Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: TRINH THUY MAI

Interviewer: Arisa Miyake Yang

Date: May 07, 2012

Location: Tustin, California

Sub-collection: Linda Vo Class Oral Histories, 2012

Length of Interview: 00:54:02

FIELD NOTES

The interview was conducted in the District Art Gallery located in “The District” mall in Tustin, Irvine. Present during the interview the Narrator, Trinh Thuy Mai and the interviewer, Arisa Miyake Yang. I followed protocols and had all of the papers requiring a signature be signed before the interview. Before starting the interview, I explained a bit about myself in order to create more of a relaxed atmosphere. The narrator was very accommodating throughout the entire interview and was very open to all of the questioned asked.

We conducted the interview in the art gallery where she has some of artwork shown. The gallery was very roomy and quiet, making it perfect to conduct this interview. The gallery was closed at this time so there were no interruptions and it also relaxed both the narrator and interviewer. There were paintings from different artists posted up on walls and hanging down from the ceilings. Trinh’s paintings was only on one section of the wall. She had 3 to 4 paintings hung up on the wall, with lighting that gave a clear view of her paintings. In the middle left wall of the room there was a desk and several chairs. That was the area where Trinh sat in during open hours of the art gallery and kept watch of the gallery. We got ourselves comfortable in that section before starting the interview.

Trinh Thuy Mai showed up to the interview casually dressed in a summer aqua top, jeans and sandals. She did not seem nervous at all in the interview and talked a lot during the interview. Her English was very clear and understandable, making it easier for both the narrator and the interviewer to keep the conversation going. She has a very open personality and was willing to share her passion in conversing history and her participation in this project. She was an extremely supportive narrator which made this project easier and faster.
Since there were some technical difficulties, we scheduled for another interview within the same week. Thus, this allowed her to think more about what she wanted to talk about and also clear up from facts that were jumbled during the interview. The interviewer gave some more sample questions for her to think about and expressed that there was no need to be so detailed.
Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Part 2

Narrator: TRINH THUY MAI
Interviewer: Arisa Miyake Yang
Date: May 9, 2012
Location: Stanton, California
Length of Interview: 01:09:11

FIELD NOTES

The second part of the interview was conducted in the Stanton Public Library Conference room. Originally it was supposed to take place at her art gallery located in Huntington Beach but due to unforeseen events, the interview location was changed at the last minute. It was a hot day outside but inside the library was nice and cool so it may have been a good decision that the interview location was changed.

The library conference room was not all that big. It was far from being a professional conference room. It was more like a children playroom where some parts of the room had turned into storage place. Despite the fact that it was supposed to be a conference room, there was only a few tables and even fewer chairs. At first I was worried that this room may not have an outlet but luckily, we were able to find one conveniently located under the table we were gathered at. The down part of this location was that we had to leave the room if anyone wanted to use the family computer located inside the conference room. Luckily, no one came in that day to use the computer so we were able to complete the interview without any problems.

Trinh came in her casual wear again. Wearing a light black jacket, an aqua top, half-pants and sandals. Her hair was put up and she wore earrings. Like the previous interview, she was very relaxed and perhaps even more comfortable than before now that it was our second time meeting each other. She was much more prepared this time to talk about the things she wanted to include into the interview and the interviewer was also more prepared than the first interview. The interviewer had picked out certain questions and stories she wanted to hear which made the interview a lot smoother and faster. Trinh especially elaborated more on her family and the stories she had heard about the Vietnam War for this interview, which made the second interview have more information than the first.