Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: DONNA CHEN
Interviewer: Nairi Davidian
Date: February 23, 2014
Location: San Gabriel, CA
Sub-Collection: Linda Vo Class Oral Histories, Winter 2014
Length of Interview: 01:50:39

Time Log

Track 1 Length: 00:32:44

00:00:26 Donna Chen introduces herself.
00:00:33 Donna Chen says she was born in 1960 in Saigon city in Vietnam.
00:00:50 She talks about father from China went to Vietnam at age of 12 and her mother was second generation of Chinese was born in Vietnam.
00:01:41 She explains, she was born in Saigon city, and she talks about her community and neighbors that had different businesses.
00:02:58 She talks about her childhood memories that was interesting and memorable one about American soldier.
00:06:44 Donna Chen talks about her culture that is combination of Chinese and Vietnam.
00:08:05 She talks about her family business and some other people that had small business or worked for others as a labor.
00:09:03 She explains about her neighbors that they were so rich or poor.
00:09:59 She talks about how they celebrates Ted with her family.
00:11:15 She Talks about how they celebrates birthday in Vietnam specially when people are old, having birthday party is more official and important.
00:12:58 She explains about funeral ceremonies, and how they keep dead body at home for two to a month and give a chance for everybody to see the
dead person before burning the body.

00:15:13 She talks about her educations and school in the Vietnam.

00:16:06 She talks about her grandparents and how her grandmother from mother side’s was an elegant lady.

00:18:00 She says that she has two brother and three sisters, and she is the second child in her family and the older child is her sister.

00:18:33 She talks about her family last name “Trang “ and how in Chinese and Vietnamese people have to follow their family name. Also she describes that people when they are young, they have called also with nickname.

00:20:36 She talks that she speaks Vietnamese and Chinese.

00:21:29 She talks about her grandmother life and her relationship with her husband.

00:23:39 She talks about her family’s business and how her mother was a businesswoman.

00:24:46 She talks about her family’s education and what was the reason that her mom had to leave the school and go to work.

00:27:43 She talks about her family gathering especially during the New Year.

00:28:14 She talks about her two sons and their education.

00:28:45 She explains that she talks about her history as a first generation to come to the United States.

00:29:23 She talks about her family and generation different expression about religions.

00:30:23 She talks about specific food that they have during the New Year.
She talks that her mom tried to make all meal at home even though they had somebody to help her mother.

She talks that her family practice Buddhism religion, and her sons are practicing Christian religion.

**Track 2 Length: 00:43:05**

She talks about the war and how they had terrible moment during that days.

She says that she was student during the war.

She talks about her family situation and her father that he involved in the war, and also she talks that her father was captured during the war, and he was in the jail. She talks about her feeling about this situation that her family had.

She does not talk about reeducation camp explains that she does not know about re-education camp.

She talks that some of her relative pass away during the war.

She talks about the last day of the war and some memories that she remembers form that moment.

She talks about life after war and how every thing was messed up even education was changed in Vietnam’s schools.

She says, because they did not know how they can handle their life after the was, they decided to leave the county.

She says that she is a boat person, ha to pay and run away from the
Vietnam, but she did not know where she must to go until she arrived to Male Zia.

00:26:01 She says that because boat was too small, she did not bring anything with her self unless gold ring.

00:27:22 She talks about the condition when they were on the boat until they arrived to Male Zia and settlement in refugee camp.

00:32:39 She talks about refugee camp in Male Zia that was the beautiful Island.

00:36:33 She talks about some expression and experience when she come to the United States when she stayed in Miami at the first time.

00:38:56 She talks about how long she stayed in Miami.

00:39:50 She talks about some organization especially Red Cross supported them when they arrived to the US.

00:40:53 She talks about her condition and situation when she resettlement in the US.

00:42:06 She talks about her good decision that she came to the US.

Track 3 length: 00:34:50

00:00:09 She explains about her challenges to learn English and get her education in the US.

00:02:21 She talks about who helped her to find the home in California.

00:03:13 She talks about her job that she found in California.

00:04:24 She explains about her new and old community and their differences.
00:05:32 She explains some experiences that she had about the racism during the time when she lived in Miami and California.

00:11:19 She talks that she has a lot on non-Asian friends.

00:11:59 She talks about her introducing in American society.

00:12:59 She talks about her two sons situation right now and if some day they get married with non Asian girls.

00:13:52 She talks about culture shocks and her experiences.

00:15:03 She explains her reason that why she choose to be a citizen and the processes that she got as a citizen, Also she says that she votes in elections and involves in some political activity to help her people and community.

00:16:18 She talks about political parties that she has an activity to help people to understand about politic and to be citizen in the US.

00:16:58 She talks about her networking with Internet and TV to read any news and getting some information in English language.

00:17:14 She talks about her relative that was in Vietnam before.

00:17:36 She talks about differences now and before in Vietnam country.

00:19:31 She talks that she went to Vietnam as a visitor travel in country form North to South.

00:19:59 She talks about her activity in Asian Arts Talent Foundation as a president.

00:21:07 She talks about some specific Asian custom that they wear during the New Year and some holiday.
She talks about New Year custom and gift to give to the old people, single person at home and kids.

She talks that Vietnamese Community that has changed in America.

She talks about her activity and involving in Vietnamese culture in the US, and what is the reason. Also She talks about her involving in local Organization.

She explains how she find this organization. And also she talks about entertainment during the year.

She talks about little Saigon and the place situation.

She talks that culture and language are more important things in generation to remember about their heritage.

She talks about sad story about her two best friend that they passed away during the time when they was in the ocean inside the boat.

She talks and expressions about the country where there is no war.

She talks about how she has to make a peace in her life, and how she is a strong person in her life.