

**The Canadian Southeast Asian Refugee Historical Research Project:  
Hearts of Freedom (HOF)  
Management Committee Meeting  
Wednesday September 22, 2021  
1:00 pm (Ottawa time)**

Participants:

Anne Arnott, Emily Burton, 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, Laura Sanchini Stephanie Stobbe, Ginette Thomas, Chris Trainor.

*\*\*some participants experienced connection difficulties and missed part of the discussions*

Regrets:

Xay Bounnapha, Peter Duschinsky, Dau-Thi Huynh, Vuthy Lay, Charlie Lim

## Summary Notes

**1. Review Agenda and Summary Notes** (Colleen Lundy)

- The order of Agenda items was revised to allow Chris Trainor and Sheila Petzold to present at the beginning of the meeting.
- No additional items were proposed for the Agenda and the Summary Notes.

**2. Next Steps for Archival Donation** (Chris Trainor)

Next Steps:

- *Inventory:* HOF needs to provide Archives with an inventory of the material that it will be donating to the Archives. The inventory should include both physical and digital materials. The format of the materials does not matter. This will provide a broad overview of the broad materials that will be part of our holdings. So the first step is for us to provide Archives with the broad list to start that discussion. Then we can then discuss what would or would not work.
- *Donor Agreement:* He will forward a copy of the Donor Agreement to Allan and Colleen. As primary investigators, Allan and Colleen will have to sign the agreement, and in preparation for that, will need to discuss the language in the Agreement about any restrictions and other access conditions. But this does not need to be discussed today.
- *Digital content:* we need to discuss what we would want to have accessible and discoverable, and the timelines when we would want that to become available. In the case where we may want to donate other materials at a later date, it would be beneficial for the archival team to know what materials will come first and what will follow.

### Materials:

- Any materials that interviewees indicated that they would like to donate to support the project would be important.
- Other project-donated materials for the research project used to, for example, write a book, would be important.
- For the transfer of all the 4K video interviews, Chris will arrange a separate meeting with the technical team because they support the digital infrastructure. They have already been briefed on the digital recordings for this oral history interviews project and will be expecting them. The video interviews are not on the web server. The public links and the links from the website bring the user to view the video that is located on YouTube.
- Research-related materials from committees would be important. The community and city coordinators may consider archiving documents related to coordinating interviews.
- The consent forms can be archived in paper form and Allan and Colleen need to meet with Chris separately to discuss privacy issues. Archives will scan them at some point in time. Although the consent forms will not be made public, they will likely be important for Archives to have to make the interviews available through other libraries through the digital infrastructure.
- Project management materials can be archived, including all notices and communications sent from the project, starting with when they started up the project, with ads for positions, etc.
- Archives has access to “Archive-it”, a web archiving service for libraries and archives that can capture what our website looks like.
- In case someone will make other documentaries on HOF, the film team has made a log of every image that they used in the film, including the source, and where you can find it. They sourced a lot of historical images, which will be very important for future documentarians, and important for Archives.
- Artifacts: In the case of a recently deceased interviewee who had asked to donate the artifacts and personal documents in his luggage, Chris advises that for the actual archive donation, Allan and Colleen will have to sign off that these are actual project materials, and they would need a special donor form for the family to donate the materials. When it comes to actual artifacts that are different types of materials, Archives needs to determine that they can actually preserve and maintain them properly, as they may need special measures to properly preserve the quality and integrity of documents, photos, etc. If not possible, Archives can look at other institutions that may be in a better position to archive them, as we would not want any valuable artifacts to be lost.

### **3. Update: Documentary Film (Sheila Petzold)**

- At the May 12, 2021 meeting, the Management Committee had the chance to provide their feedback on the rough cut of the film. The film team is now working with the goal of having the final version ready at the beginning of November.

