

INTERVIEW OF LUIS M. LIMES

by Deanne C. Siemer

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- Siemer: Luis M. Limes is an educator in the Northern Marianas, a classroom teacher, the coordinator of the audio-visual program and a district legislator under the Trust Territory, and the administrator for the adult education program and elected member of the Board of Education in the Marianas government. Mr. Limes was a delegate to the First Constitutional Convention. Would you just tell us your full name?
- Limes: My full name is Luis Marciano Limes.
- Siemer: How long have you lived on Saipan?
- Limes: I was born on Saipan on November 4, 1934 in Garapan during Japanese time, before the Second World War.
- Siemer: Where was your father's family from?
- Limes: Originally my great-grandfather was from the outer islands in Truk, the Lower Islands, they call them Pulusuk. I don't know why we call them Pulusuk, but the Carolinian calls it "Suk." That's where my great-grandfather on my father's side came from. Probably they were the group hired by a man named Johnson who went out to the outer islands to get some workers for the coconut plantation. Maybe, I don't know if there were the cotton fields they have on Guam at that time. Maybe my grandfather was in that group. Otherwise he might have been with the people who have sailed constantly to Guam and back to the Caroline Islands. Usually they come to Guam to get a few sharp things for their use and then they pick up a few habits like smoking and they planted one of the islands with tobacco seeds. Now they use that as a their stopover to get a few tobaccos. And then they picked up a few habits also in learning how to eat maybe European or Asiatic foods. Anyway, from my father's side, as I said, he was my great-grandfather who was with the Johnson group or he might have been with the migratory group that came to Saipan.
- Siemer: And how about on your mother's side?
- Limes: On my mother's side there is very little bit interesting because being matrilineal, see I pick up the details on how they are originally from Kosrae from a place called Lela.
- Siemer: L-e-l-a?
- Limes: Maybe that's how they spell it. They moved from Kosrae because something happened. Maybe it was between the clan or what, but the king was unsatisfied because the queen ran away with this group and sailed down to an outer island in Truk, called the Manomoneato area, or the Ooloon, on the map you will see Ooloon. So that's where my great-grandmother on my mother's side came from. But my mother and my father are born here. My grandmother was born in Guam. She was with this group that was working as a group in Tamuning, they called it. And then, the wonderful leader, Carolinian leader, who is buried in Guam, requested whether the Carolinians can migrate to Saipan because there were no persons living here. They were removed partially by, I think, the Spanish soldiers. Then the governor reluctantly approved because, according to what I learned, he was looking at the boat they were riding on with the babies and the children. He shook his head because it looked like only a small paddling canoe. But anyway, they moved up here

and then another group from another island came up and then, bingo. And then we saw that the Carolinian people occupied the seashore and they have their own houses where they usually gather to have a big meeting, where the young boys learn the trades and other things. It's in this place on Saipan. Because they have one clan on the southernmost and another clan all the way up to Tanapag. So there are five what we call "Ut."

Siemer: So there are five clans?

Limes: Not really clans, but "ut" where sometimes in these "ut" there are maybe ten or more clans involved in it. But they were under this chief.

Siemer: The group that your family belonged to, was it in Garapan?

Limes: Yes, the one in the middle they call Mughan.

Siemer: How do you spell it?

Limes: M-u-g-h-a-n, mughan. That's almost in the middle.

Siemer: Where did you go to school?

Limes: I went to American school. I was supposed to go to Japanese school as a first grader but somehow it didn't work out because I babysit my younger brother. I think I was lucky, too, because maybe not even one complete year of that school, those of my age who have gone to Japanese school. The beginning of Second World War came. There were a few planes as I recall coming in, dropping a few things or bombs and went back. As times getting like shorter they were constant but at one time it was maybe once or twice a week they would drop by on them. So later it becomes every week you see these planes zooming around on the island. We were removed from Garapan, our main village. We were told by the Japanese government, the military government, that you must work your farm and stay there because sooner or later the enemy will come, maybe referring to the Americans, that they are big, big people with long nose and blue (like cat) eyes and all this description, and you must prepare yourself. It was a bit scary to me. Although I didn't speak Japanese well, I can understand through my brothers and sisters. And they were also trained to stand by with sharp things, you know, in case they are using that. They are crazy. You think, "What are they going to do with a spear?" Anyway, I'd say about 99 percent, maybe 100 percent of the local people were moved from their homes to their farms.

Siemer: Where was your family's farm?

Limes: Here, where we are now is one area.

Siemer: Really?

Limes: Yes, on my mother's side. On my father's side, one not too far away from here.

Siemer: In back, by the hill, just before the hills?

Limes: Not too far from there, maybe about one-quarter mile. Then we have another one by Quartermaster Hill, on my father's side. That's where we stayed, in fact, during Japanese time, by Quartermaster Hill, where the Seventh Day Adventist Church is located. That's where we were during Japanese time. These lands here [were] leased out to the Okinawan people. They were workers as I saw them. They plant and use the land. Everything, they planted anything that was probably consumable. Also, we were allowed to come down. There was taro, our own breadfruit, we can come and take it, and sometimes they'd give us things that they had with no problem, as long as they knew whose children are these. They can identify them by sight, so it was okay.

