

**The Canadian South East Asia Refugee Historical Research Project:
Hearts of Freedom
Management Committee Meeting
March 22, 2019
Peter Findlay Boardroom, 5th Floor, Dunton Tower
Videoconference access: <https://appear.in/heartsoffreedom>**

SUMMARY NOTES

***Participants:**

Mike Molloy - Chair

Colleen Lundy

Stephanie Stobbe

Anne Arnott

Xay Bounnapha

Emily Burton

Charlene Elgee

Tuyet Lam

Charlie Lim

Luong Le Phan

Lloyd Keane (for Chris Trainor)

Staff: Mondy Lim – Media Coordinator; Ginette Thomas – Project Coordinator

Regrets: Allan Moscovitch; Dau-Thi Huynh; Laura Sanchini; Chris Trainor; Tri Hoang; Vuthy Lay; Kien Le

1. Welcome and review of agenda:

There were no additions, deletions or changes to the agenda

2. Review of Summary of January 30, 2019 meeting:

Approved with no changes

3. Update: wrapping up year 1 of the project: Colleen Lundy & Ginette Thomas

- March 31, 2019 marks the end of Year 1 for the project. We are busy preparing year-end reports as required under the terms of the Contribution Agreement with Heritage Canada. Although the project experienced serious delays at the start – ex: we did not receive clearance from the Ethics Committee until December 14, 2018 – we are pleased to report that there has been a flurry of activity over the past few months and that the interviews are well under way.
- The Ottawa interviews:
 - The target is to conduct 30 interviews.
 - The interviews started the weekend of February 2-3, and as of March 17, we conducted 25 interviews over 7 weekends, and 10 more interviews are scheduled to the end of March. It's important to note however that 2 of the early interviews need to be redone for technical reasons.

- The breakdown of interviews by community for the period of February 2-March 17 (last weekend):
 - Cambodian team: 7
 - Laotian team: 2
 - Vietnamese team: 15 – (but 2 interviews are not useable)
 - Government/sponsors/others: 1
- Interviews scheduled by community from March 23-March 31:
 - Cambodian team: 3
 - Laotian team: 2
 - Vietnamese team: 3
 - Government/sponsors/others: 2
- Planning for the start of Year 2 interviews in Montreal and Toronto:
 - The teams are busy identifying potential interviewees.
 - We are seeking suitable locations to conduct interviews in both cities. Exploring potential options at Concordia University in Montreal, and at the School of Social Work at the University of Toronto.
 - Conditions: the locations need to be central and easily accessible by public transportation; the interview room must be in a quiet setting (to minimize external noise); the room must be large enough for the camera and lighting equipment;
 - We will be developing guidelines for the transportation, handling and storage of camera and technical equipment in locations outside the Ottawa area.
- Student assistantships: documenting research
 - We hired 3 Research Assistants to assemble key published literature regarding the refugees fleeing from Laos and Cambodia to Canada during the 1975 -1985 period, and to document the response of the Canadian media to the crisis and the arrival of refugees during the same period. In addition to annotated bibliographies, all three research assistants will complete background papers by the end of March.

4. Review of the interviews thus far: Mike Molloy

- Each interview typically lasts between 90 to 120 minutes.
- The technical environment is important. All interviews, except for one, were conducted in a room that was tested for lighting and sound at Carleton University. The only interview that was conducted in a home setting had to be redone because the sound and lighting conditions were not adequate, and household distractions took away from the focus of the interview. This is a good test as we select locales for the remote interviews in Montreal and Toronto.
- Interviews are conducted in either official language. Where the interviewee had an accent or limited vocabulary, the presence of their child has been very helpful to ensure that the essence of the story is captured.
- The post-interview process:
 - Once the interview is over, the Media Coordinator does an initial editing of the video which is then made available to the interviewee for review.
 - At the same time, a member of the Research Committee reviews the video and completes a time log that records where major topics of interest are introduced, or where facts/issues need to be clarified.
 - Where clarification is needed, the logs are forwarded to the interview teams for answers.
- Thus far, interviewees have shown a high degree of buy-in to the project. They arrive with prepared outlines, photos and other memorabilia that are an important part of their stories. And while the sample at this time is small, the personal histories that are being documented are astonishing. What comes through time and again is:

