

History

The impetus for founding the Archive came from within a Southeast Asian American community. Dr. Phạm Cao Dương, a member of the Orange County Vietnamese American community, first proposed the idea to UCI officials in the mid-1980s.

In response, the UC Irvine Libraries established the Archive in 1987 with the primary purpose of documenting the new Southeast Asian population in Orange County. The initial materials came from donors throughout California, other parts of the United States, and abroad. Many early items documented the donors' personal experiences as refugees and provided background information on the culture and history of their homelands. Other contributions came from refugee workers and from American veterans.

As the Archive grew, it expanded to include Americans of Southeast Asian origin in the United States as a whole, including smaller ethnic groups such as the Cham, Tai Dam, Kmhmu, Iu Mien, and Lahu. The special focus on Orange County and California continues. It became the mission of the Archive to preserve and document the social, cultural, religious, political, and economic life of Americans of Southeast Asian origin, beginning with the exodus from Southeast Asia in 1975 and continuing on into the future as their new communities develop.

The Archive's significance has been recognized by the receipt of prestigious grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the California State Library.



How You Can Assist the Archive

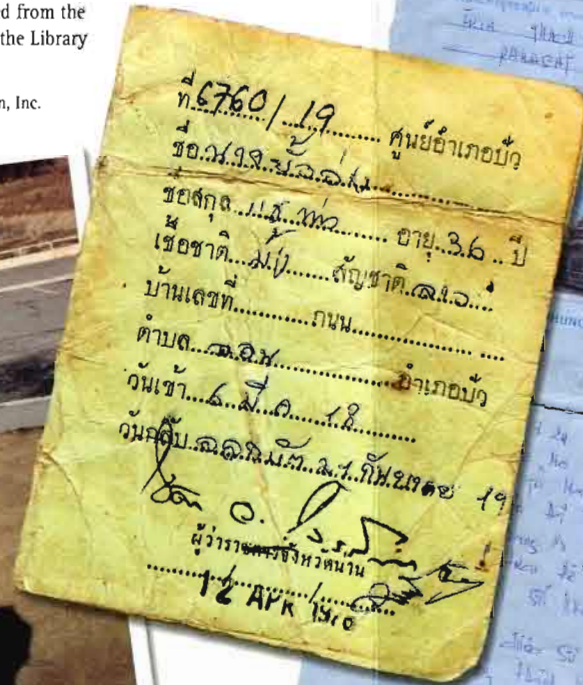
The Archive actively solicits donations of materials. We are especially interested in materials concerning the activities of organizations, businesses, individuals, and events in Southeast Asian American communities. Please contact us if you have materials that you would like to donate or would be willing to let us duplicate.

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A translation of this brochure is available in Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese.

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Documenting The Southeast Asian American Experience



Our Mission

The Southeast Asian Archive of the University of California, Irvine Libraries has as its sole focus the documentation of the refugees and immigrants from the former Indochina - Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam - who have resettled in the United States since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975.

According to the 2000 U.S. census 638,000 Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese now live in California, approximately 40% of the Southeast Asian American population in the United States. Orange County has the largest population of Vietnamese outside of Vietnam, there are substantial Laotian settlements in San Diego and the Central Valley in addition to the large San Francisco Bay Area community, and the largest population of overseas Cambodians is in nearby Long Beach.

Given this demographic profile, UCI is the logical location to document and preserve the experiences of this new American population group.



Collections

The Southeast Asian Archive contains a wide variety of materials in English and Southeast Asian languages. Collecting has focused on the refugee camp experiences of boat people and land refugees, resettlement efforts in the United States and beyond, the development and progress of new ethnic communities, and – to a lesser extent – the culture and history of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam as they reflect the cultural origins of the refugees.

Types of materials found in the Archive include:

- art (paintings, drawings)
- artifacts
- articles from magazines & journals
- books
- business directories
- correspondence
- dissertations & theses
- ephemeral materials (fliers, brochures, programs, etc.)
- films/videos/audiotapes
- government documents
- magazines & journals
- newsletters
- newspaper clippings
- organizational records
- pamphlets
- personal narratives & papers
- photographs
- posters
- refugee orientation materials
- reports
- surveys

