

# WAR AND AFTERMATH: Vietnamese Refugees in Orange County

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# Outline

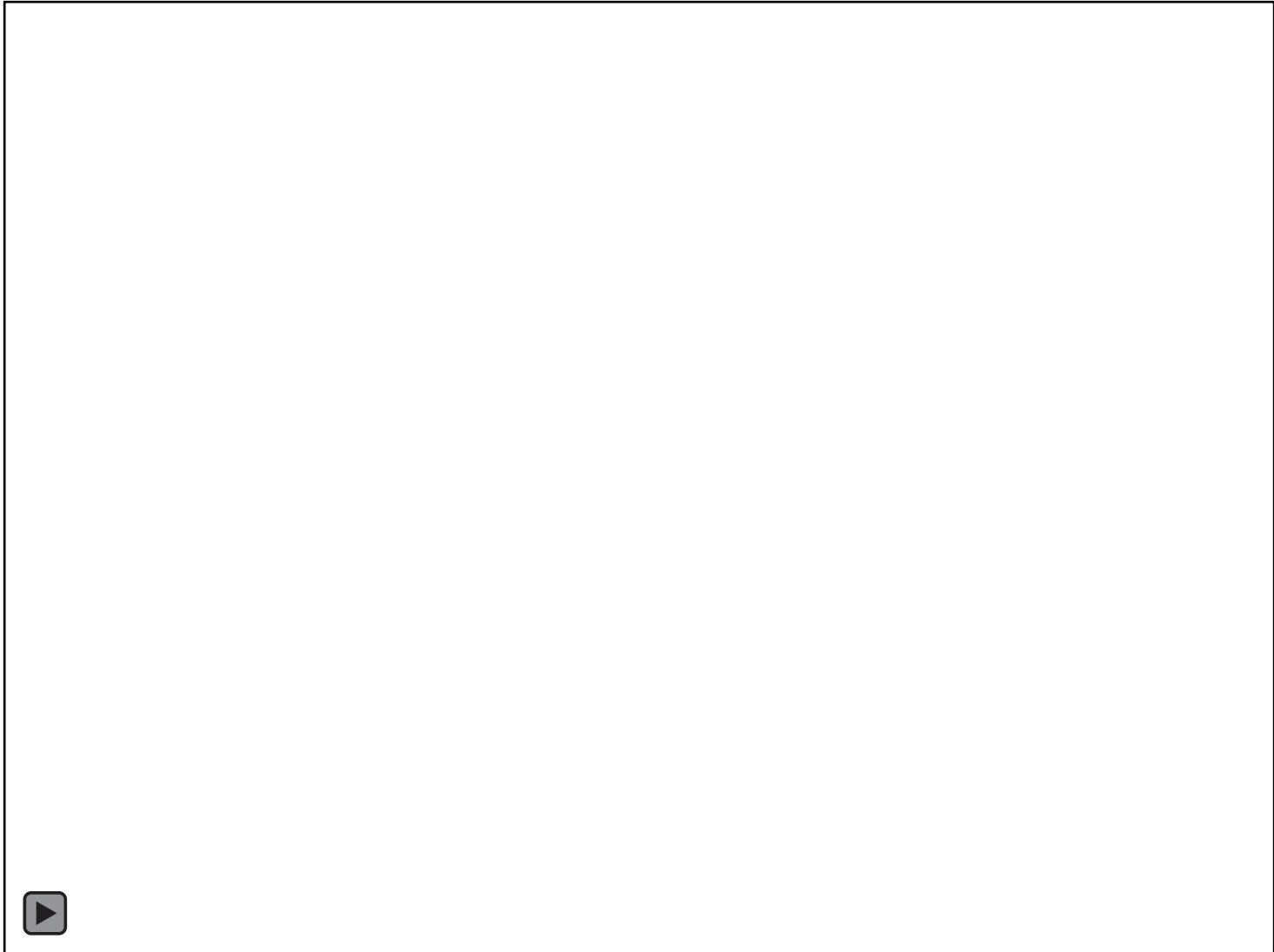
- “Vietnam is not a War”
  - Frames, Narrative, Subjectivity
- 1975 Evacuees
- The “boat people” experience
- Resettlement & secondary migrations
- Transforming Orange County
- Interviewing/Primary Sources



# Context and Perspectives

- What types of stories are told about Vietnam and its refugees in mainstream media?
- How do these stories remember the past and for what purpose today?
- How does history get written? By whom? For whom?

