

The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Oral History Project

Philip Santos

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by David Rasul

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California State University, Sacramento Library

[00:00:17]

Rasul Good afternoon. My name is David Rasul. I'm a committee member of Oral History of the Chicano Movimiento of Sacramento. And today we're conducting an interview with Philip Santos. This interview will be video/audio recorded and will form part of the Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Project Oral History, which is archived at Donald and Beverly Gerth's Special Collection and University Archives at CSUS. Do you agree to this recording?

[00:00:47]

Philip Santos Oh, yes.

[00:00:47]

Rasul Today's date is, what's -- August 3rd --

[00:00:51]

Santos Third.

[00:00:51]

Rasul -- 2023. Time of the interview is approximately 1:30. We are in the city of Sacramento at Las Language Academy in Sacramento. Please state your full name and spell it.

[00:01:07]

Santos My name is Philip V. Santos, P-H-I-L-I-P, S-A-N-T-O-S.

[00:01:14]

Rasul Please provide your birth date, month date and year.

[00:01:17]

Santos It's really old. 7/19/49.

[00:01:20]

Rasul Not as old as me. Where you born?

[00:01:25]

Santos I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii.

[00:01:30]

Rasul Where were you raised?

[00:01:32]

Santos Raised partly in Honolulu for the first five years of my life. And then we moved to San Francisco, and then eventually ended up in Sacramento and I was the rest of my time was spent in Sacramento being raised with by my mom and my father. And we had a fairly normal life. My dad worked for the federal government, Mather Air Force Base. And my mother was -- she didn't go to work until after he graduated from high school. And she was a state worker.

[00:02:07]

Rasul And your dad, what did he do at the -

[00:02:09]

Santos He was an aircraft mechanic. Yeah, and he ended up running a shop, and they were fabricating parts and things with -- for airplanes. He had an interesting life.

[00:02:28]

Rasul [Inaudible] sorry.

[00:02:31]

Unknown Speaker Say what kind of airplanes he worked on.

[00:02:33]

Santos Yeah.

[00:02:38]

Unknown Speaker Can you ask that question one more time? [Crew chatter]

[00:02:57]

Rasul What did your parents do for a living?

[00:02:59]

Santos My father worked for the federal government. He worked at Mather Air Force Base. He was an aircraft mechanic. And he was also, he -- both of my parents, my mom and my dad, were survivors of Pearl Harbor. And after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, my father joined the military, I think in 1944. And he worked on P-40's, fighter planes, and eventually the P-51's. And then when he -- when we moved to Sacramento, he worked on the T-29, which was the air -- the radar training airplanes. And my mom was a state worker. She worked for DMV. And I don't know what she did.

[00:03:45]

Rasul How many brothers and sisters do you have?

[00:03:50]

Santos I have one surviving sister. One of my younger sister passed away at 33 years old, and she had a form of muscular dystrophy, and she passed away from that. And my sister is still living, is retired. She worked for the prison system.

[00:04:12]

Rasul What was the primary language growing up?

[00:04:17]

Santos It was English, and Chinese, and some Hawaiian, and a little Spanish.

[00:04:23]

Rasul Please describe your experience as a child in your family and neighborhood.

[00:04:30]

Santos Okay, well in Hawaii, it was a fairly unique situation. It was made up of Japanese, Chinese, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, and a few Mexicano's thrown in. But mostly the ethnic minorities were the majority. The Caucasians, we had a special name for them. And they were called "The Haole's". And it's kind of accepted throughout the state of Hawaii. And it was, it was fun growing up in Hawaii because the minorities were the majority. And when we moved to Sacramento, we moved into Oak Park, which was predominantly Black African Americans and Mexicano's. And across the street neighbors, which turned out to be my best friends, were Japanese. So I didn't really experience any discrimination until the first grade. And they put me into a speech therapy class, because I had a Hawaiian accent. I spoke with the call "pigeon". And it was hard for them to understand what I was talking about. And what eventually happened is that all the other members of my class were Mexicano's. And they didn't speak English at all. And so I started to learn Spanish, and also, I acquired a California accent.

[00:06:20]

Rasul Did your parents experience any discrimination during then?