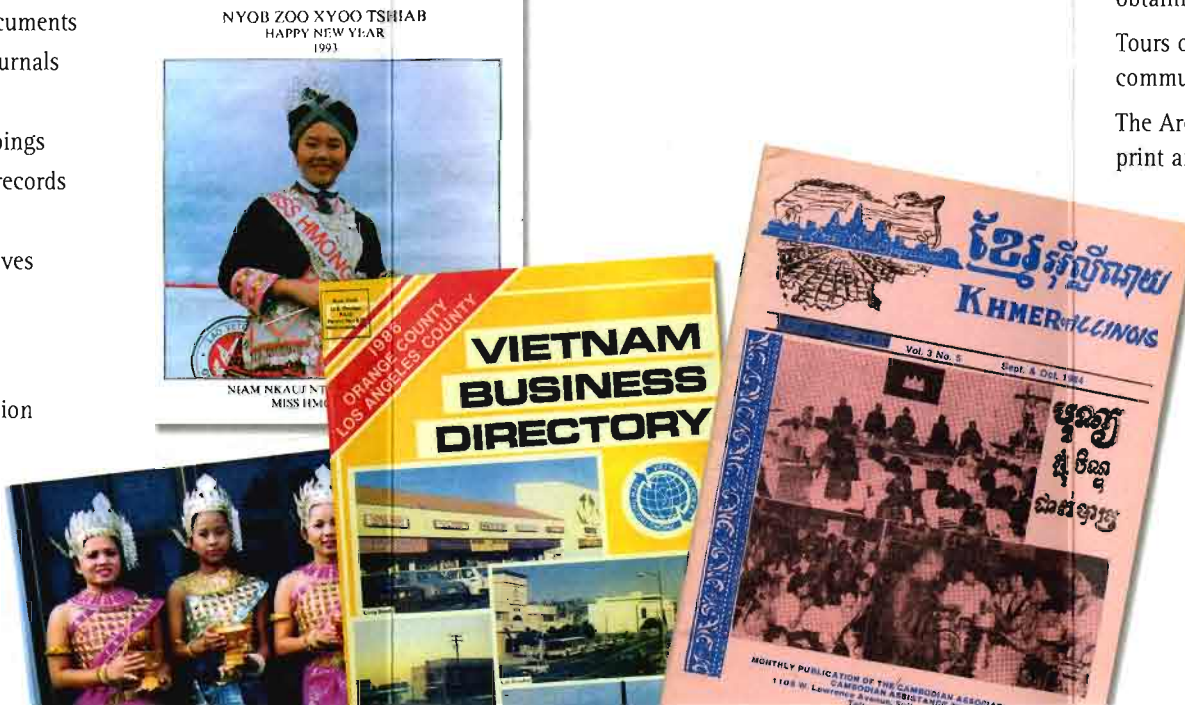
Archival collections contain unique materials for researchers. A few examples:

Mitchell I. Bonner Papers, 1975-1990s. Textual materials and photographs primarily documenting the San Francisco Bay Area's Southeast Asian American communities, focusing on Laotian Americans.

Kim Hà Papers, 1983-1997. Manuscript of Kim Hà's published account of her family's escape from Vietnam by land to refugee camps in Thailand.

Brigitte Marshall Papers, 1980s-1990s. Printed and audiovisual materials documenting refugees (primarily Hmong) in camps in Thailand and their resettlement in California, mainly in the Central Valley.

Southeast Asian Resource Action Center (SEARAC) Records, 1975-1996. Files of this major center located in Washington, D.C. which was established to assist resettlement of refugees nationwide.



We Welcome All Visitors

Users of the Southeast Asian Archive include college and university students and faculty, K-12 teachers and students, social service agencies, community activists, the media, and law firms. No credentials or approvals are necessary for access to the Archive, but, a UC library card is required to check out circulating materials. Circulating materials also may be requested through Interlibrary Loan. Most materials can be photocopied.

Community Outreach

Southeast Asian communities have given much to the Archive in terms of knowledge, contacts, expertise, and collection donations. In return, the Archive gives back as actively as possible.

An Advisory Board composed of community members and academics was formed in 1993 to enhance the Archive's outreach efforts, maintain an active contact between the community and the university, and assist in obtaining materials.

Tours of the Archive are frequently given to classes, community members, campus visitors, and others.

The Archive's quarterly newsletter, available in both print and on the Web, is distributed to more than 500 individuals and organizations nationwide.

The Archive's website (sea.lib.uci.edu) includes links to a broad array of relevant resources, issues of the Archive's newsletters, the online version of an exhibition titled "Documenting the Southeast Asian Refugee Experience," examples of Hmong *paj ntaub*, and topical bibliographies.

The Southeast Asian Archive in Print

Archibold, Randal C. (1997, January 26). Preserving pieces of refugee experience. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. A1, A20.

Bà Anne Frank – Đại HọcUCI giới thiệu thư viện – Văn Khố Đông Nam Á. (1999, April-May). *Văn Hóa* 44, A47-48.

Fujita Rony, Dorothy, & Frank, Anne. (2003). Archiving histories: The Southeast Asian Archive at University of California, Irvine. *Amerasia Journal* 29(1).

