

A VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANT'S STORY by REBECCA ROSS
HIST 210: Modern U.S. History
Springfield Technical Community College
Fall 2008

Mr. Tran and his family came to the United States from Vietnam by way of Thailand. The trip was long, at times exciting and at times a little scary. Mr. Tran was sixteen years old and didn't speak any English when he and his family arrived in San Francisco. They travelled from California to Manhattan, New York. They stayed for a while in Chinatown. There were other Vietnamese people living in Chinatown and it was comfortable. The family moved from Chinatown to Springfield, MA. Once again they lived near other Vietnamese people.

Mr. Tran realized he missed his extended family still in Vietnam. It wasn't the same being around other Vietnamese people as it was family. His parents said life would be better here and he believed them. Now, he just had to learn English.

Mr. Tran went to high school in Springfield. He found English very difficult to learn in the beginning. Other Vietnamese teens were helpful with English and school. He doesn't believe he encountered any prejudices, but he was also with others of his race. He graduated from high school and moved out of his parents' house, but stayed in Springfield. His parents have not learned English and still live in a Vietnamese community.

Mr. Tran is a citizen of the United States. He is now married with two children. They live in West Springfield. He says that there aren't too many Vietnamese in West Springfield, but they are happy there and the schools are excellent. His children speak English and Vietnamese. The family celebrates both American and Vietnamese holidays. The biggest Vietnamese holiday for them is Vietnamese New Year. They love pizza and hotdogs, but prefer rice to potatoes. They dress just like all Americans with the exception of Vietnamese wedding ceremonies. The ceremony is very traditional and calls for multiple 'costume' changes.

Mr. Tran works at Hasbro Games, in East Longmeadow. He has been employed there for eleven years. He says it is a good job most of the time. He takes his breaks and eats dinner with many of the other Vietnamese who work at Hasbro.

Mr. Tran has returned to Vietnam four times in the twenty-five years since he came to America. He likes to visit with relatives who still live there. He says Vietnam is a beautiful country, but America is his home.

—November 2008