- Siemer: So you didn't start school until after the war, during the American occupation?
- Limes: Yes, yes.
- Siemer: And then, how long were you in school?
- Limes: Let's see. I remember first I went to be an altar boy. I had the opportunity to go to Guam. When I finished the first nine grades, we were graduated in 1952. Then, I was sent to Guam with a group of other Saipanese boys. We attended the school there. I think the high school for the day time students they chose plus the seminarians were together, then they were followed by high school. I was one of them and it was a bit of confusion and a bit of excitement because Guam is already a colossus, very far more advanced than us. So being there I didn't think of myself as a seminarian but I think of myself as there to have a good time, crazy. Learning of English was something that I had to make myself, to force myself to learn. I can speak some Chamorro and all the time the people in Guam thought that I am a Chamorro. So it helps. When they speak English I tried my best to learn English and at the same time the teachers were Americans, fathers, stigmatan's group. They were very strict too, you know. That's where I first learned how to eat oatmeal.
- Siemer: That's terrible stuff!
- Limes: It was, you know. I thought, my god, what are they serving us. When I am home, you know, I eat taro, I eat breadfruit and lots of rice and lots of either fish or beef, and canned meat because U.S. soldiers have lots of canned goods they just give to us. I was raised almost completely with those things! Going to a place where it was so confined, and they serve oatmeal and I look at it milk and I just watch and sometimes a cube of butter they throw inside and I also throw a spoon of sugar and I forced myself to eat it and I felt so "blaagh!" after that. One of my Guamanian friends, Ricky Duenas was really almost you know, being light complexion, I can see her turn red because she wants to laugh or she wants to vomit, and I say: "Take it easy, don't vomit. You can't do that to me."
- Siemer: How long were you in school in Guam?
- Limes: Two years with the seminarians. Then I didn't tell my folks that there was also a school for teachers, teacher's training, on Truk. So I went in and filled out a blank form and it so happened that the principal was my teacher before, Mr. King, a former marine. Big guy, he was 6'6" or 6'4". You can hear him walking past the room like an earthquake bloomp, bloomp, bloomp and we know who it is and we say, "Here comes the earthquake!" He said, "Okay, tell your folks you will be leaving on the month of so-and-so by ship." So we were lucky for those who were under the military. We were sent by their ship and by seaplane. So we went to Truk and attended their school there.
- Siemer: Was it an American school?
- Limes: Yes, the American school. This school was run by the Navy. At that time, there was still the Navy [Administration].
- Siemer: Teacher training school?
- Limes: Yes, just for teachers.
- Siemer: How long were you there?
- Limes: Two years. After finishing there, I went to Guam. That was the first time when I entered college in a way. First, the college affiliated with, I think, the University of Ohio. And I was not expecting to go there. I was looking forward to being placed in high school either in 11th or 10th grade because the way I compare it, I said, "Gee, this is not two

years in Truk. At least you have the basics of being a classroom teacher, I think.” But the experience you gain there by mingling with other Micronesian people is so great that you learn a lot of culture as well as the language improving. And then, going to Guam was another experience that I picked up.

Siemer: So you came back from Truk to Guam?

Limes: Yes. Of course, I came to Saipan first. I went there through a sponsorship by a lady, Miss Homestead, who really helped us out in the form of being a librarian. This lady, she said, “Okay, you go up to my friend, Dr. Marion Hanson, and he will be a sponsor.” So I went there and I didn’t have any idea that these people were very much religious. What I mean is, they are Seventh Day [Adventists] and they don’t work on Saturdays.

Siemer: Seventh Day Adventists?

Limes: Yes. I’m not used to Saturday off. I’m used to Sunday off. But anyway, they were a really good family. And he already had maybe four or five Palauans there. But I went there and stayed with him. When we were talking he said, “Maybe you don’t have to go to high school. Let’s go and I’ll talk to the principal.” Mr. Geddes was the principal of George Washington, the only high school at that time on Guam. So we went there and we talked and he said maybe I could take night classes for those two courses that were missing. Then he said I could take some college courses. And I felt very insecure, as I said to Dr. Hanson. He said, “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of it.” So they talked again with the Dean. I was sitting there when they talked to Dr. Sessen. And Dr. Sessen said, “You’re okay. You can pass, you can take courses.” And I said, “Gee, what is this? I never had a real high school diploma never had a high school diploma but they are putting me here and they have confidence in me.” So I took math, English (not credit), and I forgot the other one. I did quite well in math. The teacher in my class, who was my professor in math, he told me if I could do this, I could do English. And I said, “How do you mean?” And he said, “Well, you solve problems, and that’s from English courses you took. So go ahead to the library and read all you can and go to your English teacher and ‘sock it to him.’” And I said, “Okay, sir.” But they were really good professors in my experience. You feel relaxed with them. That’s how I felt. Maybe that’s why I can learn a bit faster because they make you feel comfortable. Dr. Bateman, in my second year, I took his course in speech. I still remember the IPA International Phonetic Alphabet. And he had all these strange markings on the board and said, “This is how you pronounce ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’.” And I enjoyed it. I really enjoyed it. I love this. So I had [saved] that [material] all the way to the time one of my children went to see if he was ready to go into high school. But the typhoon came and all of our things, most of them were gone.