# “Black April”



# US Militarism in Southeast Asia

- 1954 partition
- Secret War in Laos 1964-73
- US withdrawal in 1975
- Khmer Rouge, 1975-79
- Evacuees/first wave
- Reeducation camps
- Boat People



SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE VIETNAM WAR

# Southeast Asian Archive

Documenting the histories of Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong and Vietnamese diasporic communities.



**VIETNAMESE**  
 • ĐỊA ĐIỂM: OLD WORLD 7561 CENTER AVE., HUNTINGTON BEACH

**FROM 1987**  
 Sunday, June 28th  
 7:00PM - 1:00AM  
 Do liên trường High School tổ chức  
 Với sự cộng tác của ban nhạc  
**THE FANTASY**

**A NIGHT TO REMEMBER  
 PROM '87**

**FORM**

- Cà Sĩ Lũng D
- Ảnh Sáng Hết
- Khung Cảnh V
- Âm Thanh Tụ
- Parking Rộng

MỠI CHI TIẾT XIN LIÊN  
 \* Các trường trong học  
 \* Lee Floral (714) 531-61

\* Tầng Hội Học Bình Vĩ  
 Trước 10 giờ 15  
 - Anh Triết Bình (714)  
 - Anh Phạm Minh (714)  
 - Anh Chánh Triệu (714)

Sau 10 giờ 15  
 - Anh Ngọc Huy (714) 740-2864

Giá vé ủng hộ \$35.00

**Mor Vang**  
 Hmong, Age 78

Mor Vang came to the United States from her native Laos with her husband Pan Doua in 1983. In Laos she worked on her family farm and never went to any school. When the war came to her area, all of her boys were taken into the army under command of General Yang Pao. Two of her sons - one was only 13 - and her parents were killed in the war.

In 1983 she and her husband came to the U.S. to live with her sister in Fresno. Although they feel welcome in their new home, they have no skills for work and are having trouble learning English. In Laos she said life was much easier. She was able to work all day on the farm and come home to be with her family. In the United States it is all about money. She does not want to be a burden on her family and often cries when talking about her future.





Courtesy of Nick Ut (Saigon, 1966)