[00:06:27]

Santos You know, I don't really know, because they didn't really talk about it. But my -- we just, we just lived our lives. It was, I think they may have, you know, but they didn't share it with me. And so consequently, you know, I didn't really look at people in one way or another. I didn't have any kind of prejudices, or, you know, attitude towards people. I just accepted, like, you know, if he was a good guy, or bad guy, or, you know. And basically, that's what we did. And I think the one time, my father told me something about discrimination, and he didn't really mean to, but it was just the way it turned out. He had a Chinese friend, that was in the Merchant Marine, and he retired as a lieutenant. And I said, "Well, why didn't he go to Captain?" "Because he was

Chinese." And I said, "Well, why was why was that a reason?" And he says, "That's what they do. They -- once you -- once a Chinese receives -- gets to the rank of lieutenant in the Merchant Marine, he's done. So he retired." And I didn't -- it didn't register, but it's stuck with me. [Inaudible] Yeah.

[00:07:54]

Rasul What are your earliest memories of events that attracted you to El [phonetic] Movimiento?

[00:08:00]

Santos Well, the first memories as I was going to Sac City, and I ran into this, this young man. His name was Lorenzo Patino. And he was looking for a roommate. And I was looking to move out of the house. I was 18 years old, you know. I was getting ready to see the world, so I said, okay, I'll live with you. Or I'll be your roommate. And it was like \$50 a month. I was like, perfect. I could afford that. And it turned out, it turned out to be above his mom, mom and dad's house. So they had like a casita on the top of the house. And, but we, I learned, I learned a lot of Spanish because the mother didn't speak any English. And the father barely spoke English. So to communicate, we had to, you know, we had to talk to each other. And the brothers and sisters would help me with the Spanish, and I got really good at it, you know. And I don't have the gift for language, but I can communicate when I, when I have to. And it was, it was one of the best experiences that I've ever had. And, but Lorenzo, being the man that he was, or, at the time, a young man, he had these ideas of becoming a lawyer. And we're going to City College. He was 19, and I was 18. And he would take me to the Capitol, the Capitol building, and we will go between -- he'd go before the senators, and assemblyman, lieutenant governor's. And he would say, "My name is Lorenzo Patino. I'm representing the Chicano Legal Defense fund with MALDEF. And I'm trying to raise some money for the, for the Chicago Legal Defense Fund." And he got, he got money. He was getting -- he was such a gifted [inaudible], you know, he could, you know, he could convince anyone of anything. But it was, it was so heartfelt, and it meant so much to him that, you know that the Chicanos and Mexicano's needed to get equal treatment for justice, you know, in the justice system. And it was a beautiful thing. And it was, we went to 25, 30 senators and assemblyman. And he raised money. All the checks that he had received, he turned over to MALDEF. And I could see that there was inequities. I could see there was injustice. And it introduced both of us to the United Farmworkers Movement. And we ended up going to a rally in Delano at Filipino Hall. And we're just, it was just a group of Campesino's [phonetic], and me, and Lorenzo. And all of a sudden, these people have popped up out of the audience and started talking. And it was the Teatro Campesino, the beginnings of the Teatro Campesino.

[00:11:17]

Rasul Wow.

[00:11:17]

Santos And it was -- this was doing the, some of the performance. And the guy that brought us down there was Jose Montoya. And I met Jose, and I go, "Who is this guy?" You know, he's an older guy. And, but he, he had such charisma, and you just wanted to follow him anywhere. You

know, it was, just he knew the plight of the farmworkers. He knew what was going on. So we ended up in a picket line ending -- boycotting grapes at the time, table grapes. And we brought it back to Sacramento, and I met -- ran it -- through the Lorenzo going to legislature. I met Joe Serna. Joe Serna, at the time, was an intern for Mervyn Dymally, who became a Lieutenant Governor of California years later. And it was, he started this group called COPA, the Chicano Organization for Political Awareness. And Joe was a student at the time. He was like working on his master's degree. And he was interning for Reverend Dymally. And so it was just all this stuff going on. At the same time, the African American movement was going on. There was, people were rioting, rebelling against the system. And we got sucked into the vacuum. It was like, there was like, all this need, people were being disenfranchised of their rights, and their, you know. And injustice, injustice is going on. It -- you just couldn't help, if -- you had to be ignorant not to notice it. You know, and eventually, I ended up with the next semester, I ended up at Sacramento City College.