Siemer: How long did you stay on Guam at that time?

Limes: On Guam? All the way up to 1957. One of the principals by the name of Mr. Edwards came to Guam looking for a teacher. And he came over to the College. I think the population of the College at that time was only 300 or 200. There were many servicemen, Navy people, as well as the Air Force. I know we became very close to being in a very small area. So at any rate, Mr. Edwards came down and said, “You’re from Saipan?” And I said, “Yes, sir.” And he said, “I’m Mr. Edwards, the principal of Hopwood High School, Hopwood Junior High. And I need you there to teach.” And I said, “But I don’t have any experience.” So he said, “Dr. Purdue told me you were taking courses in science. And yes, we would train you to go out to school.” Then they gave us one week to observe and then we also take over for an hour or so and the teacher there gave us all these comments and so forth. Well, I was lucky to have, maybe because he was also a Chamorro, and we talked

some times that I mix my English with my Chamorro. He was Mr. Cruz, who was also a former marine, as well as a graduate of Marquette or somewhere. But he was teaching 5th and 6th grades. Very patient man. And I was released and came up to Hopwood and stayed there all the way up to my retirement in education.

Siemer: You came to Hopwood in 1957?

Limes: Yes.

Siemer: What were you teaching?

Limes: I was given music, P.E. class, science, and social studies and I was given the 7th grade and the 8th grade. The 7th, 8th, 9th were the only grades, so in 7th grade sometimes they have to divide it, sectionalize it, into four sections because there were so many. So usually other teachers shun away from teaching the 7-4, 7-3, or 7-2, so I volunteered to do it. I said this was my challenge and I was going to try hard to teach these [kids] so that they will appreciate learning, and yes, I thought I did a good job by passing on knowledge and information to these kids and it makes me feel good because I saw them [develop] and they graduated. They became members of the Legislature. They became members of the Congress of Micronesia. In fact, Judge Villagomez was at one time my student; his brother, also.

Siemer: Jesus?

Limes: Yes, and also Oscar, do you remember him?

Siemer: Rasa?

Limes: Yes. Yes, and then, who was the principal, I mean the superintendent of the school? Henry Sablan. And it's so fun because I became a board member and we sat together. It makes me feel good.

Siemer: You were elected to the Board of Education?

Limes: Yes, I was. I was the first Carolinian being elected to the Board of Education.

Siemer: How long did you stay at the school? When did you retire?

Limes: 1985. I was a classroom teacher up to 1965 and then there was some other program, the expanding of the program at school, like the audio-visual. There was some money from a federal [program] that could be utilized to buy whatever equipment was necessary and there was no one to take care of that, so I volunteered. So they sent me to Hawaii, to the Honolulu Community [College] where they have these courses in being a technician for awhile. This was basic because we had a tape recorder, movie [projector], slide [projector], an overhead projector and other smaller things. We even had a battery-operated film strip, which I sent up to Northern Islands. It was really neat because I had all these catalogs and I sat with teachers and said, "Let's see what we can order, we have so much of this money." So they indicated what they needed. I put them [the orders] together and [calculated] we have so many students here and we can justify this much.

Siemer: When were you in Hawaii?

Limes: The first was when I was a teacher, a math teacher, and I was taking a course, "Modern Math" they called it. It was almost nothing but abstract that you are talking about. It was so completely different math from what I learned, the kind of math I had. Under the NSF, the National Science Foundation, the program was extended to here, was open to us. I wrote to them and submitted my application of why I wanted to be funded by this program. So myself and another three teachers. The other two teachers were into math

and social studies was open. In 1965, I think, was the first [time]. I was almost 10 weeks in Hawaii during the summertime. That was my first experience in going farther away from the island. Guam was first and the PICS, the Pacific Island Central School. Then, to me, Guam was quite sophisticated in terms of development. They have more people. They have more cars and so forth. Going to Hawaii for me was a shock. Really. Just landing at the airport, I looked around and I said, "My God, what is this? This must be some of the things I read in [the geography] book." So I look up, I look at the tower, and the plane was going in. It was, in fact, TWA [which] was the first propeller plane that landed here. That was the plane we took from here to Guam. Then we went on Pan Am and we landed in Kwajalein. We stayed there overnight, I think, and we took off and landed on Johnston and then we see nothing but birds. And then from there all the way to Hawaii. I thought it was quite a distance. And it was and I was very tired. But landing in Hawaii, I looked out and I got so excited. I looked out and said, "Gee, this is neat." And meeting the people is another different experience I picked up. And the language I learned from how they use pidgen English or whatever they call it. It was quite fast for me to pick it up also being a local person. So they thought I was a local person at that time.

Siemer: The courses were at the college?

Limes: Yes. Let's see. The Honolulu Community [College] provided the technical, radio and all this equipment. But the no, no, that's the second time I went back to Hawaii.

Siemer: The first time was your math course?

Limes: Yes, the first time.

Siemer: And that was when?

Limes: It was in '65.

Siemer: And then the second time was when?

