Narrator: TUNG DINH
Interviewer: Theresa Pham
Date: May 26, 2015
Location: Westminster, California
Sub-collection: Vietnamese American Experience Course, Spring 2015
Length of Interview: 01:35:15

Narrator Life Map

1968 His family housed an American soldier who helped teach him English, tutored his older sisters and step brother. Also taught his parents how to speak French. — The American soldier offered to adopt Tung and bring him back to the United States with him but his parents declined as they felt it wasn’t culturally acceptable.
1972 Mr. Dinh moved to Biên Hòa with his family at age 11.
1975 April 30th, the Fall of Saigon. Was present in Saigon at the time with his family trying to escape through Saigon’s main airport but failed.
1979 Mr. Dinh began his twenty attempts of escaping Vietnam. — Was caught trying to escape and was sentenced to serve an 18 month sentence in a jail by the beach in South Vietnam.
1980 Mr. Dinh was released from prison due to overcrowding and returned home. He attempted to escape several more times to escape after his return.
1984 He was caught and jailed again— this time to serve a 3 year jail sentence in a jail in a mountainous jungle also in south Vietnam.
• Remembers eating only a small bowl half-filled with and performing backbreaking labor every day.
• Recalls his encounter with two snakes that he captured, killed, and ate for sustenance.
1985 Mr. Dinh was released early again due to overcrowding but also by being a good student. He was released after 18 months and returned home to Biên Hòa.
— Found out his eldest sister had already left to escape to Thailand.
1986 His last and successful attempt to escape Vietnam began.
• Traveled to Cambodia by bus. Made a pit stop in Camonson (?) base then followed a connection to travel to Thailand by boat
• Remembers the boat being very small, and carrying 12 other people.
1987 Mr. Dinh arrived at a small refugee camp in Thailand and stayed for a week before being transferred to the larger, main refugee camp also in Thailand.
— Before being transferred to the larger camp, Mr. Dinh found out his father was arriving to the same small camp he briefly stayed at as well. He then got transferred to the main camp to reunite with his eldest sister.
— After Mr. Tung’s father arrived at the main camp in Thailand, they had clearance to immigrate to the United States as his father worked for an American airplane company.

1988 In May, Mr. Dinh, his eldest sister, and his father were transferred to Bataang camp. Philippine refugee

— They stayed for 5 months to learn about and be assimilated into American society.

1988 In October, Mr. Dinh, his eldest sister, and his father arrived at LAX Airport in California. Los Angeles,

— They stayed at his aunt’s house in Cerritos for the time being.

1989 Received his first job in Irvine, California as an electronic inspector of printer parts through several friends at the Buddhist Temple he attended.

1991 He greeted his first of two uncles at LAX Airport who immigrated to the United States through the Humanitarian Operation (HO) Program.

1992 He greeted his second uncle at LAX Airport who immigrated to the United States through the Humanitarian Operation (HO) Program.

1993 He married Linh Bui in June after they met at the Buddhist Temple. The couple then moved to Anaheim, California.

1994 Had their first son named Dinh, Thanh Long and began sporadically moving around Orange County.

— Both he and Linh became heavily involved with the Buddhist Temple.

1998 Mr. Dinh reunited with his middle sister and his mother at LAX Airport when they arrived 10 years after he immigrated to the United States.

2001 Got laid off from his first job in September, but was hired as an electronic inspector at Boeing Co. on his birthday in November.

2007 Mr. Dinh and his division from Boeing Co. were transferred to work for L3 Communications as a satellite parts inspector.

2010 Mr. Dinh and his family continued to sporadically move around Orange County, but stayed in the area as many of their family and friends had settled in the vicinity.

2012 Mr. Dinh and his family finally settled in Westminster, California where they currently reside.