, but this hammock is made of rattan, you know, and she doesn't get out of that, because, as soon as there's an air raid, you know, her brothers, because she had a lot of brothers, would carry her to our air raid shelter and take her there until the air raid passes, and then, after the air raid, bring her back to the house. There came a time when she couldn't bear the pain anymore. So, this officer told my father, he said, "Why don't you bring her [here]? We have," some sort of field hospital in a school near us. So, my father said, "Okay." So, they brought my mother to the field hospital and a Japanese doctor looked at it and said, "Oh, there is an inflamed," something, "in the knee," and he operated on it, and he cut it open, and there was a lot of things in it, but, after he cut it open and closed it, the pain was gone and she was cured, but, again, after that, we never saw the doctor again.

SI: Several sources on the Japanese Army that I have read say that the Japanese officers were just as bad to their own men as to civilians. Did you see that at all?

DD: Yes, yes, you know, their men, if they don't come right away or they do something wrong, they get slapped and kicked and all that, you know. Oh, yeah, they're strict disciplinarians.

SH: Was it more dangerous for your female cousins, your mother or your father's sisters? Did the family try to protect the women? Was there a problem?

DD: There didn't seem to be any problem along those lines. Like I said, you know, the officer must have warned his soldiers not to fool around with us or our family. So, we never had a problem of that sort.

SH: How did you communicate? Did anyone in the Japanese garrison speak English?

DD: No. This officer spoke good English, because he's an architect, and I don't know whether he studied here or not. Oh, yeah, he was good.

SH: Do you remember his name?

DD: No.

SI: What was the extent of your father's involvement in the resistance? Did he mostly just relay information?

DD: In the beginning, it was mostly relaying information, but, then, after the Americans landed, ... the 11th Airborne Division landed, parachuted into Tagaytay, where you hear about that volcano in a lake in a volcano, they landed there and my father is within that area. So, they asked for volunteers to go with them in their mop-up operations, and this is funny, you know, because they thought that they would be given, you know, uniforms, shoes and everything. So, when my father's guerilla group went to the camp to volunteer, they were not given anything, so, they were not wearing shoes. So, they went, you know, looking for [the Japanese], in the mop-up operations, barefooted. In that sense, he participated actively, at that time, but it was just for, maybe, two, three months.

SI: Were they there as scouts?

DD: Yes, yes, because they knew the area. So, they would guide these American around.

SI: During the war, were you aware of your father's role in the resistance or were you told afterwards?

DD: I was told that afterwards. You know, you don't ask questions when you're, what? ten, eleven years old. You just play.

SI: I was curious if your parents told you how to act around the Japanese, so as not to reveal anything or draw any suspicions.

DD: No, nothing like that. Like I told you, I used to take a bath with the captain.

SH: You spoke about a prison camp in a school, so-to-speak,

DD: Actually, it wasn't a prison camp. They just sort of brought these people to that place, to that one place. There were no other prisoners; they just brought these twenty-five people there who were pointed out by this *Makapili*.

SH: After the war, were you aware of any prison camps that had been in your area?

DD: No, not in our area, no.

SI: You mentioned air raids. How frequent were the air raids?

DD: In the closing days of the war, it was like almost every day. They would come in, and these are American airplanes, you know, and our air raid shelter, actually, is not a shelter. It's a creek, okay, of course, two walls. If the airplane is coming this way, we would be in this wall, you

know, or, you know, that's the only way we do it. If it comes right over, then, we'd be gone, but they were not dropping bombs in that area after they hit our house. It was just strafing, you know.

SI: What do you remember about those raids, being a child? Were you afraid?

DD: Of course. Scared, you'd push into the side of the creek, you know. You'd go as deep as you can. One of my uncles was killed during this time. ... He was like the executive officer of my father and there was a report that there were Japanese in such-and-such barrio. So, he said, "Okay, let's go, I'll lead the group." Now, his son, who is also my age, at that time, gave him a helmet, but it was a Japanese helmet. He wore it. It was dark, at night, and, all of a sudden, a shot rang out, and he was shot by his own man, and he died there.

SH: We often talk about the attack on Pearl Harbor. The next day, of course, the Philippines ...

DD: Yeah, December 10th.