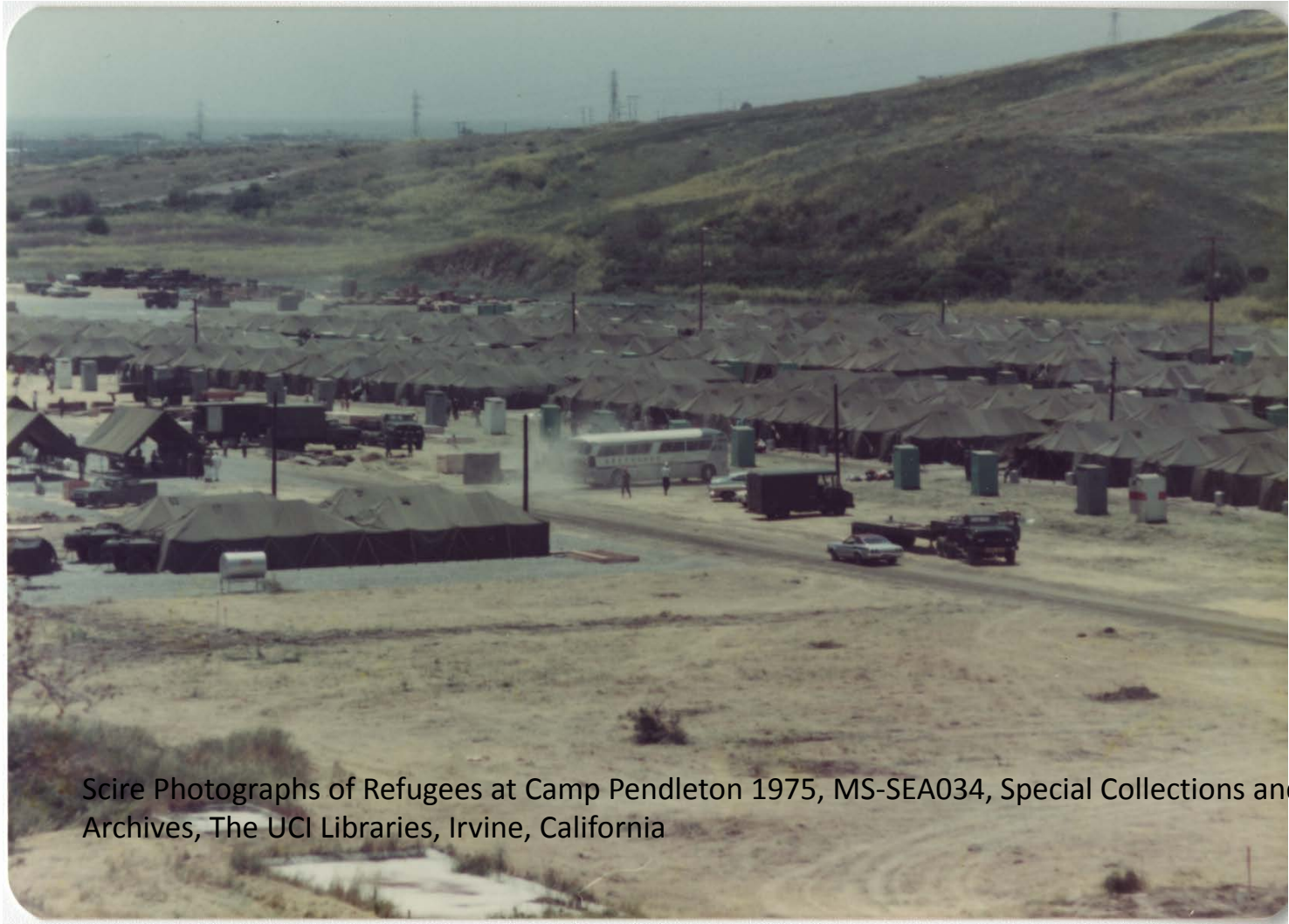


# Consequences

- 58,000 American lives
- 5.1 million Southeast Asian lives
  - 2 million Cambodians at the hands of the Khmer Rouge
  - Unexploded ordnances (UXO) have killed 20,000 people in Laos since the bombings have ended
  - Reeducation/imprisonment of South Vietnamese
  - Mass exodus (land, sea)

# THE 1975 EVACUEES

# Camp Pendleton, 1975



Scire Photographs of Refugees at Camp Pendleton 1975, MS-SEA034, Special Collections and Archives, The UCI Libraries, Irvine, California



Official Marine Corps Photograph



Official Marine Corps  
Photograph

# THE BOAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE



Huy Tran



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LOAN PHAM THAI

# RESETTLEMENT



December 1979, Virginia



Westminster, CA in the mid-1980s



# **ORANGE COUNTY: CREATING LITTLE SAIGON**



# Orange County, California

- Population over 3 million
  - White: 1.3 million (44%)
  - Latino: 1 million (34%)
  - API: 600,000 (20%)
    - Fastest growing
    - Vietnamese: 194,423
    - Korean: 93,710
    - Filipino: 89,341
    - Chinese: 84,170
- (Cambodian:7,072| Laotian:3,053 | Hmong: 1,200)



Photos from *The Orange County Register*

“Everybody in Orange County is blond and lives on the beach.”



No way. One look at the Register should be enough to convince anybody that Orange County is a community of many cultures and lifestyles. †You can see it in our special coverage of immigration issues, ethnic celebrations and neighborhoods like Little Saigon



—now the largest Vietnamese community in America. †Of course, feature articles aren't the only way we express our understanding of the county's cultural diversity. †Our everyday coverage is equally broad-based and reflects the fact that if you live here, we talk about you—whatever your race, nationality or color. †Some people may still believe that Orange County is either all white. Or all tan. †But fortunately, they're in the minority.