- Work is progressing and things are coming together quite well. The content of the film is ready and they are now focused on tweaking technical details, like some images that are not at a high enough resolution, so they may have to go back to the individuals and get those photos scanned again if possible. The team is also pulling together the final credits list that will appear on the film.
- Obtaining public and historic images is a large part of producing a film and obtaining the rights to include them in the film is a very costly process. But the team's digital film archivist did some great work and was able to obtain a good deal with the CBC, so this will help them stay within the budget.
- Since we were successful in conducting a video interview with Former Prime Minister Joe Clark in August, the team is looking at the possibility of including short clips of Joe Clark as well as Former Minister of External Affairs Lloyd Axworthy that would frame the tone of the federal government's approach to Canada's response to the Southeast Refugee crisis.
- There was a discussion about options as to how HOF could best present and make the general public aware of the valuable contributions that the Canadian political leaders and public servants that served to make Canada's response a success. It could provide a valuable narrative to inform Canadians of the importance of strong political leadership.
- The team is researching the technical requirements for the final version. Most people will likely be viewing the film online, but it is also expected that the film will be screened in other venues, such as at the exhibits that HOF is planning with the national museums in Canada, so they are exploring the formats and technical details required for the delivery of screenings of the film in a variety of public settings. We need to confirm the technical specifications for online streaming and playback, as well as double check the output formats for public broadcasting, for exhibits and festivals. We also have to make sure that we meet the standards for archives to ensure a longer shelf life for the film. So please let the team know of any other screening requirements for the final film.
- The team is waiting to hear from a composer who will provide the soundtrack, he was not available during the summer but will be connecting soon to get that underway. The narrator needs to be confirmed. There were very positive responses to the voice of her film editor who filled in and read the script in the rough-cut version that we saw in May. Even the composer noted that it was low-key, compassionate and natural. Another option that was discussed was to explore a female voice. It was suggested that perhaps one of our female participants who is a reporter could also be approached as a possibility.
- If the film is ready, there is the possibility that we could submit it as an entry in Hot Docs festival. The submission deadline is late November, the decisions announced in February 2022, and the successful entries will be aired in March and April 2022.
- She will let the Management Committee know when any screenings occur so that they can share that information with the community.

#### 4. **Update: Museum Exhibits** (Emily Burton)

- There is still no word from potential funders which is causing delays for the committee's work for the next stage, which is the design stage. They were hoping for a decision from Canadian Heritage in July, but things have been quiet because of the election. Perhaps we will have news over the next few months.
- In the meantime, the Exhibits Committee is pursuing its work on exploring the content and design of the exhibits. They are meeting with designers to discuss what potential exhibits could look like.
- They had a meeting with the programming department at the *Canadian Immigration Museum at Pier 21* in Halifax and they are interested in hosting a 3-day event which could include a viewing of the film documentary and perhaps also a book launch. This would likely be in September 2023 and would also include some events for the local communities specifically.
- The *Pacific Canada Heritage Centre Museum of Migration* in Vancouver is also very interested in having it for about 3 months and there is a possibility of an overlap with Asian History Month. They talked about putting advertisements on bus shelters and perhaps having an event in Chinatown as a possible location because there are still some Vietnamese restaurants in Chinatown and it was much bigger in the 1970s when the refugees arrived.
- There is a lot of interest out there and we are still waiting to hear from *Human Rights Museum* in Winnipeg and a few other places and things are coming together except for that important funding piece of confirmation of funding.
- We are also looking a “trailer” for the film for marketing purposes, that would be on a “landing site”, meaning a special link so that the public does not have to navigate through the website to find it. There could also be a landing site for the book as well.

#### 5. **Update: Book** (Mike Molloy)

- The book is progressing very well. There are now 6 chapters that have been prepared in first draft form. There are 3 more to write as well as the front end of the book.
- The writing of these chapters has been a very difficult task. Each of the 6 draft chapters covers at least 30 videos that needed to be viewed over and over by the writers to identify the stories that came out of each one. It has proven to be a very time consuming process. For example, the first drafts for chapter 2 (The Vietnamese War Refugees of 1975) and Chapter 3 (South Vietnam In The Last War Years) has involved an estimate of at least 300 hours so far, which is a huge amount of time.
- In many cases, the depiction of the brutal conditions that are presented in the stories is intense. For example, we may have to consider including a warning ahead the draft of Chapter 4 (Cambodia: War, Genocide and Stories of Survival). But these stories deserve to be told, and what happened to those people deserves to be recorded, but it is at times very difficult to read.