SH: What do you remember about that? How soon did you realize what was happening?

DD: I think we moved when they started hitting Bataan. No, no, we moved after a year, because my sister was born, the one I told you was born in the barrio, ... December 9th, Immaculate Conception. So, it must have been a year after.

SH: From speaking to your family, did they have any idea that the Japanese posed a threat to the Philippines?

DD: No.

SI: Again, through what your family told you, do you know how Americans were viewed before the war?

DD: No, I don't know, because, well, before the war, they were just like anybody else. I don't think they were considered as occupation forces, you know, because, at that time, we were still under the Americans. We were a Commonwealth.

SI: Was there a general yearning for independence?

DD: There could be in Manila, but, you know, we were in the province. Maybe in Manila, where the seat of government is, maybe, but we were not aware of it.

SH: The first Japanese soldiers you saw were those that occupied your home.

DD: Yes.

SI: During the war, did you ever travel to Manila or any other population centers?

DD: From that barrio, where my sister was born, my father used to go to Manila to sell things. He rented a truck and he would buy, you know, pigs, chickens, rice, whatever, and bring them to Manila and sell it in Manila, and then, come back, but, us, no, because most of the trips that my dad did was on this truck, where it was full of goods for sale and, if he cannot fill it up, he had other people, his friends, who had their own [goods], you know, would share that truck with him.

SH: You spoke about living in this big family community in the province. For a little kid, as you said, life just went on, was a big party. Did weddings or other celebrations take place?

SI: How normal was your lifestyle?

DD: It was normal, but I don't remember any weddings. I don't even remember any birthday parties, because it looked like it was a party every day, I mean, in the sense that, you know, we were all eating together and, you know, playing together. So, I don't remember any special day for a party, no, I don't, until we moved back, you know.

SH: Did you have chores?

DD: No, no, because we had a lot of help, not only with the relatives, but, you know, we had help in the house, cooks, and babysitters, and whatever. I grew up with a guy taking care of me until ... I went to high school.

SH: Really?

DD: All of us had somebody to go after us.

SI: Do you know how your father passed information along?

DD: Mostly by runner, in the earlier stages, and then, I think, in the later stages, there was a radio that was brought over from somewhere and that's how he relayed the information, but it was, you know, a succession of runners to go to the headquarters.

SH: How long was your father able to keep going into Manila on his sales trips? Was he able to do it for the whole war?

DD: No. I think he was able to do it for, maybe, a year, a year-and-a-half during the war, and then, after that, no more. Things got to be so strict in Manila and even the goods became scarce, you know.

SI: Did he talk about the destruction in Manila?

DD: No.

SH: What was he most afraid of? You spoke about restrictions. What were some of the things that he was most concerned about?

DD: No, it's not about the Japanese. It was about the highway men. They would stop these trucks and get all the goods and the money and that's what he was scared of. As a matter-of-fact, again, one of my uncles was killed on this truck, because the highway men stopped the truck, but they didn't stop, they just went ahead, and they shot them. ... The second to the youngest brother of my mom was killed on that truck and I think that's when my dad decided it's not worth it.

SH: Did he have a special place where he hid the money?

DD: No. I don't know if he had.

SI: Did you ever hear any stories about people helping downed fliers, that sort of thing?

DD: No, no, we didn't have that.

SH: When do you remember seeing your first American soldier? You spoke about the planes coming over.

DD: The Americans, I don't know what group this was, they landed in our beach in Nasugbu, because Nasugbu is a coastal town and Americans landed there. It was January something, 1945 maybe. They landed in the beach and that's when we saw them, not right then, because we were still in the barrio. So, as they moved up and they met up with these Americans that landed in Tagaytay, that parachuted, then, we met them, you know, "Chocolate, Joe?"

SH: How much English did you speak at that time?

DD: We did speak English, because we were taught in school, even from kindergarten, the instruction is in English. So, basically, all of us can speak English, or understand at least.

SI: Was your education interrupted at all by the war?

