Interviewer: Heather Rocca  
Date: February 16, 2013  
Location: Del Mar, California  
Sub-Collection: Linda Vo Class Oral Histories, 2013  

Length of Interview: 55:27

Time Log

The first couple of minutes was cut off, but Stefan had mentioned where he was born, his parents names, and where he grew up.

00:00:03 Stefan mentions what he thinks is one of the more precious traditions that the Vietnamese culture offers.

00:00:52 He discusses his schooling in Vietnam.

00:01:03 Compares learning Math and Science in America to Vietnam.

00:02:00 Explains his immigration process, as a boat person.

00:03:40 Mentions what he remembers the most from the experience of escaping was the smell.

00:05:30 He discusses what he remembers the most once he arrived in San Francisco.

00:06:39 Explains the difference of priority one, two, and three.

00:08:10 Mentions that he does not know how to speak Chinese.

00:08:37 Explains where they lived in Tennessee and his first experience with Doctor Pepper soda.

00:09:36 He explains how he took every opportunity to learn English. Heard the word “Excuse me” said in a different way, so he tried to use this word to practice but it didn’t work out well.

00:12:58 Explains that his dad made them speak Vietnamese at home to keep the language, and tried to stay connected with any other Vietnamese people close by.
Pecking order of Vietnamese immigrants of who came first, shows who knows more.

Do family reunions.

Explains that the two children, that his mother as a favor brought over from Vietnam, were put up for adoption. Part of growing up is making tough decisions.

Explains that his parents are open when talking about the past. His family doesn’t get too emotional when discussing their past.

Mentions how his family talks about how confusing the Vietnam War was.

He talks about which family members he had were involved in the war, and that his family was very well off in Vietnam at that time period.

He mentions that without his dad in Vietnam, his mother’s motive of leaving Vietnam was to reunite with her husband, as well as to have freedom.

He talks about his Grandma and their special relationship. He feels that there is a whole story that is unexplored about how the ones that stayed in Vietnam feel.

He mentions that he named his first company: Con se ve, means your son will be home, for his grandmother.

First time to visit Vietnam since he escaped. Talks about his mix of feelings.

Over fear of waves.

Discussed all of the places he has lived.

Discusses where his other family members live.

Discusses his discrimination experiences through an essay contests.

He talks about how in every community, there is at least a couple people you can connect with.

Faces less and less discrimination as we get older, and everyone feels discriminated
00:34:17 He talks about why he doesn’t vote, but has made a decision to start getting involved.

00:35:33 Talks about the U.S. policy after the Vietnam War.

00:36:36 He talks about wanting to preserve the Vietnamese language and how the English language has become second nature for him.

00:39:52 Talks about he learned English by translating word be word into Vietnamese.

00:41:22 Mentions how smart his siblings are.

00:42:05 Mentions how he feels he has a certain responsibility for his younger siblings to make money first so he could help them out.

00:43:16 Discusses the benefits of moving to Tennessee, but still wishes that he stayed in California when immigrated here because it would have benefitted his Vietnamese.

00:44:31 Felt disconnected but now is reconnecting with himself. In some ways felt too Vietnamese to be American, but too American to be Vietnamese.

00:45:46 Talks about his thoughts and visits to Little Saigon.

00:46:53 He hopes that future Vietnamese-Americans feel connected to their rich culture and aware of the sacrifices their parents and the community has made.

00:47:59 Hopes he remembers more stories for the future.

00:48:13 He discusses how writing is a form of therapy for him, but he has no intention of publishing his work.

00:49:54 He talks about how he is involved in the Vietnamese community and what he aims to do.

00:51:02 Mentions about how there are some things he should do that he doesn’t end up doing.

00:51:24 His thoughts about what will happen in the future concerning the Vietnamese culture in
America.

00:52:55 He talks about how we should encourage but not force other cities to make a similar “Little Saigon.”

00:53:59 He talks about his feelings when meeting other Vietnamese people who have emigrated here from Vietnam, but doesn’t want to compare stories.

00:54:24 He mentions a song that reminds him of Vietnam.

00:55:09 He mentions that he plans to visit Vietnam again the near future.