Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: DANH NHAT QUACH
Interviewer: Michelle Le Pham
Date: May 6, 2012
Location: Huntington Beach, CA
Sub-collection: Community Interviewers
Length: 01:17:28

FIELD NOTES

The interview was conducted at the home of the narrator, Danh Nhat Quach in Huntington Beach. As I pulled up to the gates of Mr. Quach’s gated community, a security guard motioned for me to roll down my windows and asked for my name and whose residence was I visiting. As I drove into the neighborhood, I told myself that these homes must cost a fortune.

Upon arriving, Mr. Quach opened the door and greeted me with an exuberant smile and warm hug. I quickly collected my materials and proceeded into his home. He was wearing a light blue dress shirt, khaki pants, and dress shoes. His hair was longer than I anticipated for a man of his age, but that made him all the more welcoming. Apparently he had set up a work area for us, laid out with albums, documents, and photographs. Off to the side were snacks and water laid out especially for me, I couldn’t have been more delighted. His wife Linh Quach ushered me into a chair and insisted that I eat before I conduct the actual interview. As I slowly munched Mr. Quach sat himself next to me and we began our official introductions. He would tell a little about himself and I would do the same.

We began our interview with very routine introductions, such as name, place of birth, and profession. It was obvious early on that Mr. Quach was used to these types of interviews as he mentioned he done a few back in the early 80’s and 90’s. On the topic of his experiences in the Vietnam War and xperiences thereafter Mr. Quach seemed visually excited to describe all the nail biting details. When he discussed about his actual escape, his eyes widened and became very animated. Every now and then as a signal to me, he would tap me on the shoulder or the leg indicating that “this is a very important detail”. Mr. Quach thoroughly enjoyed retelling and describing his assimilation to the United States. He went into great detail about how he and his wife earned their degrees in Pharmacy and created the famous shipping/pharmacy business in Little Saigon.

After the recorded interview as over, I turned off the recorder and Mr. Quach offered me his personal scrapbook to look at. There were mountains of albums that I went through and I asked him that if he would be kind enough to give another interview in the future. Because Mr. Quach’s life has been so rich, it was impossible for me to cover all of his life’s detail in only a span of two hours.