DD: No, actually, because, at the start of the war, I was like five years old. No, after the war, I started. Well, it was interrupted maybe one year, then, I stopped, then, after the war, I continued, second grade elementary, and our school system, it's only up to sixth grade, and then, you go to high school, and, lately, they said you have to have seventh grade, and then, you go to high school. So, that's why most of us finished college when we're twenty, yeah, because twelve, then sixteen, then sixteen to twenty, college.

SI: Again, this may not touch upon your circumstances, but there were many factions in the Philippines, like the Huks and the Abu Sayaff. Were you aware of them as a child? Do you know what your family thought about the situation?

DD: Okay, the Huks was started during, ... I think even before, the Second World War. They had Huks already trying to fight the Americans. They wanted to have their independence or something, but the Abu Sayaff is just recent.

SI: Oh, they did not have that then.

DD: No, we didn't have that. We had [what] was called the *Moros*, or Muslims, we called them *Moro*, in the South at that time, but there was no such thing as Abu Sayaff then. They're Muslims and they were fighting all the time. They fought the Spanish, they fought the Americans, and they couldn't do anything about it, because they just kept on fighting and fighting, you know, up to now, and especially our area, even up to now, or maybe just a few years ago, was never any place where these *Hukbalahaps* thrived. There was none at that point, because, basically, the people there were content with what they have. There's not much of this landlords taking advantage of the tenants, you know, like in the Central Luzon or in the Northern Luzon, where there are big, landed gentries and they have, like, so many thousand acres of land, and they have tenants, and they don't treat their tenants well, you know, and all that, and that's where these groups started to come up, you know, the *Hukbalahaps*, the NDF [National Democratic Front], you know, all different kinds, because of the unrest of the peasants due to unfair treatment of the landlords, but, in our town, this was not so. We had a big landlord there. Oh, he owned, like, three thousand hectares, which is six thousand acres, but his tenants were all happy, because he treated all of them fairly. He had about one thousand tenants, but, you know, they were all treated fairly. They were not taken advantage of, so, they were happy.

SH: Was the landlord Filipino?

DD: No, Spanish, because the land was part of a Spanish Land Grant that was given to them during the Spanish era, which they carried even until the Americans came, because I think one of your President's said that, you know, those lands taken from these people should be given back. So, there are these Spaniards who had, I don't know how true it is, but they said, during the Spanish time, if you're a big shot Spaniard, the governor, the Spanish Governor, would tell you, "Okay, go ride your horse, go as far as you can, and then, come back, and all that you have gone through is yours." That was the story. That's why they owned thousands and thousands of acres, you know.

SI: One thing that is very interesting about the Philippines is, there is a very eclectic mix of influences, the Spanish, the native cultures and the Americans. Also, it seems as though it was a culture moving from the traditional way of life to a more modern, Western way of life. How did you see that play out in your own family and your life?

DD: Well, I don't know if you can call it "played out," because, you know, our family, you know, stuck to the old ways, like the respect for elders, this kissing of the hand and this, "*Po*," which is, you know, every sentence that you finished, if you're talking to somebody older than you or [whom] you don't know, you end it with a "*Po*." Like, "Yes, sir," would be, "*Opo*." "How are you?" and the answer will be, "*Mabuti po*," meaning, "I'm okay, thank you," something like that, and, also, food, you know, basically has Spanish influence. It is only lately that we got into this hamburger thing, but most of our food is influenced by Spanish dishes, saucy. That's about it. Well, the latest generation has already forgotten about these things, you know, about this respect for elders, kissing the hand and this "*Po*." At that time, you can't call your father by his first name. Nobody calls any older people by their first name, nobody. Here, even your father, you call him, you know, Dingo [Mr. Duarte's nickname] or something.

SH: As the war was winding down, you spoke about strafing by American aircraft. How do you remember the war coming to an end?

DD: Well, for us, it really came to an end when the Americans that landed in Tagaytay got to our barrio, and then, so, we just started to clean up, and then, we moved back to the town.

SH: What kind of interaction did your family have with the Americans as they moved through the barrio?

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SI: Were they friendly?

DD: Yeah, very friendly, especially to the kids. Oh, yeah, they'd share anything. They'd give you anything, sometimes, even if you don't ask, they give you [something].

SI: You mentioned in the beginning that, because you lived on the farm, you were not as affected by rationing and that sort of thing. Was there an extent to which the war caused material hardship?