Limes: When the typhoon hit here, Typhoon Jean. I was in Hawaii when that typhoon really totally damaged the island here. It scared the daylights out of me because my two girls were still small. But lucky, a professor who was always with us said that if there was something bad, they're going to send us a telegram. Anyway, I was what a short memory I have! I think it was in 1975. One is 1965, then 1975. Yes, the 1965 was the NSF. And the other one is either 1975 before the Typhoon Jean or 1973. My wife should have been here because she knows. She was working with the typhoon relief as a nurse.

Siemer: Have you been to the States in between that time?

Limes: Yes. When I got back I was put into the office to work under this program, the audio-visual, because we had expanded here. There was a specialist from Phoenix who was contracted and came out, Jim Class. We would work together as an audio-visual specialist team in one of the high schools. We set up a library of films, library of other needed equipment that the teachers can come up to the main office and utilize or I will bring it down to them and instruct them.

Siemer: For the whole school system?

Limes: Yes, for the whole Marianas school system. Also Rota, we extended to Rota.

Siemer: So you were working at that point for the Board of Education?

Limes: No, not yet. The Board of Education was recently, three or four years ago. Then from there, I was also given the opportunity to work under the adult basic education, ABE.

- Siemer: Was that run out of the high schools as well?
- Limes: Not yet. While we were doing this, we were under the TT [Trust Territory government]. The movement of our district was going into secession, seceding from the rest of Micronesia, was happening.
- Siemer: In 1975?
- Limes: Yes. And then TT was also preparing to move out because of this move.
- Siemer: Right.
- Limes: And I was called I changed my working area. I was still in education but I went up to headquarters and worked closely with Mr. Rabauliman, under him, in the operation of
- Siemer: Felix Rabauliman?
- Limes: Yes, Felix of MDTA, that's like SEATA, but it was under I forgot the president.
- Siemer: Was Felix in charge of the adult education program?
- Limes: He was. So under those two, I worked as a MDTA coordinator for the western Carolines, here all the way down to Palau. Sometimes I went to the eastern [islands] to help out in all the formulation of jobs, initiated jobs, or worked with the people to hire those who drop out or who cannot go to high school and give them a job, you know.
- Siemer: Then what did you do after the Marianas seceded?
- Limes: Because the Marianas seceded, I was given to take care of the adult basic program.
- Siemer: Here in the Marianas.
- Limes: Yes, in the Marianas. So the first college which was formed was just next to Marianas High School. The building that they give us is almost like the size of this. We were told to move out from the main office because the college was under this law it was formed. So our adult basic was under the college program. I was in charge of that. Then the new site was built. We were moved up to the new site.
- Siemer: Up on the hill?
- Limes: Yes, that's where my office was located. So I operate that program. I saw the program going to these other two islands, disseminating information as well as extending them the English-speaking program and other necessary courses which could help them in their work. So we have this money. And then when the political thing started [constitutional government in the Marianas], I entered to run as the mayor.
- Siemer: Had you run for office under the TT government?
- Limes: Yes, I have. I was a member of the Legislature.
- Siemer: The Congress of Micronesia?
- Limes: No, never. Just the legislature of Saipan.
- Siemer: When was the first time you ran for office?
- Limes: Okay. The first one was in 1963, I think. Because in 1962 I got married and 1963, that was the beginning of the legislature, to go into four years. Only the Marianas legislature. This has nothing to do with this new thing which the Con-Con put up.
- Siemer: Was this the Saipan Municipal Council?

- Limes: The Saipan Municipal Council is different from this.
- Siemer: This was the District Legislature under the TT government?
- Limes: Yes, this was the District Legislature. I was a member of that District Legislature. In 1963 I was voted in. And then, after finishing that, they wanted me to be commissioner of District 4. And when the opportunity came for me to go to Hawaii, I requested [of] the people in District 4 if they could give me that chance to go to Hawaii and I finished the what do you call that under the program of Hawaii. They have that foundation.
- Siemer: The East-West Center?
- Limes: Yes, the East-West Center.
- Siemer: Did you go to the East-West Center?
- Limes: Yes, I did.
- Siemer: So did I.
- Limes: Really?
- Siemer: Yes, in 1962 and 1963 I was in Hawaii at the East-West Center.
- Limes: Well, in 1963 I was in the legislature but in 1960, right after my maybe you already finished in Hawaii that time when I got there. The East-West Center during Mr. Trafanowitz and Dr. Bender.
- Siemer: So you had an East-West Center grant?
- Limes: Yes. One year.
- Siemer: How long did you say?
- Limes: One year. And that's where I helped out also the formulation of the Carolinian dictionary, not dictionary but this man was starting to work on Carolinian dialects and language. So that's how I got my East-West grant. It was an experience meeting other students, especially at East-West Center. Ooh, you see all different kinds of people. I just sat in their lobby and [looked] straight at the door and I counted to see how many different people came in, and I saw Indians and I thought everybody was Indian. When I talked to my friend, when we went to another community, he says this one is Pakistani, this one is Bangladeshi. "What do you mean? Aren't they all Indians?" He said, "No, I'm not Indian."
- Siemer: My roommate was an Indian and she brought with her a tambura which is that real long-necked instrument that just sort of goes twang.
- Limes: Ah, yes.
- Siemer: And she would sit for hours at night making music.
- Limes: You know the painting, the one over there. I look on it. I look on the window and they were running around throwing all these things. And I called my friend and said, "Hey, you have to come on, come on." And I said, "What is that?" And he laughed. He said, "Let's go down and have a good time." And I said, "No, no, no, no. I don't want to, I'm already enough like this. You can go around and paint yourself if you want." He told me a little bit about that custom. "It looks like they're having a good time" and he said, "Yeah, yeah, that's part of it too. Laugh if you wish paint too much on you."
- Siemer: Where you a commissioner at the time?