- The terror and harsh conditions they endured,
- The determination to get to a safer place for the sake of the children,
- The power of family attachments,
- Mutual support and assistance among strangers when they were hiding, in refugee camps or in the process of escaping,
- Ingenuity in evading detection by the authorities,
- The part that luck played when it came to survival or success and,
- The suffering survivors endured after the Communist victory, during the escape, in the refugee camps and even after arrival in Canada.
- Of their experience in Canada, what comes through is:
 - Their determination to succeed and to ensure their children succeed,
 - The huge linguistic, climatic and cultural challenges,
 - The loneliness and sadness at the loss of country, friends and family, and
 - Their profound gratitude and fierce attachment to Canada.
- From a policy perspective, one issue that we will be tracking closely to assess its long term significance is the fact that it appears that not everyone was afforded an opportunity to take the time to learn English or French on their arrival.
- Even based on this small sample, there is the overwhelming feeling that this project will make an enormous contribution to the understanding of the South East Asia refugee settlement experience in Canada.

5. The website: Stephanie Stobbe and Mondy Lim

- Stephanie Stobbe and Mondy Lim have been in discussions with the Director of Communications and Marketing as well as the Web Designer at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) about the possibility of hosting the Hearts of Freedom website.
- Mondy Lim explained that the website is currently being hosted on the server of his company, MondyLab, because Carleton University could only offer to accommodate a cookie-cutter institutional template on its server. That situation does not meet our needs.
- The Hearts of Freedom website has an artistic design to reflect the communities and to accommodate the promotional and educational resources that will be developed later in the project. The Director of Communications and Marketing has reassured us that CMU will allow him the creativity to continue to develop the website.
- Stephanie Stobbe confirmed that both the President and the Vice-President Academic at CMU are very supportive of hosting the website while the project is underway and well into the future. The project fits in with Mennonite values and the pride that the first Agreement with the Government of Canada to sponsor South East Asia refugees was signed by the Mennonite Church.

6. Walk-through of the Hearts of Freedom website: what it looks like – Mondy Lim

<https://heartsoffreedom.org/>

- The purpose: the website is the main tool to showcase the interview videos as well as the resources that will be developed throughout this project. More importantly, it is the main community access point for Hearts of Freedom information and resources.
- Historic grainy photos that are featured on the website will not be retouched as they capture the historical value of these pictures at an important point in time.
- Scanned artifacts: a few documents and photos have already been scanned and posted on the website – we are using a high quality scanner to capture the best possible image of the documents and objects that interviewees are bringing with them.

- The slider interview window is demonstrated: This feature shows the 3 most recent interviews. This will help draw the attention of the viewer to interviews, and although eventually there will be 110 interview files, these will be categorized for easy access and retrieval. The objective is that this section of the website should not be too cumbersome for the viewer to navigate and find the interviews that are of most interest to them.
- Protected interviews: interviews are not made public until such time that the interviewee has given his/her consent to do so.
- The timeline feature: is designed to be a visual chronological representation of important dates that is not overly reliant on text. The goal is to use a visible timeline that the viewer can follow and click on certain events for links to news articles, or photos or videos that are relevant to that period.
- The map: similarly, there are plans to have an interactive map of South East Asia that will also include links, photos and videos that are relevant to the project.
- The timeline and the map form part of the project mandate to develop educational resources.
- Other resources: the website will be the place where all the resources will come together, and will be the “go to” place to access them.
- Mike Molloy and Mondy Lim will review the photos that are currently available at Archives to determine if any should be integrated into the website..
- At the moment, the website is available only in English. Once the text is final, it will be translated into French.
- Action:
 - Members are asked to send links and any background information that they think can be shared on the website. Stephanie Stobbe agrees to send the link to the interview video that was made with her mother.
 - Members are asked to go the new Hearts of Freedom Facebook page and to “like it”. This will create increased traffic to the account, and by the end of June, when someone is searching “Hearts of Freedom”, they should be able to end up at our site, instead of the Indonesian film of the same name.
- Launch: The Hearts of Freedom website will be officially launched at the International Metropolis Conference in Ottawa on June 24-28.
 - The Metropolis Conference is the largest gathering of people interested in migration and immigration matters, with over 1,000 people expected to attend, many of whom will be international delegates.
 - Hearts of Freedom will be sharing a display booth and Mike Molloy is looking at options how we can use it to promote the project.
 - The idea is to have the website running on a large screen with images to draw people to the booth, to talk to people about the project and to give out a small card with the Hearts of Freedom logo, website info, and contact information. The idea is to tweak their curiosity, to collect business cards and email addresses of visitors to the booth so that we can track these for the marketing purposes.
 - It may also be a good idea to have people from the community at the booth if possible.

