

**The Canadian Southeast Asian Refugee Historical Research Project:  
Hearts of Freedom (HOF)  
Management Committee Meeting  
Wednesday February 17, 2021  
1:30 pm to 3:30 pm (Ottawa time)**

Participants:

Anne Arnott, Emily Burton, Peter Duchinsky, Tri Hoang, Dau-Thi Huynh, Tuyet Lam, Van-Nha Tran, Mondy Lim, Colleen Lundy, Amy Ma, Mike Molloy, Allan Moscovitch, Mai Nguyen, Sheila Petzold, Som Phouangpraseuth, Stephanie Stobbe, Ginette Thomas, Chris Trainor.

Regrets:

Xay Bounnapha, Richard Dang, Vuthy Lay, Charlie Lim, Laura Sanchini

**Summary Notes**

1. **Review agenda and Summary Notes** (Allan Moscovitch)

No revisions or additional items were proposed for the Agenda and the Summary Notes.

2. **Outline for the book and discussion** (Mike Molloy)

*For more information - see attached "Update - HOF Book Committee"*

- We need to deliver the book manuscript to our primary funder, the federal department of Canadian Heritage, by the end of September 2021. Our manuscript proposal was accepted for publishing by the McGill Queens University Press (MQUP). Once it is delivered to MQUP, we will be looking at publishing the French version of the book.
- We are working on a draft to be ready by end of June. The revised book outline at the moment contains the following chapters:
  1. Introduction: origins and development of the HOF project
  2. Chap 1: what caused the refugees to flee Southeast Asia; Canadian government policy
  3. Chap 2: the Vietnamese experience; the first wave in 1975
  4. Chap 3: the Vietnamese experience; the second wave 1978-on
  5. Chap 4: the Cambodian experience
  6. Chap 5: the Laotian experience
  7. Chap 6: the Canadian role
  8. Chap 7: Analysis; lessons learned from the Southeast Asian resettlement experience
  9. Chap 8: Conclusions
  10. Appendices: data
- The structure of the book reflects the relative demographic distribution of the interviews among the three ethnic groups.

- We now have data about the total number of refugees who came to Canada during this period. This includes: 70,000 refugees in what we refer to as the first wave 1975-1980; 77,000 more during the years 1981 to 1997; and, 60,000 more, mainly Vietnamese, who were sponsored by relatives in Canada under the Canadian government's family reunification program. This means that the total number of Southeast Asian refugees who came to Canada was over 200,000.
- In a review of our data, we noted that 14 of the refugees interviewed by HOF also self-identified as being of Chinese ancestry.
- All the authors are working hard on their chapter. Peter Duschinsky indicated that he plans to have a draft of Chapter 2 ready by the end of March. He is focusing on the experiences of the refugees during the last days of Saigon. He has reviewed all the interviews from this first wave and is impressed by the quality of the stories. He is enthusiastic about how the other chapters will build on the experiences that the refugees have shared with us.

### 3. **Outline for the documentary film and discussion** (Sheila Petzold)

*For more information - see attached "Report on Progress of HOF Documentary"*

- A total of 16 interviews have already been chosen to be featured in the film, and the team is reviewing 3 hours of film which needs to be reduced to fit the 45-minute length of the film.
- The film will include interviews with 8 refugees and interviews with 8 Canadians who were actively involved in the resettlement of the refugees. One additional french interview with a Vietnamese refugee will also be added. It was noted that it is the refugees themselves who are the main storytellers in the film.
- The film narrative is being assembled by the film editor and has been divided into 5 blocks that cover the topics listed below. It is expected that blocks 2 & 3 will be ready by the end of March.
  1. Introduction and historical context: the fall of Saigon and Phnom Penh; life before the wars; and, the decision to leave.
  2. Stories of the escape: encounters with pirates; and, the rescue.
  3. Life in refugee camps: the Canadian response – government initiatives and sponsorships; and, interviews with Canadians in the camps.
  4. Arrival in Canada: adjusting to life in Canada; and, reflections.
  5. Where are they now. Credits.
- Work is progressing on researching access to additional film footage from the CBC and other sources. The challenge is negotiating the cost of license fees to use CBC footage which is significantly higher than when planning started a few years ago.
- For the soundtrack, Sheila is optimistic that a scorer with whom she has worked with in the past will be interested in working on this film.
- Work is also underway to scan still images from photos and from news headlines. The challenge is obtaining the highest resolution quality images as possible. Sheila has many photos and is working with Mondy Lim on the images provided by the interviewees themselves. Emily Burton will get in touch with Sheila about the images that are available at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, some of which may be from people who were interviewed. Mai Nguyen will also follow up with interviewees and

Stephanie Stobbe will share copies of some documents that were provided by an interviewee in Winnipeg.