[00:13:19]

Rasul All right.

[00:13:20]

Santos And -

[00:13:20]

Rasul You already use the term in your discussion here, "Chicano" and "Mexicano". How did the people around you, your friends and family accept the term "Chicano" versus Mexican, or Mexican American?

[00:13:35]

Santos I thought it was the greatest idea I've ever heard. You know, it was like, we needed a change. We needed to, to identify ourselves, become aware of ourselves. And the Chicano, the Chicano label was the perfect thing. Until I ran into a Mexicano. Oh, man, it was like I cussed him out, you know. And he just read me out, and told me what, what it meant to him. And I kept running into it, especially with the farmworkers. You know, it was like, they did not accept it. And being the fair person that I am, I managed to, to get the proper feedback of what was going on here. And it was like, it was a misconception, a lot, from a lot of people. They equated Chicano's with Pachuco's, which had a bad connotation from the 40s. And a lot of these, a lot of the farmworkers that were there, were from that, that era. And it was, it was a hard time. And I think a lot of discrimination and injustice happened because of that, because of the Pachuco's. And they blamed the Pachuco's, and not the sailors. You know, not the reason why it happened, you know. But, you know, as the system was so huge and incumbent, it just, there's -- injustice is bound to happen. Because the absolute power, and you know, it's like, there's an old saying for it, you know, "Absolute power corrupts absolutely." And it was doing that, and we're seeing that. We're in front of it. And it was, it was a hurtful thing. But to get back to your question is, we kept on with it, you know. And the people that accepted it, were going to accept it. And the people that didn't, it was okay. You know, I didn't mind calling "Mexicano" or "Latino", or "Latino Dos Eches [phonetic]", you know. It didn't -- it was okay, you know. And, but it was like,

as long as our message got across, you know. It was like, we were fighting for education, you know, and it's like, education is the root of it all.

[00:16:02]

Rasul I know, you weren't in the Mexican American Education Project.

[00:16:06]

Santos No, I wasn't.

[00:16:08]

Rasul Had you heard about it, and what effect it had?

[00:16:11]

Santos Yeah, the fellows, you know, and the fellitos [phonetic], you know, they were like a big part of what was going on. They're -- that was their quest. It was to come back, come and get the -- finish their education, like in terms of the fellows are working on their master's degrees, and the fellitos were working on their undergraduate, and eventually their credential. And then we're going to take that back to the, to the people that they came from, you know, from the areas of where they came from. And we were lucky enough to snag Josea [phonetic], and convinced him to stay here. Of course, it didn't take much convincing because Vea [phonetic] was here already. And Estephan Vea was the first class I ever attended at Sac State. What a, what a natural thing. It was like, well, I walked into this classroom, and it was going on already. I showed up late as usual. And I had the self-importance of where I was too busy. I was so busy, you know, I was late to everywhere. And so showed up, and Estephan flashes this slide. And it's like all these different really nice, vibrant, strong colors, you know, it's like just jumping off the off the canvas. And he goes, "I call this roadkill." And this, he says, "You ever see like, like a dog, or a cat, or bird get run over, and then it gets keeps getting run over? And how all the colors emerge from it." And he says, "It's actually, it's a very sad thing, but it's a very beautiful thing. He's giving you his last bits of life, showing his colorful -- his intrinsic colors. And it was like -- and when Vea said roadkill, he just had this laugh. He has this laugh that was just contagious. And I go, I gotta come to the school.

[00:18:20]

Rasul Did your knowledge of cultural issues influence your involvement and participation in the movimiento?

[00:18:29]

Santos Initially, not so much. As I learned more and more, of course, it did. You know, and it's like with my involvement at Sacramento State College, I was, I was following people around. And you know, when I first got to school, there were 48 Spanish surnames full-time enrollment of 20,000 people. And out of the 48, how many were Mexicanos, or even admitted to being Mexican, you know, and it was very few. And so we band together. We, you know, it's like out of self-defense. You know, but it was it was a good thing, because at this time, the EOP program was starting. So

we're involved with recruitment. I got involved with the MAID [phonetic] group, which eventually became MEChA. In fact, we changed it that year. And --

[00:19:36]

Rasul What year was that? What year was that?