7. Carleton University Archives, preserving the history: Lloyd Keanes

- He explains that the Archives work is generally more “analog” than “digital”, so the work that the Hearts of Freedom project is undertaking presents some interesting opportunities.
- Ephemera: at the December 5th 2018 meeting, Chris Trainor shared a list of items of interest to Archives (copy of the list is attached at the end of this document for your reference). Lloyd explained that there have been questions about what these specific materials may be included in the ephemera category. They are the transitory types of materials, such as a train/plane ticket, or a

flyer announcing an event, etc, that from an archive perspective, their value is in the historical context of how they were used.

- Action re: Provenance:
 - Documenting the “chain of custody” is a very important step in archiving material, and it’s very important to have a process in place to ensure that the materials/digital photos/scans of the material be passed directly from the interviewee to the Archives Section.
 - They have a form that the owner of the material must complete to release that material to Carleton University.
 - Currently, we do not tell interviewees that they can donate their material to the Archives. We need to integrate this into our interviewing procedures.
- Digitalizing of photos: he explains that, ideally, Archives needs to retain the originals and would give the digitized copy version back to the owner. The reason is that Archives has the proper physical environment in which original materials can be preserved and conserved. The owner would have the authenticated digital copy for their own files.

8. Funding opportunities: Colleen Lundy & Stephanie Stobbe

- Colleen Lundy is looking into Carleton University’s crowdfunding “Future Funder” Program. The advantage is that donors receive a tax receipt. One of the questions that come to mind is how the funds are managed within the university. We will provide more information when it becomes available.
- Stephanie Stobbe is in touch with a local business man who is interested in providing funds to conduct interviews in the Winnipeg area. These interviews could potentially start in the Fall, after the rush of the Montreal and Toronto interviews have taken place. She also indicated that she would look at the possibility of applying for a SSHRC grant.
- Action:
 - Members are encouraged to look at potential sources of funding within their communities so that the project can conduct interviews out west. This is important because a lot of refugees have settled out west.

9. Roundtable discussion – Mike Molloy

- Xay Bounnapha congratulated the team on the excellent website. He believes that we should use it to promote the project, and to leverage contributions from the community. He indicates that he would be interested in being interviewed, and Colleen assures him that he is eligible.
- Action:
 - Xay Bounnapha’s name will be submitted to the community coordinator as a potential interviewee.
 - Members are asked to keep an eye open for community events or opportunities where Mike Molloy could be invited to make a short presentation about the project. We also have a banner that communities can borrow and display.
- Tuyet Lam supports using the website to fundraise for the project, and suggests that community organizations can also be encouraged to do fundraising. She offers to help with local interviews in Alberta as they have the resources, people and cameras to do interviews. Mondy Lim cautions that the issue of video quality and technical standards will need to be verified. Tuyet Lam also mentions that she has an interview with some of the Air Canada personnel who were involved in the process, as they were trying to capture these stories.
 - Action: Mike Molloy and Tuyet Lam will follow up on these issues.

- Emily Burton also congratulated the team on the website, and thanks the Management Committee for their involvement as this exciting project unfolds.
- Luong Le Phan is pleased that he has been getting a lot updates about the progress of the project from Mai Nguyen, the Community Coordinator. He is a designer and has links to the community, offers his help with anything he can do to improve the image and design of the project.
- Mike Molloy announced that Peter Duschinsky will be stepping back from some of the activities on the Research and the Management Committees for a short while, and indicates that we are looking forward to having him back at the table.

10. Next Meeting: first week of May 2019:

- The members of the Management Committee will be canvassed about their availability to meet again during the first week of May.

Hearts of Freedom – Archival Documents List

Archives and Research Collections in the Carleton University Library is seeking to acquire archival documents related to the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian refugees participating in the Hearts of Freedom oral history project. These documents will also enhance the Canadian Immigration Historical Society collections, also housed in Archives and Research Collections.

Items of interest for the archive include:

- Photographs
 - Country of origin
 - Early life in Canada
 - Participants and their families
- Ephemera
- Records related to immigration and resettlement
 - Transit: transit logs, tickets
 - Housing: Leases, settlement records
 - Resettlement aid: documentation from resettlement agencies, community groups, or sponsor families
- Correspondence
- Newspaper clippings and magazine articles on immigration and resettlement
- Unpublished writings on the refugee experience

We would also be willing to consider items that are not listed above, depending on the type of material and its source.

To discuss a donation further, please contact:

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