Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: MINH HANH NGUYEN

Interviewer: Rachel Mock

Date: Thursday May 17, 2012

Location: Saint Anselm’s Episcopal Church; Garden Grove, California

Sub-collection: Linda Vo Class Oral Histories, 2012

Length of Interview: 1:29:21

Time Log:

00:00:58 Minh Hanh Nguyen discusses her hometown and early life in Vietnam where she heard the sounds of war but grew up with a loving family.

00:02:40 She talks about growing up during a war torn time and how it affected her every day life.

00:03:30 Minh talks about moving to another city during middle school because her other home was not safe. She talks about stories of being robbed by gunmen.

00:04:35 Minh talks about the support from her parents and how that made it easier to live during a war torn time.

00:05:40 Minh talks about her father’s other family and her half siblings whom she would often visit in the Countryside.

00:06:28 Minh talks about a family friend who lived with her and was considered as her sister.
00:70:10 Minh talks about her early schooling (elementary school, middle school, and high school).

00:08:22 Minh talks about her favorite subjects in school and ones she disliked.

00:09:30 Minh talks about her father's occupation as a chemical engineer but the support they gave her in choosing what she wanted to study in school.

00:10:35 Minh talks about the activities that her and her parents used to do together.

00:12:30 Minh explains how her mother was educated for only having primary schooling and would help out her father with his chemical experiments.

00:14:00 Minh talks about her college experience in the Philippines studying home technology.

00:16:34 Minh talks about only staying in college for 2 years due to family issues.

00:18:26 Minh discusses how she went back to school at the University of Saigon to get a BA in American Literature.

00:21:35 Minh talks about her experience with the war again and how it affected her family.

00:27:22 Minh talks about working with American agencies between the time when she went to school and came back after 2 years conducting interviews for the military around cities in Vietnam effected by the war.

00:34:00 Minh discusses why she left Vietnam with her family and what her experience was like leaving so rapidly from her home country.

00:36:25 She describes the day she left Vietnam and how she got ready to leave

00:44:40 Minh remembers where she first went after the war
00:47:05 Minh talks about going to Camp Pendleton and then volunteering in Fort Chaffee in Arkansas.

00:56:00 Minh reminisces about living in Portland Oregon after she moved from Arkansas and tells a funny story about buying a car with no credit.

00:58:08 Minh discusses how her family was able to get sponsored to Oregon and get their first apartment.

1:00:38 Minh talks about moving to California and her first impressions coming to America.

1:03:22 Minh talks about her first home in the San Fernando Valley and commuting to work as a social worker and a counselor.

1:11:44 Minh discusses her involvement in the seminary and how she made her decision to become an ordained minister.

1:13:30 Discusses her work in churches with her husband.

1:16:36 Minh discuses Jesus’ teachings and how she believes they can be incorporated into every day life.

1:20:00 Minh talks about her involvement in her current location (Saint Anselm Church) and the projects she has been involved in.

1:23:13 Minh shares her most current project incorporating traditional Vietnamese music into liturgies.

1:27:00 She talks about how she is in the final stretch of her life and what she hopes to see at the church.