Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: NINA MAI
Interviewer: Amanda Nguyen
Date: February 18, 2012
Location: Corona, California
Sub-Collection: Vietnamese American Experience Winter 2012

FIELD NOTES

I arrived at Nina’s home in Corona around 7P.M. on Saturday February 18, 2012. There was a large jump house outside her driveway with many kids running around chasing with each other. I was at Nina’s 4th year-old son’s birthday party. This was the first time I met Nina in person, as I contacted her through her brother, a friend of mine. Nina was running around setting up dishes of food for family, neighbors, her son’s karate class friends, and his classmates from school. I helped Nina set up some things for the party and entertained the children.

After most guests had left around 9:30PM, we began the interview. Nina led me into a room near the front door, which was her home office. Nina worked at home and had a room connected to her home. The walls were painted light green, which I enjoyed looking at. Along one wall was a bookshelf filled with books I was unfamiliar with. One corner of the room sat a giant stuffed animal bear meant to act as a seat cushion. Also in that corner were toys scattered on the floor. We sat on a couch along the wall adjacent to the house with a power strip conveniently available on the side for the Zoom recorder to plug into.

I took photos of Nina prior to the interview but she wished for me to take photos another day when she did not look so unruly from the birthday party. At the time, she was wearing a black strapless maxi dress. She also wore a jean jacket over that. Her hair was casual, up in a messy bun near the crown of her head. She wore brown strappy sandals that were easy to slip in and out of as she managed the birthday party.

Nina was very excited to begin the interview and I could tell she had many stories to tell. She enjoyed being able to talk to someone other than her family about her experiences. It was like there were new ears for her stories. She elaborated and explained very in depth accounts of her memories. The entire interview was very upbeat and very enjoyable that the time went by very quickly.