Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: MINH NGUYEN
Interviewer: Keith Gonzales
Date: May 6, 2012
Location: Eastvale, California
Sub-collection: Natalie Newton Class Oral Histories
Length of Interview: 01:27:57

Time Log

00:01:46  Mr. Nguyen discusses how the war did not affect his family due to his good family name. Father was a government official in South Vietnam.

00:02:57  Mr. Nguyen talks about how his fondest memories with his parents were the good life they were living in South Vietnam.

00:04:55  He talks about how his father was the mayor of Nha Trang City, and how it helped them during the war.

00:08:55  He talks about how he tells the story of his journey to his kids as a lesson in life. Especially when he is scolding them.

00:13:33  He starts to talk about how the taking over of South Vietnam has affected his family. His family had to throw away their memories such as photos because it can be used as evidence against them due to his family's government occupations.

00:14:42  He mentions why he left the South was for freedom and the situation he was in.

00:15:15  He talks about how he got on the boat. Also he describes the boat and the condition of his journey. Also how he left with just the clothes on his back and an ounce of gold.

00:17:57  Starts to talk about his experiences in the Philippines, which he was at for a couple of years.
Mr. Nguyen begins to talk about his first arrival to the United States.

He talks about how he started to work 2 part time jobs. He also mentions how easy it was to find work back in the day.

He talks about how it was worth it escaping, because it was for freedom.

He talks about how the war affected his family in a really bad way after it has ended.

Mr. Nguyen discusses how seeing coffins and people dying was one of his most memorable experience during the war.

Mr. Nguyen talks about how he was caught on his first attempt of escaping and how he was sent to jail. He also describes the condition of the jail, and how they were treated inside.

He talks about how when the Communist took over he had to stay at home, he couldn’t go to school because his father worked for the former government of South Vietnam.

He starts to talk about why he moved away from Orange County.

He talks about his encounters with racism, but also how he was able to do something about it legally or the right way unlike if it was in Vietnam.

He starts to talk about his first trip back to Vietnam.

He starts to describe how the Vietnamese culture he grew up with in Vietnam is different from the one here in America.

He starts to talk about the differences of the government system of Vietnam and the United States.
He starts to talk about why he was moving a lot. He mentions how you can just go anywhere here in the US while in Vietnam you have to get papers and permissions to go to other parts. He mentions how he loved the freedom.

He talks about how they started their Nail Salon businesses and why they started it.

We discussed the incident on the Video Store on how he had the picture up. He expressed his opinion on the matter. He also talks about his feeling towards communism.

He begins to talk about Communism and its ways. He also mentions how the Communist controls people by depriving them of the most basic necessities.

He talks about the living situation in Vietnam and how hard it is.

He talks about how certain aspects of freedom is important, for example voting.

He begins to talk about the lessons that the past can teach the future generations of Vietnamese Americans.

He describes how communism is evil and how it does not work, uses Russia as an example.