DD: Not really, not in our area, because, like I said, it's a farmland, it's a farming area. So, most everybody has something to eat from their gardens or, you know, their small plots where they can, if they don't plant rice, they can barter it with what they have, like, maybe chicken, or pig, or whatever. So, I don't think we ever had any problems with food. Maybe we had some problems with, you know, buying new shoes or clothes, but never with food.

SI: Did most people grow rice?

DD: Well, rice is the basic part of our meal. I think, the Filipinos eat, like, each Filipino family eats about three thousand kilos of rice a year and you Americans eat only, like, fourteen hundred pounds a year each, no, fourteen pounds each. Yeah, we have rice, and then, all kinds of vegetables that you can think of, and then, plus, you know, we have small poultry, one or two pigs, a cow maybe, or a carabao, for plowing. So, like I said, we never had any problems with food.

SI: Do you remember any special days, like V-J Day?

DD: No.

SI: What about Independence Day?

DD: Again, in our town, nothing. In Manila, they do celebrate this, they did, I mean, July 4th, but, then, later on, during the time of the father of the President now, who was also a president then, President Diosdado Macapagal, he changed the Independence Day celebration of the Philippines from July 4th, because he said that's the Independence Day of Americans. Our

Independence Day is June 12th, because that's when we got our independence from the Spaniards. That was our first Independence Day, and then, the Americans came in and, you know, fought us and bought us from Spain for twelve million dollars or twenty-one million dollars. So, right now, we're celebrating Independence Day June 12th.

SI: Were there any stories from your family about the time of the Spanish-American War?

DD: No. I brought you these for your reading. One is from the Western point of view and one is from the Filipino point of view.

SH: Just for the record, Mr. Duarte is showing us a printout of three different history websites. One is a timeline, one is from the Filipino perspective and the other is from the Western perspective.

SI: What role did the Catholic Church play in your life and your family?

DD: Oh, very great. As a matter-of-fact, not only with our family, it's with almost everybody's, every Filipino, because we are about ninety-five percent Catholics. So, you know, the Catholic Church plays a big role in our lives, both spiritually and mentally, because quite a few of us studied in Catholic schools, although Catholic schools are not really, ... not everybody who wants to go to college can go to Catholic schools, because they're expensive. Catholic religion has a great influence on the Filipino life, as an individual or as a family.

SI: During the war, were there any efforts by the Japanese to control or suppress the Church?

DD: No. Like I told you, we used to go to church every Sunday. No, I don't remember any time or heard of any suppression of, you know, like worship and all that, no.

SI: Do you remember being exposed to any propaganda?

DD: No.

SI: You went to high school a year or so after the war ended.

DD: No. I went to high school in '49.

SI: From what you know about high schools in the United States, how was your high school different and how was it similar?

DD: Okay, no, well, the high school where I went, basically, [was] like a US high school, because these are Jesuit faculty and these Jesuits are mostly from New York, you know, Irish and Italians. So, it was patterned after the US school system. We had English, Latin, everything. As a matter-of-fact, even Filipino, our national language, is only a subject. It was not the medium of instruction and this is true for any school, even the public schools, from the grades up. ... Once, when I was in college, they tried to start teaching the medium of instruction to Tagalog or Filipino, our language. It didn't work, because there's no Filipino translation for, like, things in

Physics or in sciences, you know. If there were at all, it's so long winded that it wasn't worth it. So, they put it back to English. They even, for a while, said that we should have more Spanish. So, they required us to have twenty-four units of Spanish to be able to graduate with a bachelor's degree. Again, it didn't work. Like, I have twenty-four units of Spanish; I can understand a little, but I cannot speak it. "*Muchos gracias*," that's all I know. So, now, they said forget it. In some schools, you can get twelve units. It's optional or elective, but Latin, in our school, was a must. You need Latin. We had Latin all four years of high school and two years of college.

SH: Were you allowed to speak your native language?

DD: No, not in school. In school, if they catch you speaking your native language, you get what they called, "Post," which is a punishment. If it's not a long winded conversation, they tell you, "Okay, write a hundred times, 'I will always speak English in school,'" or, if you are a repeat violator, they have what they call, "Post," which is, on Saturdays, they give you one hour, two hours, three hours post. You go there and, together with the rest of the guys who have post, you either do exercise or you clean the school yard, but, now, they've changed. Now, you can do anything and, at that time, it was all boys. Now, it's coed, which destroyed it.