- Limes: I was, but not really in the sense of staying here when that typhoon came. That's right, when that typhoon came. That time I was in Hawaii so my alternate did not really do a good job because he went out fishing. All this food which was brought by the Red Cross was supposed to be disseminated to the needy because almost, as I said, 99 percent of people, their house was broken so what they did was to stay under the tent. When I came from Hawaii, this man, Antonio Tenorio, met me at the airport and he says, "You don't have a ride?" I said, "No." He said, "You know, I really needed you. Come on. Let's get your luggage." So rather than going home, he took me to his office. And he said, "You are the commissioner, right?" And I said, "Yeah." He told me all this and I take it because it is like we are very related. He is Chamorro and he was raised in the Carolinian community and he knows this. So he knows my family very well. [He is] Joeten's brother, the youngest one. And I said, "You mean you didn't help out my District 4?" He said, "What, that crazy guy? I don't feel safe. Let's go home." I just put down my luggage and I went with him and started to bring those people who needed housing. The San Antonio commissioner took all the money the District 4 money. So there. The first thing I did when I landed was to start working. So about five houses, at that time I put their names down and made sure they had the right plot. You take out your old map and we'll see. So we did that. And the next day again we didn't like what was left. You know a house needed to have a roof in tin and luckily my father-in-law, my brother-in-law you see, my house was so lucky. Maybe the guy upstairs was really protecting me.
- Siemer: This is your house in Garapan?
- Limes: No, it was in Chalan Kanoa. That time we had not moved to Garapan yet. So it was in 1960s somewhere because the year I moved up to Garapan was in 1971. So it was in 1960s this happened.
- Siemer: So you lost the roof off of your house?
- Limes: Yes, that's right. The village had only two roofs in tin left. My sister's house next to me was blown away. The next neighbor on the right side of me was blown away. And all the Japanese made houses were concrete but roofed in tin, they were blown away. Only my house which was wooden roofed with tin remained. You're right. There were only two roofs in tin. And my father-in-law started to repair it and my brother-in-law and oh, I was so lucky. A lot of people had an accident, died, or whatever. Anyway, that's how I got here that day when I finished the Hawaii courses. Straight to people and started working and then Antonio says, "You son of a gun, you started working. Who told you to put that crazy guy in?" I said, "Listen, you know, I had a meeting with this group of Carolinians." He said: "Those Carolinians are crazy; they don't know this boy."
- Siemer: Who was it who was subbing for you while you were in Hawaii?
- Limes: My cousin, John Teregeyo; he's in Guam now. And (laughing) we had a meeting and oh, boy...
- Siemer: Was District 4 primarily Carolinian at the time?
- Limes: Yes, yes, District 4.
- Siemer: So District 4 was Chalan Kanoa?
- Limes: Chalan Kanoa. It started further up beside As Lito all the way down to Cemetery Road, in Chalan Kanoa's District 1, 2, 3, all the way out to the sea, out to this new building that is a Villagomez store. And that was the time I experienced this coming back.
- Siemer: Did you run for office after you came back?

- Limes: Yes, the mayorship.
- Siemer: Mayor of Saipan?
- Limes: Yes. I lost.
- Siemer: In what year did you run?
- Limes: 1984 or 1985, I think.
- Siemer: Who did you run against?
- Limes: My friend, Gil Ada, he passed away. You know this gymnasium [is named after him], but he died before he completed his year as the mayor.
- Siemer: Is he related to Frank Ada?
- Limes: Yes, his brother. You know, when he was single and I was single, we would sit together and drink, sing a lot of music and go have fun. So during the campaign we see each other as a friend and try to help each other but some people are so consistently party that you see what dirt he has and slap it out. I was not brought up that way by my grandmother, my father. So anyway, he won. He called me to work in his office. I said, "I am not of this group here. I would have come to you and we would have worked together but next time we're on. Call me if you need me on some kind of advice or such thing." I was already a member of the Board.
- Siemer: The Board of Education at this time.
- Limes: Yes. See I lost that election, but then I won next year. I won the Board of Education election at-large. I was the highest vote-getter. I said: "Gee, this was too much."
- Siemer: And that was in 1986?
- Limes: I think so.
- Siemer: Now back in 1975 when the Covenant was being debated, the United Carolinian Association was against the Covenant. Felix Rabauliman, for example, was opposed to that. What was your position at that time?
- Limes: Maybe they didn't understand what we opposed. We were just opposed to the fact that we thought we were not ready. Our people are not yet ready to take over this [task]. At that time Eddie [Pangelinan] was the only lawyer we had. And you talk about the M.D.s, most of them were on the English, British system. We didn't know if that was acceptable in the U.S. system of M.D. [licensing]. That makes us worried. Many of us were not even finishing college and high school, and we not really ready to go into the standard of living like the Americans live. Like what is this tax? We don't know. We were worried about the experience we had during the Japanese-American war. We hope nothing will happen on Tinian [with the American lease] where they were negotiating on. I hoped they would give us the privilege of requesting the money that the U.S. will give us in case we trade this and they give us this.
- Siemer: The Carolinians were concerned that there wouldn't be enough money for education or medical care and things like that?
- Limes: No, we were really scared of the Second World War, and then going into the American way of living because we saw Hawaii, how [different it was]. The first time I saw in Hong Kong, when I went to Hong Kong, I didn't see it in Taiwan or the Philippines later. But in the U.S. even in Hawaii we saw the poor lying asleep around the store somewhere and you say to yourself, where are the religious that used to come and [take care of these people]?