[00:19:40]

Santos Nineteen seventy.

[00:19:42]

Rasul Okay.

[00:19:43]

Santos And Lorenza was the chairman of the MEChA group at the time. And so we had this thing to go, there was like a -- what was going on at the time was the Vietnam War. And I know you have some experience with that. And it was -- we're noticing the injustice of the draft system, where predominantly African Americans and Chicanos, Mexicanos, was were being drafted, and sent to Southeast Asia to fight and die. And when they would come back, they couldn't get jobs. They couldn't work. They were like, in the same state that they were before. But a lot of them got the GI Bill, and were able to come to school. So we had this protest, August 29, 1970. What a, what a, what a beautiful thing. It was like the emergence of the Chicano movement, I think. You know, it was like, I don't know how many people. It was thousands of people. I would say 100,000 people. We organized our groups here in Sacramento. Took car loads. I was one of the drivers. I took people down there. The Washington Center, Washington Council, were taking -- giving rides. And it was a beautiful day. I mean, thousands of people, just all doing one thing, protesting the war and the injustice of what was going on in the war. And as soon as we got to the park, the riots started. It was amazing. It was amazing. I couldn't believe it. It was like 100,000 people pissed off at the cops. It was amazing, it was an amazing day, you know, things were happening. People were -- and it's like, people get abused so much. And they get pissed off to the point where they, were they get angry. And that's what, that's what was -- that's what erupted that day, that day. It all happened at one time. And it was like a, it was a hard day. It was hard to see, and hard to deal with. But what emerged out of it was just monumental. It changed my life.

[00:22:20]

Rasul That goes right into the next question was, how did you, how did the movimiento personally change you?

[00:22:28]

Santos Well, it just it, you know, it made me think. It made me understand what discrimination was about and what was going on with it, and how unfair it is, and how cruel people can get. And it was, I couldn't, you know, it was we would see so many young men and women coming into the schools, just not having any education background at all, not being able to read or write. And we supplied those things for them. One of my mentors, Isabel Hernandez, she was one of the

counselors at the EOP program. She knew how to plug people in for what they needed. And you could see people succeed. It was, it was totally amazing. It was like people were starting to, like, get degrees, starting to go through the system starting to learn. It was kind of embarrassing. I was like an upperclassman at the time. I was a junior in Sac State. And Isabel comes up to me says, "Hey, do you want to be a counselor?" I go, "I don't know anything about counseling." No, you just what we want you to do is to tell him what classes to go to. And what teachers to get, and what teachers are good with the, with the, with the Chicanos, and fair. And I said, "Okay. I can do that." And so I, you know, I did intake. And I did the background checks, and, and I helped them, I helped a lot of students get into the classes that they needed. And the embarrassing part is that they graduated before I did. But it was so much fun. I didn't want to graduate. You know what I mean? It was like, I thought this is what I was supposed to do, you know? But it felt good at the time, and it made me catch sight of what I needed to do. And it was like -- and things started to happen for me.

[00:24:53]

Rasul You already mentioned Isabel, but what role do you think the Chicanos play in the movimiento?

[00:24:59]

Santos It's a major part. You know, the best example I can give is our job is in the [inaudible]. You know, one was, was -- one was the hand of the other. You know, the left hand and the right hand. It was like they were partners. They were like, fellow -- they were compatriots. They know, we -- there was like, there was an attitude between traditional and feminism. You know, which was, you know, it was a little bit, a little debatable, you know, but it was like, some people saw women as a, as a subservient part, and others were rebellious. And I, you know, it was a matter of reaching a -- that happy medium. And, you know, people needed to recognize what was going on, and it -- that overrode a lot of those type of prejudices. You know, it was within our own group. You know, when the women's movement started, I go, "What are they so pissed off about?" But when you find out, you know, you know, women are making half of what men were making, you know, they're not -- you know, what, when they get pregnant, they wouldn't come back to school. But I mean, just basic things, you know. And it says, wow, that's not, that's not cool at all. It's not fair. You know, and a lot of times when you'd hear that view, it's like, no, you know, it's just, you know, he's been a wuss. But no. No, not at all.