SH: Did the girls have their own schools?

DD: Yeah.

SH: Was this a boarding school? Did you live there?

DD: No. You can board if you want to, but [it was] not necessary that you live there, no.

SH: Did you board there?

DD: No. I lived with my uncle, ... because we didn't have a house in Manila, but, after, I think, ... two years there, living with my uncle, my dad decided that we should have a house, so, he bought a house in Manila and that's where I stayed.

SH: Did your entire family move to Manila?

DD: No, just those studying in Manila, because after me came my sister, and then, my other brothers who, you know, were in college. That's all in Manila. So, we lived there, but mom and dad stayed in the farm and our grandmother stayed with us, and we had household help to do everything.

SI: You moved to Manila after the war ended, in about 1949.

DD: Yeah, I started studying in Manila in '49.

SI: At that point, what stage of recovery was Manila in?

DD: At that point, they were just barely scratching the bottom. As a matter-of-fact, our school, because it was bombed out, was Quonset huts. We had Quonset huts, rows of Quonset huts, for our classrooms and we were glad it was Quonset hut, because, when it rains, no class, because it was dripping, it was leaking, and, in 1952, we moved to our new campus, which is in Loyola Heights, which is, you know, a new campus and everything, nice buildings. We left the Quonset huts.

SH: How soon was the family home that was bombed redone?

DD: No, we didn't redo it anymore. My dad said, "Forget it." So, we lived in another house.

NM: When you were in Manila, was there a visible American presence? Was there a sense that the Americans were trying to rebuild the city?

DD: No, not really, no. There was quite a lot of construction going on, you know, rebuilding, but no military presence that I saw.

SI: How did you and your family view MacArthur? Was he as prominent in your opinion as the history books say he was to the Filipinos?

DD: I don't think so. I mean, you know, our family maybe talked about him once in a while, but not in adulation or anything, because, actually, MacArthur hasn't impacted our lives *per se*. We didn't really care too much about praising MacArthur or anything like that, because we were far from where he was.

SI: That is the image we get from the history books, that he was adored, viewed as a savior.

DD: I don't think so.

SI: Before moving to Manila, did you ever have a chance to travel much outside of the province?

DD: No. It was just the province, Batangas, which is a big province, and Manila. Once in a while, summers, we'd go to Baguio, up north, which is the summer capital of the Philippines. So, almost everybody goes up to Baguio during summer, because it's cold over there. It's up in the mountains, five thousand feet above sea level.

SH: Really?

DD: Yes, yes. That's why they call it the summer capital of the Philippines. Even the government offices move up there for summer. They're closed in Manila, but they have offices in Baguio, their own buildings and everything, even the courts. The Supreme Court is up there. There's a mansion, a presidential mansion, over there and they move there during summer.

SH: What did you do there?

DD: Nothing, just play around, play in the parks, you know, go horseback riding and that's about it, really. There's nothing much to do in Baguio. Well, at that time, there was, like, Burnham Park, where you can go skating, ... and meeting teenage girls, you know, that sort of thing. Aside from that, there's really nothing there, and, once in a while, we'd be able to get a pass to go into Camp John Hay, which was an American Air Force R&R place, and it's beautiful. They have a golf course, and you can play in the golf course, if you have a pass, and you can eat in the restaurants and that's where we started to know about hamburgers, ice cream, from the States, you know.

SH: How did you get these passes?

DD: You have to, well, [have a] connection. You can go and ask for it in an office there, but we had a cousin who worked at the office there, so, no problem, but not everybody can go in there, and you pay script money. You change your money into script.

SH: What do you mean by script?

DD: Like, here, you know, when you pay [for] your food here, they give you tickets, some sort of tickets, this is what you call script money, but they are in denominations of one, five, ten, twenty and you buy a whole booklet, and that's what you spend inside.

SH: Do you remember doing any shopping with Japanese money?