- Joe Clark will be writing the foreword to the book.
- There have also been changes at our publisher, the McGill Queens University Press. However, our correspondence with them indicates that they are still on track to deal with our book.
- It will take another 5 months before we have a complete edited manuscript. Since several authors are involved in drafting the manuscript, editing will deal with the issue of the different styles and ways of presenting the stories. However, variety in presentation can be an asset.
- One of the challenges is the list of acknowledgements. It will prove to be quite long and extensive, so we will have to look at how to address that. So many people have contributed in one way or another which is a wonderful problem to have! We just need to figure out how to do it.

#### **6. Update: Educational Materials (Ginette Thomas)**

- Our funding agreement with Canadian Heritage requires that HOF develop networks with provincial ministries of education and school boards to promote the resources developed by the project, and that these resources reach educational institutions.
- Only when the book and the film are completed and available publicly, will the Education Committee be able to discuss a dissemination strategy to share the lesson plan and access to the book and film to support their studies.
- With the ongoing delays in the production of those 2 deliverables, the aim is now to target mid-2022 before approaching the ministries of education with a strategy to integrate the lesson plan and the educational materials in their curricula.
- In the meantime, a draft lesson plan was prepared (a first draft was distributed for the May 12 meeting) It is composed of 5 separate teaching modules based on the themes developed for the book and for the documentary film: a brief history of life before the war, the escape, the journey, arrival and life in Canada.
- The lesson plan will centre around 6 selected video interviews from Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese participants (3 English interviews and 3 French interviews) that will serve as case studies. The selected interviews will be 6 former refugees that lived through this experience when they were youth. For the module on the Canadian response, 2 interviews will be selected as case studies.
- The teaching modules are designed for 45 minute classes in high school grades.
- Sample provincial/territorial secondary school curricula have been collected to support the development of a generic lesson plan that could be used across Canada.
- Next steps include: completing the lesson plan with new information from the book and film; linking relevant sections of the book (page numbers, etc) and the film (minute numbers, etc) into the appropriate module to guide the case studies.
- There was an excellent suggestion to use film clips of historical events to introduce the module on the history of the Southeast Asia and of the war. Even a few minutes of film

footage would provide a great visual perspective of the historical context for students to experience what life was like at that time.

- Hopefully we can also direct teachers to the digital exhibits when they are ready.

#### 7. **Discussion: The future of the *Hearts of Freedom* project** (Colleen Lundy)

- *Colleen* opens the floor to a free-flowing discussion by reminding members that we are coming to the end of project at the end of the month as we close the books with Canadian Heritage. This means that Ginette's formal role as Project Coordinator and Mondy's formal role as Digital Coordinator also come to an end.
  - We would like your thoughts as we begin to plan what will happen next with HOF.
  - Will the members of the Management Committee want to stay involved with the project? And if so, in what form, and how we would do that.
  - Any advice as to how we could remain as an unincorporated activity and should we have a constitution.
  - Any other options we should consider on how we should proceed without just closing the books on the project.
- *Allan*: From the perspective of the research team, it will take another 6 months to have everything wrapped up and maybe even longer:
  - The film will not be ready for another 6 months, and the same thing with the book, and the educational materials are interactive with the film and the book, so that can't be finished either. And the website is also interactive with the book and the film so we will be beyond the formal limits of the Canadian Heritage funding. But we will keep going and take another 6 months to get everything wrapped up.
  - As well, there are plans to carry on the exhibits until 2023 or may 2024 so there needs to be management of the project since there will be activities of the project. Also, the website will have to continue. We've purchased the domain names for 10 years as part of the project. So we hope that it will at least be maintained for 10 years.
- *Mondy*: He will continue to maintain the website to at least ensure that it is running properly. Perhaps we can speak with Stephanie about folding it under her initiatives at her university. Ideally, a community could be built around the website where people and researchers could connect, build forums, etc
- *Sheila*: The project needs to maintain a presence, and she also wants to continue to be involved in whatever way she can to help in communicating these stories.
- *Colleen*: One of the strengths of the project has been community involvement. The project emerged from the community and the community has continued to be present throughout the whole time. It might go into a different structure or a different as a committee of some form, but she would like to see community involved in that structure in some way. She welcomes any ideas how to set that up, who would be involved, and how the community associations could also be part of that as they have been from the start.