[00:26:40]

Rasul Are there local women that you can remember that there were significant in the Chicano movement here in [inaudible].

[00:26:45]

Santos A lot. I mean, there's like Anita Ramos. Mariano Rivera. And Dolores. Well, your sister Rosemary Rasul. Jenny Bacca [phonetic]. Martha Bustamante. You know, those guys were amazing. It was like we would have, we would be on a picket, you know, picketing a Safeway. And we went to this one Safeway all the time, and I felt so bad for this. We'd be there every weekend, and yelling out stuff. And Martha and Rosemary would go into the store. And they would start an argument with each other. And then Martha would feign or fake fainting. And she'd fall down on

the grapes. And as she's falling down, she's squeezing the grapes so they can't sell them. And it was just, it was, I go, man, what a woman, you know? I mean, what courage that, you know? And she didn't fear anything. You know, she was just, she was her own woman. You know, I used to loved hanging out with her. You know, I've learned a lot from her. And she was just one of the madres [foreign language] that just stuck up for everybody. And Jenny, the -- you know, she was like, Jenny Bacca, to me, was the patron saint of the [foreign language]. I mean, she's just, she would help every anybody or -- anyone or anything. And, you know, anytime people needed a ride to government, she'd go and take them a ride. People were -- didn't have any food, she'd take them food. Give them, get them on food stamps. You know, anything that people needed, she would do. If you needed somebody to cook, she would cook. And Jenny's amazing part was that her mother would, in one of the [foreign language] that we have is the Dias de Les Madres [phonetic]. And Jenny's mother would be the most mother. She would have like 200 descendants from her. And then after her mother passed, Jenny was the one. You know, there was some fantastic number of children and relatives and it was like it needed to be honored, you know. And she put up with a lot --

[00:29:23]

Rasul Oh yeah.

[00:29:24]

Santos -- not only from her children, but from us.

[00:29:28]

Rasul What did you personally initiate or help initiate in the movimiento?

[00:29:33]

Santos Well, I don't know. It was like it -- at the time, I worked -- at the time I was a student, I worked at the Hornet Bookstore, which is the campus bookstore. And I was asked to start this [foreign language] section. So I went out, and you know, started researching, like, titles and books, and seeing what was available. I found one book, "North From Mexico" by Carey McWilliams. It wasn't even a Chicano or a Mexicano. And I said there's got to be more than that. You know, but it took, you know, a little bit of research. And eventually, titles and periodicals started to merge. And this guy comes up to me, his name was Juan Gutierrez, he says, "You know what? We should start a bookstore." And I said, "Yeah. I know how, I know how it works, I know how to how to get it started." So we started Larasa [phonetic] Bookstore in 1972. February 1972, I took out a business license. And we -- well, prior to that I was the chairman of MEChA, became the president of MEChA. So I always have been fundraisers and I know how to raise money. And just in the campus and community. And for no particular reason, just for, you know, we'd give money to the Brown Berets, the social movement, the social justice movements. And Juan says, "Well, why not set a little bit aside for the bookstore, and we could just get something started?" I said, "That sounds good." So we were raising money, raising money. And then Pete Hernandez actually, eventually took over the MEChA program or the MEChA group. And he was very, very supportive. He was like, he went 100% into fundraising. And that helped us open the doors. We had one bookshelf when we started, and the guy that went out on a limb to help us get going