DD: No. My grandmother had a lot of Japanese money and she was saying, "Maybe they will exchange this." As soon as the Americans came, this Japanese money was gone, toilet paper.

SI: Why did you want to study economics and English in college?

DD: It was by accident. Actually, I was preparing to go into medicine. As a matter-of-fact, I finished my preparatory medicine and I went into the college of medicine, first year proper student, but, I don't know, I passed my first year proper, barely, then, going into second year, during [the] summer, I gave it a serious thought, you know, and I said, "I can't do the things I did when I was in first year, now that I will be second year. I really have to buckle down and study," and I wasn't ready. So, I quit, and then, you know, with my preparatory medicine subjects, I just needed a few more units. I had enough units to have a major in English. I just needed, I think, thirty-six units to get a major in economics, so, I did that. So, I have two majors, economics and English, but I wanted to be a doctor, you know, turned out to be a bus conductor.

SI: How much of the desire to become a doctor came from within yourself? There must have been pressure on you, as the oldest son, to become a doctor, a lawyer, etc.

DD: Well, yes, no, no; from my dad, no pressure from my dad, you know, just, "You do what you want to do." It's more like keeping up with the Joneses, because some of my friends, and even my girlfriend at that time, was going to take medicine. So, I said, "I'll also take medicine," you know, but it wasn't really, "Oh, I want to be a doctor," no, not really that. That's why it was easy for me to make the choice.

SI: Okay. Could you tell us about your first job after college, where you worked while you were in Manila?

DD: Okay. After college I worked, ... I didn't work after college; I set up my own business, which was a printing business, and I printed, like, brochures, invitations, but it's small time, you know. Then, I wasn't getting enough from that and, in the meantime, I got married. I needed more money, so, I called a friend who introduced me to an airline, Air Manila, and I was employed there, initially, as a public relations assistant, and then, I went up through public relations manager, advertising assistant, advertising manager, sales manager, marketing manager, until I became vice president marketing of Air Manila, which was the third domestic airline, Philippine Air Lines, Filipinas Airways and Air Manila. I handled the marketing. I was in charge of all their stations all over the Philippines, which were like eighteen stations, and then, from there, Marcos, during Martial Law, closed the two airlines, Air Manila and Filipinas Airways, because, he said, they were losing money and they can't pay the government what they owed, so, there should only be one airline, Philippine Air Lines, and then, when they closed these two airlines, I was called by the vice president of Philippine Airline to join them. So, I joined them as Director of International Promotions. I was there for a couple of years with Philippine Airlines, and then, the government decided to set up a cargo airline and a rural air service, the small feeder aircraft, and they invited me to join them as their vice president marketing, to set it up. So, I moved and, now, [was] a government employee, and I set up the marketing of the cargo airline which used the C-130s, and then, ... for our rural air service, I developed the hub-and-spoke concept of flying and we were using a Britten Norman Islander, ten-seater. The idea was to go to the remotest areas, with a small clearing where our aircraft can land, get the passengers there, the people there, and bring them to the main hub to be picked up by the main airline, Philippine Airlines. So, I did that for three years, and then, an offer came for me to work in the UK doing marketing, too. So, I grabbed that for, you know, travel and, well, while I was working in Manila, with Philippine Aerotransport, I was traveling all over the place, all over Asia. I would be in Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Indonesia, almost every other week. Then, I was offered this job in London with Clarkair International. Now, this time, they were aircraft brokers, meaning they would lease an aircraft. I met them when I was at the government agency. They would lease your aircraft, because they have customers who want to move things and that was it. So, my job, as marketing, I would go all over [the] European cities, sell or go to cargo forwarders or big companies that have big movements of goods and sell it to them, and, once they have it, then, I'll get an aircraft or my office will get an aircraft to fit this job. So, I did that for a couple of years, and then, I was offered by this Nigerian airline to set up their marketing department, too. This was owned by a Nigerian that did charters, passenger charters, from Nigeria into Europe, and then, he had these domestic flights within Nigeria, also, but he didn't have a marketing department. All what he had been like a grocery store set up, so, he asked me to come in, and so, I did. I had a two-year contract with all the incentives you can think of, but life in Nigeria was miserable. Initially, I was supposed to bring my family there, but I went ahead and I told them that, you know, I'll check it out. So, when I got there, they gave me a car, they gave me a house which had everything, air-conditioning, help, driver, and then, I looked for a school for my son, Dennis. There was no school that was good, because they were taken over by the government. The schools, even the Catholic schools, was lousy and the place where I was living was Lagos, was filthy and peace and order was not that good, and even

