Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: THU HUYEN

Interviewer: Michelle Le Pham

Date: October 28, 2012

Location: Garden Grove, CA

Sub-Collection: The Grove Senior Apartments

Length: 01:17:13

FIELD NOTES

The interview was conducted at the home of the narrator, Thu Huyen in Garden Grove, CA at The Grove Senior Apartments. Present during the interview were myself, the narrator and her husband Phuoc Tran. The reason I encouraged the two together was that I thought it would be unique to have a husband and wife dynamic. The idea was to have two different perspectives of the same situation.

I had the pleasure of meeting her during one of my interviews with another narrator. When I arrived in her home, she immediately asked if I had eaten and insisted that I eat before I do anything else. While enjoying a plate of sticky rice and sweet potatoes she took out her photo album and pointed out her children with anecdotes and all. With the recorder, tables, and chairs set we were ready to start the interview.

During the interview I would direct questions towards Thu Huyen, and her husband Phuoc would interject with clarifications or enhancements to the stories. I’ve noticed that if I asked Thu Huyen to describe the scenery and emotions at a particular moment in her life, her answers would beautifully illustrate every detail. If I asked Phuoc Tran a question he would briefly describe the details and spend most of the time explaining the principle behind his actions. I felt that by having the both of them present during the interview complemented their experiences. At some point during the interview both husband and wife became so animated that they were pantomiming shielding their children from mobs of refugees and pulling each other onto fishing boats.

After the interviews were concluded, Thu Huyen and I got to talking about my personal life. It turned out that Thu Huyen was really good at giving me advice. She acted as a grandmother that I’ve never had. Overall, I felt that her intention with me, aside from being part of VAOHP was to teach me to become a better person and helping me keep in touch my roots. Before I left I thanked both of my narrators and bid them adieu.