was Octavio Romano from Berkeley, UC Berkeley. He was a -- I don't know what he taught. He was, but he was a professor at UC Berkeley. And probably literature, you know, but he had these el grito's, these little pamphlets. It had little things on [foreign language] politics. And so that's all we had was all this, this group of el barrios [phonetic], and in a few novels, you know, a few -- and other writings. You know, some weren't even books, were just pamphlets. But as we started ordering, and the bookstore started to grow, more -- there were more writers emerging. And it was like part of it was because of what was going on with the, with the education process. And there would be like symposiums, and, you know, writing sessions, where writers would get together and have conferences, and you know, talk about it and they'll share with each other. And it was, it was a great thing. So we'd go to all those things. You know, we would like have displays and make sure that the people know -- knew that these things were available. And we started at the bookstore, right in the, in the middle of the biggest barrio in Sacramento. And the guy that helped us was Joe Serna, we had he had his weekly COPA meetings at this 1228 F Street. And he says, "Well, you know, we're going to kind of break up the group a little bit, and why don't we just turn it over to you?" So \$65 a month, we got into the, like a little closet, you know, it's just a one room, and one bookshelf, and that eventually became the whole, the whole bookstore, or the whole room was -- we filled with books. And we're sponsoring cultural events; Cinco de Mayo, Día De Los Muertos, [foreign language] 16th September. Fiesta de [foreign language], Fiesta de Colores. [Foreign language] de Madres. So all those things were important to the neighborhood, and being supported. And people loved it. And now, to this day, Día De Los Muertos is been celebrated all over the place, all over through throughout the Southwest. And what really gave me, what was impactful for me was one day I was watching the news. I live in Monterey, California now. I was watching the news, and the newscaster, Dan Green, he comes up he says, "If you would like to contribute to our altar." They had a video altar set up for Día De Los Muertos in their studios, and people could come by and contribute their mementos from their ancestors, and get it on TV. And they had this, the altar that they had was being respectful to our -- to their ancestors. And it was amazing. That was an amazing day. I go, oh my goodness, look at that. Just out of the little things that we just -- that, you know, it wasn't just us. I mean, it was going on all over the place. But it was just so impactful, you know.

[00:35:54]

Rasul Yeah, with all the involvement you got, like, what significant organizations do you remember that contributed to the movimiento here in Sacramento?

[00:36:03]

Santos Oh, there's like so many. Like, well, like COPA. The MEChA groups. LOO-LAT, [phonetic] The United Cannery Workers, Rubén Reyes.

[00:36:18]

Rasul Yes.

[00:36:18]

Santos Man, what a, what a - he was such a dynamic guy. He could he could talk for hours about the about the injustice that was going on with the cannery workers. Just outstanding man. I had a

chance to interview him as part of one of my -- as a paper that I was doing for Joe Serna's class in neighborhood politics. And he just took it over. It was just, he ravages it. It was like, I'd asked one question, and he's go on for 20 minutes. But he has so much to share, you know. And there was, there's, you know, there's -- all -- there's new and emerging groups all over. And some made it. Some didn't, you know. But that wasn't the important part. The more -- the important part was, people started to recognize that and get together. And, you know, in a lot of ways, in some ways, we're our own worst enemies in at that time, you know, in that way. You know, it's like we'll do a lot of infighting and arguing. Well, the [foreign language], you know, they were -- I'm proud to say that I was one of the [inaudible] young pilots, you know. And it was the idea of it, the Royal Chicano Air Force was the Rebel Chicano Art Front. And they're a bunch of dynamic, creative people, and attract -- it was just an automatic attraction, but hard workers, you know, getting to their art out, getting it to the public. And being - getting -- influencing politics through art. It was beautiful.

[00:38:20]

Rasul Did the movement raise your consciousness regarding social, cultural, political issues? You've kind of answered that. Did you want to add more to that?

[00:38:28]

Santos Well, you know, it's a lot of the things that were happening have become part of our culture, you know, now. It's like, you know, for good or bad, people recognize Cinco de Mayo. And it was started just by, you know, by Rosemary and the community groups, and being supported by the students at Sac State, and the MEChA groups. But it was just to bring awareness and pride of the culture, and what was, what the reason was before, behind going for these, or representing these events. And we had thousands of things to do. I mean, to you know, to be involved with, but some of them are part of our culture now. You know, which, you know. And you know, we need to rein some things back in, some things that I've forgotten distorted. But that's part of growth, you know.

[00:39:34]

Rasul You know, with so much involvement, how did this involvement, movimiento, affect your relations with your family or friends?