Because we are not used to that kind of thing. We see our friend somewhere like that and we pick them up and take them either to their house or take to our house or something and let them rest. And I see this and say, "My God, I hope this thing doesn't happen here." And then we learned a little bit about tax. Even me, I really don't know much about tax except they wanted me to pay and maybe receive a rebate later if there is a rebate. But you have different kinds of tax. Then, if you want to become a self-governing, you know, what can we offer to make our government work by itself when U.S. says, "Okay, we will take this away from you now, you go ahead." These are the things that probably are not going to happen, but at least we were trying to figure out whether that thing will happen. But anyway, we feel that we are just not ready in total. Give us another 10 years until we really understand the U.S. system.

Siemer: How long had the United Carolinian Association been organized at that time?

Limes: When I came from Guam, the group was already formed. But it was formed in a way to help the community. If there is something that happened in the main office here, and they want the information [the group can be] be the disseminator.

Siemer: Was it a political organization? Did it campaign?

Limes: It was political as well as helping each other in time of grief and time of celebrating. I think what we were trying to do which, in a way, if a person is elected it won't work, because these three, not three but four Ut, if there is any movement of a celebration, let's say, all of these four, all of these Ut get together. There is a big catch of fish that everybody should share in this. If there is some high clan died, then everybody is involved. Maybe because the Japanese left those things to us; they don't say, "Hey, you're wrong." And then we see that the U.S. has a different system where everybody is equal. But here we already have chiefs. We know who are these chiefs. Sometimes we didn't say because we don't know whether the other guy is naming the chiefs. At any rate, when the U.S. came in with their system, it is very big different from our system. It [is] just the other way. Now everybody has a chance to go to school, come back and exercise your mind and what you think is that best thing for you. But the family ties among us are still strong. We still maintain ourselves; we still maintain the clan system. A few are lost because their eldest passed away and they did not have a chance to pass these things to them.

Siemer: How many Ut are there today?

Limes: There are five the Tanapag, and the Garapan have four. The operational one is the Tanapag and the two in Garapan.

Siemer: Back at time the Covenant was approved, you were a delegate to the Micronesian Constitutional Convention. Do you remember that?

Limes: was.

Siemer: How did you get selected for that?

Limes: I was elected. It was myself, Larry Cabrera, Mr. Cruz of Tinian.

Siemer: Ben Manglona?

Limes: No.

Siemer: Who was from Rota?

Limes: No one. In the Micronesian Constitutional [Convention] there is no Rota, only three of us from Saipan because they think of us as already seceded. Some of us here were on the

edge really because it [approval of the Covenant] has to go probably through so many channels.

Siemer: There was a debate at the time as to whether you should go or not because the Covenant had not been approved yet. And if it were approved, then the Marianas would be separate. But if it were not approved, then the Marianas would still be a part of the Trust Territory.

Limes: That's right. Also we thought it would be our chance to see that. Although we did not make any commitment because of this situation we were already in, we were ready to bring back whatever happens. So the Marianas said it was okay it was okay by the Marianas.

Siemer: Now the convention, the Micronesian Convention, was held here in Saipan?

Limes: Yes, over at the San Antonio, you know where the Pacific Island [Club] is now. But anyway, what happened is that if there is any argument between districts, the Marianas was called in as a judge to say [how to resolve it] because they are in the middle they didn't favor anyone.

Siemer: When you ran for that office, was it an island-wide election?

Limes: Yes.

Siemer: Why did you decide to run?

Limes: Well, because we needed someone from the Carolinian community. All of them said okay, so when it comes also to first Con-Con here, then Felix and I ran, and we were just the difference of two or three votes. So I went up to him and said, "You go in. Let me pull myself out and you go in. Because you're already sitting in and know what's been happening." He said, "No, you go in, I'm tired."

Siemer: Were there any other Carolinians that ran?

Limes: Yes, there was Benigno Fitial, there was Pete Igitol. We were the only three. So from Tanapag we requested somebody so they sent Igitol and maybe someone else.

Siemer: Where was Igitol from?

Limes: Tanapag.

Siemer: And how about Fitial?

Limes: He came from same here, although he is from San Jose. I'm from District 4. Same.

