Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: VU VAN HOAT
Interviewer: Vince Vu
Date: November 5, 2012
Location: Santa Ana, CA
Sub-Collection: Vietnamese American Experience Fall 2012
Length of Interview: 1:03:06

FIELD NOTES

The interview was conducted at our home in my room. We filled out all the paperwork, and the narrator was surprised of all the paperwork for this project. We sat on the carpet, and my dad, leaning on my bed, sat across from me. It is around 8pm and he seemed tired. He was dressed in his usual nightwear consisting of a sweater and sweat pants. He seemed comfortable, but nervous about speaking English for an hour.

During the beginning of the narration, my dad glazed over small details and remembered the general stories. I assume this is because of his old age, only remembering the key moments in his life. His answers were short, but he began to comfortably talk after 5 minutes. It then became like a storytelling session; the recorder was invisible.

The topic of religion surprised me. He explained how much religion played a role in his life and he appeared to be very proud of being a strong Catholic in a Catholic village. I enjoyed his stories about going to church and traditions of his village.

When the topic of war came, he seemed to recall more details of the events. Although I hear these stories once in a while, the chronological retelling of his life revealed a humble and protective childhood that I did not realize before.

Once we got into the topic of living in America, my dad seemed to remember most clearly, the events during the death of his parents. Looking back, he held his parents in a proud manner. Emotions began to build in both of us as we spoke about his arrival and when his father died. The interview became very light-hearted once we got towards the end and talked about his current lifestyle. Since he is retired, he answered quite happily. He was relieved to finish the interview.