[00:39:45]

Santos Oh, it missed it out. No, not really, some of the best friends I've ever had, and have, is because of the movimiento. and we have things in common. We have a love of the things that that we have in common. We have a love of the people that we're -- that we represent, and that we are a part of. And that's the glue that holds us together. It's like, you know, there's friends that I have from the early days that I'm still friends with, that I'm still talking to 50 years later.

[00:40:20]

Rasul Yeah.

[00:40:21]

Santos You know, it does. It's like, the only thing that betrays me is the mirror. I look in the mirror, I go, "Oh, how the hell did that happen?" You know, I'm old, you know. But it's like, it was such an enjoyable ride. And it was such an amazing trip. It's like, I'll never, I'll never forget it. And it's like, you know, my ultimate goal is to write the great American -- the great Chicano novel. You know, and it's going to be Johnny Simone, Chicano Private Eye. But it will be the antics and the adventures of Johnny Simone. And, but I need somebody to write it for me. I'm not a writer, but I got, I'm loaded with ideas. And I think before I die, I think that's going to happen.

[00:41:21]

Rasul I got something for you.

[00:41:22]

Santos Yeah. Yeah, I'm looking forward to that.

[00:41:26]

Rasul How did the movimiento and your involvement affect your personal career?

[00:41:32]

Santos Well, you know, I stayed with the bookstore for 20 years, not consistent, not steady. I have like little avenues that I go off on. I was part of the RCF band for a while. I had so much fun with the band, I had to quit. But you know, I was, I was with the RCAF, the, you know, doing silk screens and printing.

[00:42:02]

Rasul And Autonaves [phonetic].

[00:42:03]

Santos Yeah, and Autonaves. The car idea, both Gilbert and I, Gilbert Gamino, had a, had the same idea at the same time. And it was amazing. We were, we were at a party, and he goes, you know, you know, "Are you working on cars?" I go, "Yeah, I learned how to work on Volkswagens up in Washington." My VW bus blew up. And these guys, these Indian guys from the AIM House, the American Indian Movement, helped me fix my car. But I learned a lot on how to overhaul a motor, you know. And my dad's a mechanic, so it's in my blood. But little did I know, I didn't know anything. But it gave me the inspiration to get that going. And at the same time, at the same time that all was happening, Wounded Knee was happening. So these people were coming in and out of the AME House in Washington, that were at Wounded Knee. And so I got to meet Dennis Banks, Russel Means, who I didn't know who they were. And then when I see them on the news, I met that guy, you know. I go, wow, it's all connected. You know, so. So I made, I had a series of drawings. It was Aztec monkey wrenches. So it was tools with Aztec designs on it. And it didn't have any success, but I loved doing it. Yeah, Autonaves was a big part of my life. And eventually I didn't leave the movement, but I got into other things. And I saw I was seeing other injustice that was happening to other people. And I got into people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, physical, and mental, and intellectual. And I worked the last 15 years of my life with a, with a group from San Jose, that was based in Monterey, California. And it was

called the Hope, Hope Services. And I worked the last 15 years of my career with that. But at the same time, it made me recognize how many ethnic minorities have developmental issues, you know. And it's part of it's through nutrition, you know, and working in the fields. You know, a lot of, a lot of Campesinos were, were having issues with their children. And it woke me up. You know, I knew I wasn't -- I didn't get into it to -- for any kind of recognition. I just got into it because it was -- there's -- I recognized the need.

[00:45:14]

Rasul Yeah.

[00:45:15]

Santos And I think that's how the Chicano movement, it actually indirectly got me interested and I got involved with it.

[00:45:26]

Rasul How do you think the movimiento changed Sacramento?

[00:45:32]

Santos Well, tremendously. I mean, look, look where we're at, you know. And you know, as much as, as much of that has been done, it's not enough, you know, but it's this, we've done this much, you know. I'm not taking any kind of credit for it, because it's like, through all that, through all those times, there, you know, the educators were coming out of the group. The important artists are coming out of the group. And professionals, people that could actually work and get a retirement, you know, which was, you know, you didn't have to work until you're like 80, you know, and die at work. You know, you could work, and make a contribution, and then retire. And it's like, it's becoming, it's, in a way, it's becoming mainstream, but at the same time, the educational processes is continuing. And we have a group of emerging professionals, and some of it's not good. Some of it's really good, you know. But it's there. It's coming.