4. **Outline for education materials and discussion** (Ginette Thomas)

*For information - see attached "Update – Education Committee"*

- The funding agreement with Canadian Heritage requires that we develop networks with provincial ministries of education and school boards to promote the resources developed by the project.
- This requires a national strategy to reach across Canada. An Educational Resources Committee comprised of individuals with experience working with educational materials and professional networks has been set up.
- Timing has proven to be a challenge, and the work has been off to a slow start. Priorities in the education sector have shifted over the past year, and the development of the book and the film have also been affected due to COVID restrictions.
- Preparing educational materials is divided into 3 major components:
  - We are reviewing recent educational materials that could serve as models to create lesson plans:
    - to teach specific HOF topics as part of existing courses at the secondary level like Canadian history, social studies, sociology, civics;
    - that are approximately 45 minutes in length;
    - that are interactive and educational.
  - Create narratives for the lesson plans that draw on the work underway to prepare the film and the book:
    - the materials must provide information about that time in history;
    - the approach will be on story-telling, bringing the stories to life – memories from the journey, what it was like to come to a new country etc;
    - the lesson plans will offer teachers access to video and other materials from the HOF website, and the digital exhibits when they are launched.
  - Share the educational materials with existing educational networks at the national and provincial levels including:
    - provincial ministries of education will require different approaches;
    - existing professional organizations that have national and provincial reach: ex: the Canadian Association of Social Science Studies; faculties of education at universities across Canada (where they train teachers), etc.

5. **Outline for the Exhibits Committee and discussion** (Stephanie Stobbe)

*For more information – see attached "Report – HOF Museum Exhibit Committee"*

- The Committee has met regularly since the Spring of 2020 and continue to meet almost monthly to brainstorm various ideas for exhibits.
- The purpose of the travelling museum exhibit is to share the amazing refugee stories of courage, resiliency, hope and their tremendous contributions to Canada.
- In collaboration with representatives from the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, the Canadian Museum of History, and from the HOF team, the Committee is planning to begin work on a travelling exhibit and a digital museum exhibit in the Fall of 2021 that will also promote online access to the HOF stories, the documentary

film and other resources. Representation on the Committee will be expanded to include the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian communities.

- The travelling exhibit will hopefully begin touring across Canada by the Fall of 2022 and will be able to bring these stories across Canada to the cities where we conducted interviews: Halifax, Montréal, Ottawa/Gatineau, Toronto, Kitchener, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver. It would include 6 Pop-Up Exhibits (3 English and 3 French panels with QR codes to connect to the Digital Exhibit and the HOF website) and a Digital Exhibit located on the HOF website (with links to more interactive detailed stories and information). During the 3-day events in each location, there will also be a documentary film viewing and book discussion.
- The strategy is to use the exhibits to encourage local community involvement, such as workshops, panels and other events that will offer opportunities to share our findings and to link to broader discussions on multi-culturalism and anti-racism.
- The challenge is to secure funding to launch these exhibits. The original funding for HOF was targeted to conducting the interviews and preparing a documentary film, a history book and educational materials based on the research findings. It did not include funding for a traveling museum exhibit and a digital exhibit. The Committee has been exploring separate sources of funding, including:
  - *Carleton University Future Funder*: thanks to the generosity of the community donors, we raised \$11,100 in the December 2020 fund raising initiative;
  - *Blair Foundation*: we are awaiting a decision on our application
  - *Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives (CSMARI)* program projects from the Department of Canadian Heritage: we are awaiting a decision on our application;
  - *Digital Museums Canada Medium Investment Fund*: we submitted an application, however, as a university, the project was not eligible.

