

Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: Vu Nguyen

Interviewer: Howard Diep

Date: February 21st, 2013

Location: Irvine, California

Sub-Collection: Linda Vo Class Oral Histories, 2013

Length of Interview: 53:24

Time Log

00:00:33: Mr. Vu Nguyen states his name, his age, and describes his parents.

00:01:50: He describes where he grew up in Orange County, California between the Garden Grove and Stana Ana Borderline.

00:02:43: States where his parents were born

00:03:11: Speaks on how his family celebrates the culture and traditions of Vietnam

00:03:51: Describes Little Saigon and the businesses that he has seen/encountered

00:04:26: Describes his neighbors and community growing up in a mixed race neighborhood

00:05:52: Talks about his childhood and how he celebrated Tet in Little Saigon

00:07:01: Talks about his experience with work and labor from childhood until present

00:08:06: Speaks more about his grandfather and how he is a role model to him and experiences with him and different pets as animals

00:09:43: Talks about nicknames within the family and his sister

00:10:22: Speaks a little bit about his Vietnamese language skills

00:11:04: Tells a story about his grandfather and how he was a famous fisherman and swimmer in the island of Phu Quoc, Vietnam

00:12:01: Talks about his father and his mother and their journey through work and labor

00:13:41: Transitions to talk about his grandparents on his mother's and father's side and their work/labor in Vietnam

00:14:23: Talks about how his parents met

00:14:58: Talks about the traditions that he celebrated with his large family during Tet/New Years

- 00:15:44: States that he is not married
- 00:15:58: Talks about and describes his son, age 9
- 00:16:48: Talks about how his parents pushed him to work hard in school and strive for success
- 00:17:41: Talks more about his religion and how his family prays at night together before going to bed
- 00:18:08: Talks about funerals and ceremonial death celebrations and shrines/ancestor worships
- 00:18:55: States how he should go to church more and how he celebrates going to church with his family during the holidays
- 00:19:49: Talks about food culture within his family
- 00:20:56: Talks more about his prized possession, a fishing pole that his grandfather gave to him
- 00:22:00: Talks more about the Vietnam War and it's impact on his parents. States that it did not affect him too much because he was born in the United States and did not come over by boat.
- 00:23:18: States that his dad served in the Navy during the Vietnam War.
- 00:24:25: States that his father's youngest brother worked with the Vietnamese Triad in Little Saigon to assist people in Vietnam to come over as refugee's and immigrants
- 00:26:06: States that mother and father were both sponsored to come over to the United States. His mother stayed at Camp Pendleton.
- 00:26:39: Does not know anyone who has been in a reeducation camp
- 00:27:10: States that talking about his father's experience during the war and it's affects on him are too personal right now, but shared how his father is a tough and strong individual
- 00:28:09: States that his father came over to the United States way before the Fall of Saigon in 1975
- 00:28:31: Touches more about his parents sponsorships and how blessed they were in getting the opportunity to come to the United States
- 00:29:16: Talks more about his parents sponsorship over to the United States and journey as a boat refugee
- 00:30:07: Speaks more about his mother's experience in the United States and how she felt

alienated from the rest of the community/society because of how she looked and her cultures and traditions

00:30:44: Talks about how he feels like a minority at times growing up in his community and school in Orange County. States that he felt alienated and discriminated at times

00:31:29: Compares his community where he resides currently to Little Saigon

00:32:18: States he felt racism in elementary school, but as he progressed to middle and high school he felt like he belonged more because he made more friends that were Vietnamese and Vietnamese-American

00:34:15: Strongly identifies as Vietnamese

00:34:58: States he does not feel culture shocked when he travels because he states that the Vietnamese diaspora is widespread

00:35:28: States that he is a U.S. citizen

00:35:57: Tells a story about his grandfather and his experience taking the U.S. citizenship test

00:37:12: States that he has not voted this year, but has in previous elections

00:37:22: Talks about his father's side and how his family is still back in Vietnam. States that his family still keeps in contact frequently by mail and Skype.

00:38:04: Shares his experience visiting Vietnam when he was 12 years old

00:38:37: States that his parents still go back to Vietnam, but because his mother and father had four children, it is expensive to afford and maintain a trip to Vietnam

00:39:30: Talked about a poem he learned from his grand-master in martial arts. It was a patriotic song that was composed about parents, the country, mountain, and river.

00:40:19: He feels that he tries to keep the Vietnamese culture by teaching and communicating with his son in Vietnamese

00:41:05: Believes that the Vietnamese culture within the United States and Little Saigon will only grow stronger because of the influence that has already taken place in mainstream society.

00:42:10: Thinks that Little Saigon is only getting bigger and complains about traffic and how heavily populated it is.

00:42:51: From his observation, states how the Vietnamese community has influenced and affected society, media, and communities

00:43:47: States his involvement with the Vietnamese Boy Scouts and involvement in his local

church

00:44:46: Hopes for more room and streets within Little Saigon to clear up the traffic and congestion of vehicles within the community.

00:46:42: Wishes that the younger generation of Vietnamese-Americans to remember and understand the hardships that their parents went through in enduring the Vietnam War, migrating over to the United States, and building a solid and strong foundation for the future generations.

00:48:58: Talks about his memories going to Vietnam as a child