Siemer: So after you ran for the Micronesian Constitutional Convention, then you ran the Marianas Constitutional Convention?

Limes: Yes.

Siemer: And you ran as a Territorial Party delegate?

Limes: No, it wasn't really like that. Both sides amplify that this was not going to be a party system where you go in. This is something that will affect the rest of our lives as long as we are with the U.S. and this is a chance for us to say what we want. That was the thing we told our people to understand that this is kind of catholic group or protestant for that matter.

Siemer: Did you campaign around the whole island?

Limes: No. What I did, when groups of people would gather for something, like a novena when they send the people, we were just sitting at the light to run for this. They said, "Hey, go

ahead. Don't worry. Go ahead. I'll give you my confidence. Go ahead." Then other friends helped with the campaign. There was a little bit of that too. On the second Con-Con, I submitted my name also and I went in, and it was other party's moving who should be sitting there, like they are concerned about who is going to be there.

Siemer: In the Micronesian Constitutional Convention, did you finish a constitution?

Limes: Yes, we did.

Siemer: And during the process of that, did you and Joe Cruz and others who were there from the Marianas learn things that you used when you went to the Marianas Constitutional Convention?

Limes: Well, I think Mr. Cruz was not available at the end of it, but our chairman, Mr. Larry Cabrera, I thought, learned how the group works, how the system of Con-Con was run.

Siemer: Did they have committees like the Marianas Constitutional Convention?

Limes: Yes. All of the system the people set up is the same. Except, of course, from Truk, from Kosrae, from you know. It is the same. As I said, I was really lucky that I went through this and that one experience that gave me the edge.

Siemer: Did Larry Cabrera run as a delegate for the Marianas Constitutional Convention?

Limes: I think so.

Siemer: And he didn't win.

Limes: He didn't.

Siemer: And Joe Cruz ran, and he won.

Limes: The Cruz of Tinian, was he in there?

Siemer: Yes, he won.

Limes: Then there also was [Estevan M.] King, my friend King, the only delegate who doesn't want to walk out. The rest walk out and he said: "This is crazy. I come here for the people and why are you (makes sound)." I like the way he put his speech.

Siemer: What do you remember about the organization of the convention before it actually started? Did you go to any meetings or delegate groups before the convention started, to try to figure out how it should be organized?

Limes: I think for the president of the Con-Con. There was a move that we should see who should be coming in [as President], and I think the political move being shown there was, okay, I favor so-and-so, I favor so-and-so.

Siemer: That's what I wondered. How did that happen before the Convention? That was before we came.

Limes: There was already a meeting taking place. Not a big meeting but a few of these [delegates] said okay, especially for those who were elected trying to get them over. When I was asked who should you vote for, I said "Larry" right away then because I am very much close to him. We grew up together, the present governor. So he and I, and I don't know, I think Rasa's name was in. He was the vice.

Siemer: He was the floor leader.

Limes: Yes. So all of those together and there were probably more Republican or Territorial at that time in the Con-Con.

- Siemer: A very large majority, yes.
- Limes: I have already, right away, when they are asking I said, I vote for Larry, otherwise if there were any change, okay, you make sure you let me know.
- Siemer: Larry and you grew up together and went to school together?
- Limes: Yes. We were altar boys also. Except maybe he has to force himself to quit because his father was getting ill. He was the only boy in the family that can really help also. He stopped probably coming to school and he went to work right away to help out the family.
- Siemer: Did he live in the same area that you did?
- Limes: In Chalan Kanoa, District 3. Very close to District 4. He is a very talented person, the governor. Should he have been to school I don't know if he will be staying here. Because his knowledge in machines, I mean big machines is so [great]. The powerplant, he was the one who worked on it and made it run. When we were out of electricity, it was he who really helped out that day.
- Siemer: Had you known Oscar Rasa before the Convention?
- Limes: Yes, he was my student.
- Siemer: Oh, that's right. You said that.
- Limes: And I know him as a very quiet boy and very attentive. It was like he was absorbing everything that was going on. He went to a much higher school, and came back and I know that because he has a very sharp memory. [He] went to college and came back. What amazes me is that when I met him, he was a very funny fellow. He's really respectful when he and I would meet. When he would tell a joke also, it was very funny. I have never seen him with a bad side of him maybe he doesn't want to show that but I have never seen that. But being with his friends and so forth, I know a few of his friends who are really hard-headed persons also, but maybe to him he can handle it, being a rather brilliant fellow. That's Oscar and he can be a very good manager.
- Siemer: He seemed to be very smart.
- Limes: Yes, and he is always on the move.
- Siemer: He did a good job, it seemed to me, as the floor leader in moving the Convention along.
- Limes: Yes. Always move. Lots of peps. Lots of energy, that fellow.
- Siemer: Do you recall discussions before the Convention began about the kind of protection that Rota and Tinian wanted for their local government and to make sure that the Saipan majority could not dictate what they were going to do?
- Limes: I was also talking to one of them during a recess that they were going into a huddle and if they did not get what they want, they would go out. So I said, "Hey, listen. If you talk about the differences, then I should be the one to talk to about the differences. The only thing that happened was here because of the water there is additional water between us. But it's the same, all your language, everything. But me, it's different. I have to force myself to learn your ways so I can survive. So maybe you think it over." Then they cite the experience during Navy time.
- Siemer: What about that? Was that true? Were they discriminated against during Navy times?
- Limes: In a way they were. In fact, they were counted as not in the Marianas district but they fall under Yap. How, I don't know. Most of the time, I would say, they got lost in what they

were requesting. Either we don't pay much attention to them, or they say, "We are always thought of as if we are in a second class.

