Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: LOAN THI KIM NGUYEN
Interviewer: Kathy Le
Date: November 26, 2012
Location: Duarte, California
Sub-collection: Vietnamese American Experience Course, Fall 2012
Length of Interview: 00:59:27

FIELD NOTES

The interview was conducted in a bedroom at Loan Nguyen’s home in Duarte, California. Prior to this interview, I had dropped off the consent forms and all release forms at her home for her to fill out. Coming into the interview all the paperwork was filled out, but we had not discussed the questions of the interview much beforehand.

Loan Nguyen wore her pajamas during the interview, and made sure to have a glass of water with her. She was uncomfortable with the recorder being there and later admitted to providing only short answers because she was wary of what was being recorded. The narrator was my mother, and I had hoped our family oriented rapport would help the interview go smoothly and she would be more open to talking about her experiences. However, about thirty minutes in, she was beginning to not enjoy providing answers to the questions and would ask quietly if it was almost done. Once the recorder was turned off she would open up and talk more comfortably about her experiences, and what facts she did not go into. When working on a PowerPoint about her, she did sit with me in order to fix and go more in depth with what she would like me to mention and what she did not explain correctly in the interview. Some of these included how she came to Canada, she would rather me mention that a Catholic couple had originally sponsored her family, but only some of her siblings were able to go under that sponsorship, and after that she was then sponsored by her family members. However, she states, off recorder, that she always tells people she was sponsored by a Catholic couple. She also stated that she did not go into detail for her answers because she was afraid that someone she used to know would find her interview online and may see her as a liar if she got facts wrong.

I would like to conduct a follow-up interview with Loan Nguyen when possible in hopes that she would be more comfortable with the second interview. However, I would like to conduct the interview in Vietnamese, which I believe would make her more comfortable and would allow her to open up more about her experience.