

**Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine**

Narrator: KHOAN HUU LE

Interviewer: Michelle Le Pham

Date: September 1, 2012

Location: Garden Grove, CA

Sub-Collection: The Grove Senior Apartments

Length of Interview: 02:18:54

**TIME LOG**

**Track 1**

- 00:30 Khoan Huu Le introduces himself via date of birth, place of birth, family members
- 01:38 Describes how much war impacted his life from early childhood to adulthood
- 04:11 Briefly describes his father's career as a traveling judge and mother as a homemaker and how his parents provided a warm and nurturing home
- 05:35 Because his father was a traveling judge, Le had to leave home at an early age to be with his father
- 06:50 Describes his elementary, intermediate, and high school under the French education system
- 11:18 Discusses his experiences during intermediate school in Saigon, states that we wasn't too fond of the student body compared to elementary and intermediate
- 13:03 Describes how he got into a fight with one of the other students and how he had a feisty side
- 15:00 Stated that he didn't want to attend school in Saigon anymore and went back to his hometown for schooling
- 16:10 Describes the high school system of Vietnam at the time and the various exams to graduate and enter a new grade

**Track 2**

- 00:00 Shows his high school diploma specializing in mathematics and how he tested into university as an engineer and teaching with a form of financial aid
- 02:20 Discusses how graduated from university in 1962 and began working for the government as a high school math teacher in Tay Ninh
- 7:00 Describes his experiences when the war started and how he was drafted into the military at the age of 25
- 16:40 States that the military was a family affair; all his male siblings were drafted into the Vietnam War
- 18:30 Describes his life after he left the military.
- 19:35 Talks about his experiences and thoughts going through a re-education camp
- 22:45 Describes his life after he was released from a re-education camp, he became a principle of a high school during the communist reign
- 30:45 States that because he was in a re-education camp, the government took his teaching position away
- 33:00 States that he became a rice farmer in order to support his family during communist reign
- 34:20 Describes how despite the trouble times he made sure that the value of education still plays an important role in his life
- 37:25 Describes how he happened to come upon the recipe for detergent powder and sold the product for extra money
- 48:08 Describes how he and former student set up a plan to escape Vietnam and the events that occurred while at sea
- 1:00:00 Describes how they started drifting towards Thailand and the experiences they face before entering a refugee camp

**Track 3**

00:00 Le describes his experiences on a nearby island before entering the mainland of Thailand

**Track 4**

00:00 Describes how he convince a local to convince the district to take them in as refugee and his experiences in between rescue and the refugee camp

05:50 Describes his experiences in a Thai refugee camp with his sons and what he did to help out other refugees in the camp

09:50 Le describes how he established contact with his siblings who escaped Vietnam before him so he be moved to another refugee camp, eventually to be sponsored

11:39 Describes his experiences at another refugee camp in Song La

16:50 Recounts how before he left Vietnam he sew money into his youngest son's pocket, instead of using it for food he used it for a dictionary

**Track 5**

00:00 Discusses how education is still a priority, therefore sent his sons to school within the camp, while he worked in the camp's post office

02:30 Describes his interview process with United States embassy for admittance

05:05 Describes his experiences at processing camp in Singapore, then transfer to Indonesia where he was asked to become a teacher

09:55 Describes his experiences journeying to the United States for the first time with his sons

14:50 States that he applied for Social Security, welfare, and public education for his children

**Track 6**

00:00 Discusses how he was very involved in his children's education and emphasized excelling in school

- 08:00 After his children graduated from college he decided to pursue his own college degree in electronics. Le describes the struggles of working and going to school
- 12:50 After graduating from school he describes how he became involved with Ohio's Vietnamese community
- 15:00 Discusses his first job after graduating from college as a teacher in a vocational aviation school