[00:46:50]

Rasul You know, over time, of course, you know, time moves on, we've lost several activists, a lot of activists. You know, like Mary Manuel [phonetic], [inaudible], you know, Patino Terra [phonetic]. Is there any individuals that you want to mention that had an impact on you?

[00:47:09]

Santos Well, you just hit them all. But you know, all of them died too young. You know, Cesar Chavez died at 66. Lorenzo died at 32. You know, it's like, but the time that they had, they made a lot of, a big, huge giant impact. They ought to be proud of that. It's like we need to be proud of it, we need to celebrate it. It's, it's sad. It's hard to let go. But, you know, there are, there, there's a lot that we lost, you know. Jose Stephan [phonetic], you know. Probably the saddest time of my life. You know, but I honor them and I respect them for what they did. And I'm glad I had that experience with - [Inaudible] Yeah.

[00:48:18]

Rasul Looking back in your experience in the movimiento, are there any issues that are unresolved?

[00:48:27]

Santos Oh, yeah. You bet. You bet, you know. For as far as we come, we haven't gotten anywhere. You know, the attitudes and prejudices that were at the beginning of the movement are still there. You know, the people that hate are better haters, you know. The affirmative action wasn't perfect. Well, we need to figure out what to do. We need to figure out another affirmative action. Affirmative action two. You know, it's like we need to create something that's going to work. And it doesn't, as we as, we found out in, in the first affirmative action, it wasn't perfect. It was, you know, is easy to, to reverse, it was easy to attack. And we need to figure out a way that it's not, you know. Roe v. Wade, you know, it affects us all. You know, but somewhere out there, there's a philosopher, or politician, that's Chicano, or Mexicano, or Black or Asian, that's going to figure it out. And when we do, we need to, we need to jump onto that bandwagon. We need to encourage that, you know. And the only way we're going to do it is to become more educated, more well-rounded. And, you know, we can't stop.

[00:50:06]

Rasul So that's kind of like, like, challenges we see ahead now.

[00:50:12]

Santos Yeah, you know, and then it's like it all centers with education. We gotta get smart. You know, and it's like, a lot of my educational experiences were, you know, you was, how to, you know how to. You know, how do you how do we get to this? How do we figure that out? You know, what -- how did they do that? You know. And I needed to do more thinking than the more we instead of reacting so much, and, but that's what I learned. You know, so, you know, I'm not gonna be as active as I used to be. It's like, I'm old, you know. I got, my time is dawning, you know, it's limited. But I'll be there. You know, I'll be there. I was, like, if they need a body to be there. I'll go, you know, if they need, you know, a voice to be heard, I'll speak up. You know, I've got nothing to lose. But it's like, but that's what I do. That's what I believe. And, you know, not as much as before, but I'll be there. So don't turn around.

[00:51:30]

Rasul Any final words?

[00:51:32]

Santos No, you know, thank you for inviting me. I appreciate this. And I think that the, the presentations that you've had, and the interviews that you've made, were tremendous. And I think it's going to be useful in the classrooms, and seminars, and whatever, you know, whatever it can be used as. But, you know, we need to keep educating our youngsters. We need to bring them along. One time, I was at the bookstore on Q or R Street, or whatever it was. It was at that mansion, the Eldeborn [phonetic] mansion. And there's this woman there teaching the youngsters on how to be a Chicano. And this is the word -- have, you know, "How many of you heard the word 'Chicano'?" And nobody answered. She says, "Well, the Chicanos were activists in the 60s and 70s, who provided us -- with who provided and inspired us to get education." And

says, "This bookstore was started, was started by Chicanos." My chest puffed out so bad, it was like, almost popped. But that's what it is, you know, we need to continue those type of things. That message needs to get out. And it's, you know, we need to be reminded, and we need, you know, it has to be continuous.

[00:53:06]

Rasul Well, thank you. I think your interview is a great asset and resource for our oral history project.

[00:53:13]

Santos Well, I tried to keep talking and not look stupid. Well, thank you, David. Appreciate it.