Vietnamese Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: THACH NGOC TRAN
Interviewer: Michael Kevin Chow
Date: November 12, 2012
Location: Garden Grove, California
Sub-collection: Vietnamese American Experience Course, Fall 2012
Length of Interview: 01:08:23

Time Log

First Track (00:46:50)

00:00:23 Thach introduces himself and tells about his parents and where he grew up in Vietnam.
00:01:47 He describes the city of Đà Nẵng, and the activities he did as a child with his family and neighbors.
00:03:40 Talks about schooling as a child and what he did for fun.
00:05:35 Details his large family and memories with his siblings.
00:07:40 Talks about Vietnamese traditions growing up, and Tet celebration.
00:09:46 Tells about the ways he helped his family when he was young.
00:10:06 Description of his parents and grandparents as well as their influence on his life.
00:12:45 The takeover of South Vietnam by the Communists in 1975 and how it affected his family.
00:14:40 Talks about the bombings near his house, running to the bunker at night time, and the effects of the war on his community.
00:18:13 His brother’s involvement in the war and stories about them.
00:20:36 Tells how once he was 18, the Communists came to his house and forced him to join the army.
00:21:28 Explains his attempted escape, recapture, and punishment.
00:23:48 Thach clarifies the order of events. Clarifies that he was put in the music training after he was caught from his escape as a Communist soldier.
00:25:55 His transfer from military training to a music contest and training
00:26:30  His escape from the music training (Communist’s Independence Day music training)

00:27:35  Hiding with his friends family and his eventual arrival at his cousin’s house in 1979.

00:29:35  Describes his mom’s decision to have him leave Vietnam on her sister’s boat.

00:30:30  Tells about his brother’s escape from Vietnam and where the rest of his family was at the time.

00:34:15  Life on the boat, until it arrived at Hong Kong.

00:40:28  How he was sponsored by his brother, and flew to California.

00:42:00  Explains how his brothers got to California.

00:42:38  Thach’s first impressions of California.

00:43:18  Reunification with his brothers in Hawthorne, CA.

00:44:32  Tells about what he did to assimilate into the American culture.

00:45:56  Describes how the rest of his family got here, and where they are today.

Second Track (00:21:33)

00:00:18  Thach compares Vietnam to the United States of America.

00:01:10  Thach tells how he quickly learned to adopt American culture.

00:02:20  Tells how he keeps in touch with his family nowadays.

00:03:50  Talks about racism in the United States.

00:04:36  Thach tells about his schooling, learning English and first job.

00:06:00  Moving to Hawaii, working, staying with his cousins.

00:06:44  Tells about meeting his wife, getting married, and moving to California.

00:08:18  Talks about his two children and how he tells them about his past.

00:09:07  Tells how he preserves Vietnamese culture in America.

00:11:08  Life in Garden Grove, CA. What he does in Little Saigon.
He talks about politics in America and the recent 2012 presidential elections.

Gives advice that other children and Vietnamese American’s should take with them into the future.

Again, he shares his life in Orange County the last 20 years or so.

Thach explains how his family visits each other and where they all reside today.

Thach tells what he wants most for his children.

Talks about the Tet celebration in Orange County.

Describes what he likes to do in his free time: Tennis and Music.

Describes his family gatherings in the United States.

Tells about the opportunities that the United States has provided him and his overall experience here in the United States.