Siemer: Is that because the American administration was here [in Saipan]?

Limes: I think so. I think that was part of it. I don't know who over there the administrator was. Maybe he likes the place to be very quiet and he wanted all the serenity of that place. For those boys who were coming up very aggressive, it's a big stop because of that.

Siemer: Were there particular things you can think of that where they were treated poorly?

Limes: Not really.

Siemer: It seemed to be a very general complaint, not that the people would point to a specific thing, but that they felt generally that they were not treated well.

Limes: Yes, like they were always second when they wanted a request. Either they don't have money because we have used up all the money. All the blame falls on us. We've taken away the good things and left all this on them which in a way I don't think was happening. I was thinking population-wise all the time.

Siemer: But from your own experience in the school system, was that true?

Limes: No.

Siemer: I asked Mr. Ayuyu if that was true in the housing area, and he said it was not the case either.

Limes: When I was taking care of the adult basic [education], I extended more to Rota and Tinian the program, sending teachers, part-time teachers, who were helping on this program, abroad, all the way to San Francisco. I just picked up the phone and called to Don McKune and said, "Help me out here. I have four people that I would like to send for training, for adult basic." He said, "Okay, I'll pay the tickets. You pay the hotel." That's how good California is to the Marianas. That's why when this man passed away, I felt so bad. California and Seattle up in Washington, which is not part of Region 9, but when we get together all the Region 9, all the adult education program, all of them were very strong friends of the Pacific people. Well, anyway, I sent to the program people from Rota. In fact, I sent somebody who is a member of legislature now, Mr. Cing, Senator Cing, and also the Chairman of the Board of Education, Florence Hofschneider.

Siemer: What about the standard of living back then? Do you recall that it was substantially worse on Rota and Tinian?

Limes: No. I think District 4 is much worse.

Siemer: What do you recall at the time the delegates from Rota and Tinian saying about why they wanted special protection?

Limes: Well, I have a friend, Julian Calvo, who has been a long time a political man on Rota, being elected for a long time in office. His father-in-law owns the first hotel on Rota. And I asked him: "You have any problem here?" He said, "Like what?" I said, "Invasion of the military people." And he said, "No, what for? What are they going to do here?" I said, "Well, you have lots of women here." He said, "No, they're not interested unless they want eat coconut crab. We have plenty of fruit bats." But anyway, he says, "Oh, nothing." It was a long time ago, when we were members of the Legislature. As a matter of fact, when he was elected, I was elected also as a legislator. I don't recall anything. I cannot be specific on Rota on what are the bad things.

- Siemer: One of the things Dr. Camacho from the Popular Party often said at the time, was there had been a deal between the Territorial representatives from Saipan and the Territorial [Party] representatives from Rota and Tinian about how much power they would be given over their local affairs.
- Limes: I don't know that. Maybe.
- Siemer: I was going to ask you if you recall anything, any meetings of delegates or other arrangement like that?
- Limes: The only thing I remember when they walked out was that they would have an equal footing on Senate, upper house.
- Siemer: Well, that was provided in the Covenant. They were protected there in the Covenant. But remember when they walked out, you were debating what the representation should be in the lower house.
- Limes: Yes.
- Siemer: Ray Villagomez had proposed 12 for Saipan, one for Rota and one for Tinian. And Ben Manglona wanted two [for Rota].
- Limes: Right.
- Siemer: Then there was a long discussion. Then you all voted. And then Ben and his colleagues left. At the time of the walk-out, were you worried that all of the delegates from Rota and Tinian would walk out?
- Limes: No, I wasn't. Felipe Atalig, he's from Rota, and I asked him, "What is this" and he said, "Leave them alone. They'll come back." I said, "How do you know?" He said, "This is not Chamorro politics, this is life in America. I can go around and tell my relatives that listen, they don't want to do what we're supposed to be doing now." America says, "Make your own law now," and they want their own laws. I said, "Okay, Fel."
- Siemer: So Felipe did not think that all of them would walk out.
- Limes: No. Then, on Tinian, King said, "I'm not going to go out, I'm okay"
- Siemer: Where had you known Mr. King from?
- Limes: My student.
- Siemer: He was another of your students?
- Limes: Yes, that's right. It makes me feel that the walk-out will not work.
- Siemer: He just ran this time, didn't he?
- Limes: Yes, he won.
- Siemer: Yes.
- Limes: He won. And also the senator of Rota was one of my part-time teachers.
- Siemer: Who was that?
- Limes: San Nicolas. All of this makes me really feel good because at one time I was a classroom teacher. And I thought I contributed maybe something, a bit of this here and a bit of this there. It helps. It really helps. It makes me feel good.
- Siemer: Thank you very much for this interview and for your help on this project.