THE ORANGE COUNTY  
**Register**  
WE KNOW BETTER.









# A Watershed Moment in Vietnamese American History

Hi-Tek Protest in 1999

Courtesy of Ly Kien Truc



54 Days and Nights of Protest (10,000 people at its peak)

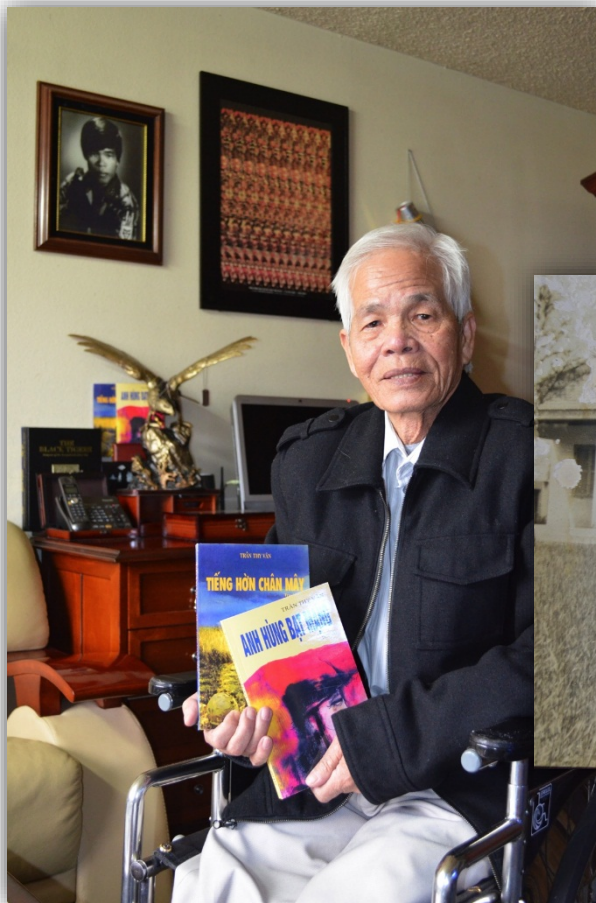


Vietnam War Memorial at the Sid Goldstein Freedom Park, Westminster



# **INTERVIEWS AS PRIMARY SOURCES**

# Trần Thy Vân



**Vietnamese American Oral History Project**  
[vaohp.lib.uci.edu](http://vaohp.lib.uci.edu)

# primary sources

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<p><b>READ</b> an introduction to the Southeast Asian American experience</p>	<p><b>FIND</b> digitized images (photographs, paintings, posters, etc.) and texts (books, articles, etc.)</p>	<p><b>SEAdoc</b> is an educational resource of the <a href="#">Southeast Asian Archive</a> at the UC Irvine Libraries focusing on post-1975 refugees and immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam and the communities they have developed in the United States. It contains 1,500 visual images and 4,000 pages of searchable text selected from the Archive to represent a cross section of our holdings. <a href="#">More...</a></p>					

[seaadoc.lib.uci.edu](http://seaadoc.lib.uci.edu)

# primary sources



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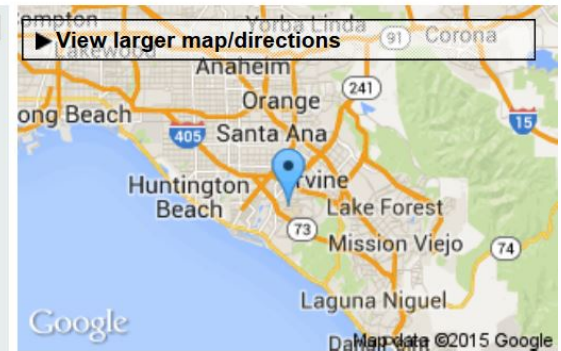
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April 14  
7:00 PM  
Barclay Theatre