the graft and corruption was all over the place, including the lowest policeman. ... I have been to ... a lot of countries; this is the only place where you can find checkpoints, like, every other block and [the] people manning the checkpoints would be, customs, immigration, the local police, the army and, all of a sudden, you'll see a blockade, a roadblock, and the soldier with these automatic guns, the Uzis and everything, ... with their eyes bloodshot because they've been smoking marijuana or drugs, they'll stop you, and you have to stop, because you can't cross the blockade, and they'll outright ask you for money. Yeah, he'll say, "Hungry, ten Naira." You have to give and this is the only country that I have been to, when they gave us a briefing, like orientation, the main thing they told us [was], "If you leave your house, if you're riding in a car, have at least one hundred naira in your pocket." I said, "Why?" "Well, because they will hold you up and if you tell them you don't have money, they'll kill you, because they know that you're an expat and expats, they know, get paid a lot, so, you have to pay," and this is the only place where you see wall-to-wall traffic the whole day. My office was in town, was, like, five miles, not even five miles, to the airport. It will take me half a day to get there because of traffic, gridlock, and, also, ... they'll hold you up in your car in this gridlock, and nobody will even help you. If there's a policeman, he'll walk away. So, after two years, they wanted me to stay longer. I said, "No, thank you. Thank you very much." So, I came here after that, and when I got here, they were laying off people from the airlines, and I didn't know any better, so, when I tried to send my resume to the airlines, I had there, "Vice president," and all that. They don't need vice presidents; they needed cargo handlers, you know. So, I worked with a travel agency in Manhattan, and then, I got tired of going to Manhattan. There was a travel agency in Jersey City; I worked there until I retired. That's the story of my life.

SH: When you were in the UK, did your travels take you behind the Iron Curtain?

DD: No, at that time, no, not yet, because the Iron Curtain wasn't parted yet, but, you know, I'm not that kind of a traveler. Like, my brother, he used to travel a lot, too, with his work, but he would go to all these tourists spots and have his picture taken and everything. I'm not that kind. I'd been in Paris several times; I haven't seen the Leaning Tower of Pisa or, you know, any attraction. I lived in London for close to two years. I never saw the changing of the guards. I just go from my office to a bar to my hotel and that's it. Oh, on weekends, we'd go drive around the countryside, out of London, which was nice, you know, and we'd eat in country inns and the pubs. That was nice, but that's all, not within London.

SH: Has your family stayed involved in politics in the Philippines?

DD: Involved in a sense, like, not active seeking office, but everybody still goes to our family, especially my mom, because my mom, for a time, was the president of the barangay association of the whole Batangas province. She was president, so, she knew most everybody, and, now, all the candidates still go see her to ask her to please help them. Those she likes, she'd, to our town, ... say, "Okay, this guy is [okay]," because they'd ask her, "Who is our candidate?" So, she'll say, "Oh, this, this, and then, the rest is up to you."

SH: What did the family think of Marcos?

DD: Good, because my dad, when Marcos was still a senator and he started to run for President, since my dad was a Ilocano, from the same place as Marcos, from the north, and, in Batangas, there are not many Ilocanos, you know, so, Marcos went to our house to campaign in Batangas. He would stay in our house when he was senator and my father would give him, I know this, at that time, when he first came to our house to campaign as a senator, my father gave him twenty-five thousand pesos for his campaign. ... When he was president already, he called my dad, but my dad didn't want to do anything with the government, so, "No, thank you," but Marcos' mother used to go to our house, too, and she would play "mahjong" with my mom, but he was good in his first couple of terms as president. He was exactly what we needed, a strong president. As a matter-of-fact, at that time, before martial law and all, Philippines was second only to Japan, but, now, we're next to Sri Lanka or something, but, then, after that, when he declared martial law and, I don't know, he became greedy or he was tempted or he was influenced by his wife, I don't know, but, then, it was downhill all the way for the Philippines. Then, we didn't like him anymore.