6. **Next steps on the website and discussion** (Mondy Lim)

*For more information – see attached “Update: Website”*

- There have been some recent changes to the HOF website, mostly cosmetic and some corrections, to make it more visually appealing.
- The highest traffic is in the Resources section where people can find links to relevant books and to our research papers.
  - Colleen mentioned that one of the authors, Filipe Duarte, received a lovely note from a woman who had been researching her father and how much she appreciated coming across his name in Filipe’s paper, *Background paper on the archival media research: Toronto Star and The Globe and Mail (1975-1985)*. Her father is mentioned several times as he was the Director of the Vietnamese Association at that time. She recalls how her father would meet newcomers at the airport and offer them a place to sleep on their couch if they did not yet have a place to stay. He worked on Operation Lifeline and her mother started the Vietnamese Women’s Association. The fact that the paper came up in her search is an indication of the coverage that the website is getting, and how important these the papers are to the people who are reading them.

- The first phase of the website is almost finished. It includes public access to 155 interviews. Out of the 172 interviews we conducted, 11 interviewees have chosen not to publish their interview. We comply with their requests and their anonymized data is available to the internal HOF research team only.
  - Mondy noted increased activity by hackers during this COVID period, with over 700 hacking attempts on a monthly basis. As a preventative measure, he removed some content from public access, in case a hack causes a leak of information.
  - The advantage of the current website's design is its flexibility. It is built on a modular architecture which allows us to create new components when needed, for example for the upcoming exhibits or educational resources, without having to re-design the website. Based on our current data, we can already build additional components to celebrate special themes for events such as the upcoming Cambodian and Laotian New Year events in April.
  - Mondy is actively collecting additional information and he encourages the Members to send him any links that they may come across that they find relevant to the project, books for example, and he will add them to the web site.
  - The web site already contains a chronology of the events of that period in history. The chronology is informative and interactive and is proving to be a good resource. We have received positive comments about it. Members are encouraged to check it out at the following link:  
<https://heartsoffreedom.org/chronology/>
- The second phase of the website will focus on the people themselves. Although we have data from the interviews, we have not curated that information, and the information on the website at the moment is primarily presented as files. What is missing are the interesting statistics, the stories and the themes coming from the interviews. Work is underway to get these organized.
  - We can start building a community around the website - a forum of sorts.
  - Over and above the stories from the interviews, there are voices behind the photos on the website. For example, one of the photos that appears on the HOF postcard depicts a couple with small children meeting with a Canadian official. Richard Dang, who was a camera operator with the HOF interview teams, recognized the child in the photo as his cousin! Who knows how many more connections are waiting to happen.
  - Mondy envisions that the HOF website could grow as a place where people will share photos, make connections and have conversations among themselves.
- Colleen indicated that we will also post the Management Committee meeting documents as well as announcements on the website for easy reference and for sharing with others who may be interested in the project.

## 7. **Other Business – funding** (Allan Moscovitch)

- Formally, the project ends on March 31, 2021 at the conclusion of the Contribution Agreement between Carleton University and Canadian Heritage (PCH).

- PCH informed us that we cannot carry over funds beyond that date, even though COVID restrictions resulted in delays in getting some work underway. We revised our plans and are getting that work done before March 31, 2021.
- However, PCH did give us an extension to deliver the results of the products, that are now due on September 30, 2021.
- We have access to other funds that we kept in reserve to help us carry on with the project from April 1 to the end of September. These include funds from Canadian Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (CIRC) and funds raised from the Carleton University *Future Funder* fundraiser.
- We already heard from Stephanie about the applications submitted for some post-project funding: from the *Blair Foundation*; and from the *Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives (CSMARI)* program projects. As well, she is also planning to submit an application for a *Connections Grant* from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to support post-project community-based initiatives.
- Other business:
  - Colleen introduced Amy Ma, a graduate student in the Master of Social Work program at Carleton University who is doing an internship with us. She has been working on digital resources for the film and is doing research on the interview videos. We are very pleased to have Amy join us for this short time.

#### 8. **Next meeting**

Thank you for joining us today. The next meeting will be on April 14 2021 at 1:30pm Ottawa time, when we can hopefully celebrate the arrival of Spring!

*Attachments included*