Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: TUAN ANH NGUYEN
Interviewer: Desiree Nguyen
Date: May 16, 2015
Location: Anaheim, California
Sub-Collection: Vietnamese American Experience Course, Spring 2015
Length of Interview: 01:43:21

Time Log

00:00:29  Tuan Anh Nguyen talks about his hometown
00:03:05  He talks about his teachers and the school system in Vietnam
00:04:30  He talks about how Vietnamese families live together
00:05:15  He talks about how he met his wife and dating customs
00:07:10  He became a teacher after college for three years and was drafted into the military. He discusses his experiences in the war and contact with American soldiers
00:12:00  He remembers life after the war
00:12:44  He recounts how he was put in the reeducation camp for three years after the war and describes its terrible conditions
00:22:07  He recalls memories of life after reeducation camp. He talks about police surveillance and how he cannot rebuild his life post-war
00:25:14  Discusses his escape from Vietnam. Talks about how he secured the boat journey through a family sponsorship. He tells the boat captain’s story and how the boat was rescued.
00:35:56  He tells about his time at the refugee camps in Phanat Nikhom and Bataan
00:37:42  Describes his move from the refugee camp to US
00:38:44 Remembers his first reactions and experiences in US. He talks about racial diversity, language barriers, and community life in America.

00:46:13 He explains how refugees tried to reunite with their families

00:47:20 He talks about raising his children in America and cultural differences

00:52:42 His thoughts on interracial marriage

00:54:15 He talks about preserving Vietnamese literature. Briefly talks about the difference between Chinese and Vietnamese.

00:57:17 Explains what they had to change to live in America such as celebrating American holidays and Lunar New Year. Describes how they must adopt new values like punctuality.

1:02:03 He talks about the differences between following religion in Vietnam versus America

1:03:31 He discusses thoughts on political involvement and his non-profit work. Tells his thoughts on US policies in the Vietnam War

1:07:00 Talks about how he gets his news.

1:07:42 Discusses his thoughts on the Vietnamese-American culture. Describes the difference between first generation and second generation of immigrants. He is unsure of what the Vietnamese-American culture will look like in the future.

1:10:55 He describes how coming to America expands education and job opportunities

1:12:26 Lists his involvements in the Vietnamese community. He taught Vietnamese and was a chairman in Vietnamese Catholic community.

1:13:39 Explains why he doesn’t want to go back to Vietnam and why he doesn’t miss it

1:15:34 His thoughts on Little Saigon
1:16:36 What he does for entertainment. Talks about the Christ Radio program he has.

1:18:45 He shares his thoughts on citizenship and voting in the US. Talks about racial tensions in America between black people and the police.

1:22:30 Describes when he truly felt like an American

1:23:01 He doesn’t think he can answer what Vietnamese Americans should remember about their heritage.

1:24:36 Lists what he writes about as a hobby

1:26:06 He describes remembering grandparents who passed away. Talks about a song that reminds him of Vietnam. He explains the role of being the eldest boy in the family.

1:29:45 Details why he can read Chinese and a little bit of French

1:31:00 He explains what his father’s occupation was. Recalls how his family was separated because of the reeducation camp. Says they all came through family sponsorship.

1:35:08 Remembers his favorite childhood memory was being in boy scouts

1:36:15 He explains the Nguyen last name. Talks about family traditions during Tet. Points out why his family doesn’t own any heirlooms.

1:39:44 Talks about his hobbies today

1:40:26 Closing thoughts. He reminds Vietnamese Americans to be grateful and generous when living in America.