SH: What about Aquino?

DD: The guy who died? Oh, he's bright. He was a bright guy. He started out as a cub reporter. As a matter-of-fact, he interviewed the first supreme of the Huks, the dissidents, and he was a senator and was the leader of the opposition. He was good as a senator. We believe he could have been good as president, but he was killed before any of this happened. So, there's a lot of respect for Aquino, but his wife, who became president, did nothing, nothing to help improve the lot of the Filipinos. First of all, because of her inexperience and, secondly, she allowed graft and corruption, specifically by her brother, and, you know, because of her, you know, this is a Filipino trait, Filipinos are always thankful or don't forget the good that you did for me. "I will always repay you," and Aquino, the lady, had this mentality that she wanted to repay everybody that helped her husband, even to the extent that she did not stop these people from, you know, doing some funny things. So, actually, during her presidency, nothing was done for the Philippines. Then, after that, Ramos, the ex-general, retired general, he did some good, but, you know, ... still, this corruption thing has not been stamped out. Next, you know what happened to Estrada. He's classmates from the Ateneo High School. He was two years below me, I'm '53, he was '55, but, he didn't graduate; he was kicked out. His buddies, he had what they called a "midnight cabinet," you know, the department secretaries, these guys meet after twelve midnight with him, the kitchen cabinet, they drink in the kitchen of Malacanang Palace until morning and this [was] where they cook up deals, and then, the gambling, the numbers game, where he allegedly was getting millions of pesos as bribe money every month. Now, this Macapagal, I don't know. Now, there will be an election in May and one of the leading candidates is a movie actor again and he's number one in the polls, he's an action hero, but he's a dropout. He's only second year high school, but the masses, the class D, love him.

SH: How stratified is society in the Philippines?

DD: A-B-C-D-E. B-C is upper middle and middle class.

SH: What determines that, income?

DD: Income, and it doesn't matter where that income came from.

SH: How does the military fit into this scheme?

DD: What do you mean?

SH: Are they a separate class? How does the military work? Are they drafted?

DD: No. Philippine Army is basically volunteer. There's no draft in the Philippines. The officer corps, most of them come from the Philippine Military Academy, some of them even studied here, at West Point or Annapolis, and then, we have the ROTC, the Advanced ROTC. ROTC used to be compulsory, first and second year, and then, third and fourth year is voluntary or optional for advanced. Now, they had some problems with the ROTC. Now, it's optional. If you want it, you take it; if not, you go take physical education, but most of the other officers came from the Advanced ROTC.

SH: Did anyone in your family ever serve in the armed forces?

DD: No.

SH: You mentioned that your only relative here in the United States was your sister.

DD: Yeah. Oh, she came over a long time ago. She came over, maybe, forty years ago. She got married to a Filipino-American citizen. That's why she was here. She studied, she finished BS Food Technology at the University of the Philippines, and then, when she came over here, she studied at the Rhode Island University to take up her masters.

SI: It sounds like most from your generation and the following generation went to college and pursued advanced degrees. Was that a natural inclination or was it because your parents had been college graduates? Was it something they impressed upon you?

DD: Oh, yeah, they did, yeah, especially, like, my father; he really was into this and he will not have it that you won't go to college, or, after your college, then, he'll drop you hints, like, "You're too young, don't work yet, go and take your post graduate," or something like that, and he's willing to spend for it, so, why not?

SI: As a wrap-up question, we usually ask, "How did the war affect who you are today?" How do you think that period lives with you, if at all?

DD: To be honest with you, no, it doesn't have any effect on me, because how can it affect a ten, twelve-year-old? no. Oh, I know about it, but I didn't even experience any hardships during the war. So, I don't see any effect on me.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to put on the tape?

DD: No, except that my son studied here, too.

SH: Just for the record, Dennis Duarte, Domingo's son, was an intern with the Rutgers Oral History Archives project, completed a Henry Rutgers Honors Thesis, and then, went on to graduate study at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I should probably also say that Mr. Duarte is the official transcriber for this project, with our gratitude.

DD: Thank you for having me.

SH: Thank you for sitting down with us today.

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Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 3/16/04