- *Mondy*: There will be a lot more traffic going to the website once the film, book and educational materials are finalized. For fundraising, he can set up the website to collect funds, but as a non-profit, we would need to determine who would be responsible to manage any funds collected.
- *Allan*: We have all invested a lot of effort and energy in this project and we don't want it to simply drop off the edge. The next steps will depend on the format we take. If we register as a non-profit organization, then we need a constitution because that's part of the registration process and there has to be an executive administering the non-profit and a requirement for an annual report. Fundraising would be for that organization, but non-profit doesn't necessarily mean that it's a charity. To be a charity, we would have to further register with the Canada Revenue Agency. If we decide to not register formally, we can have a constitution that we would adopt. Which describes the structure and the officers of the organization. Those are the choices.
- *Som*: Indicates that has to leave the meeting for another commitment, but he wants us to know that he would like to help with the future of HOF both as part of the Lao Association of Ottawa Valley and also personally as he can lend his technical skills and resources to the project.
- *Tuyet*: The Calgary Vietnamese Canadian Association is very proud to have been part of this project and they can help however it is needed for the next steps.
- *Allan*: If we were to register as a non-profit in the name of HOF, we can also indicate that the management of the organization would be shared between several organizations including the VCF.
- *Tuyet*: She cannot speak for the VCF, but she will bring it back to the VCF and keep us posted about any decisions. The VCF has an election every year with new board members, but it is the hub of all the Vietnamese organizations in Canada. She cannot speak for Mai and Tri who lost their connection to this meeting and Van Nha who had another commitment today, but she wanted to let us know that on behalf of the Vietnamese organizations from Calgary, Edmonton, Sherbooke, Ottawa and Toronto everyone appreciates being part of this project and the work done so far. And she will bring it back to the VCF.
- *Allan*: The goal for the discussion today was not to necessarily solve the problem, it's to raise it, and over the next 6 month, determine how we will proceed. So if the VCF could discuss it and how they would see the project continuing, and bring that input back to us, that would be excellent.
- *Mike*: When considering the membership, it would good if the actual organizations, like the LAOV and the CAOv and the Vietnamese associations in whatever form they are associated that, in order to ensure continuity, that we would have the opportunity to invite individual members from these organizations to be part of the management committee for a period of time, as individuals not necessarily tied to an elected roles that change every year.

- *Allan*: The same is true for the dedicated HOF community teams that we hired that are so personally connected who want to keep on with the project. We don't want to lose those people.
- *Tuyet*: She will be more available after next April as she is involved with Calgary's *Journey To Freedom Park and Vietnamese Boat People Monument Project*.
- *Emily*: She will continue to be involved over the next few year with the exhibits process. Next steps - she anticipates that the role of the museums will die down after the exhibits in terms of the advisor role and echoing the need for it to move to the communities, but perhaps collaborations with the communities down the road may continue.
- *Anne*: The project needs to continue and have a place to point to. When people donate, they need to know that they are contributing to something, not just to the website and we need to be able to issue tax receipts as an incentive. The sooner we can decide what structure we are going to take, and then take it, the better it will be for the project so that we don't lose the stability as we move out from under the umbrella of Canadian Heritage.
- *Allan*: Because we received funding from Canadian Heritage through Carleton University, the project was cited at Carleton University and as such, we were able to use their *Future Funder* crowdfunding site as a way to raise funds to support the project, and Carleton University was able to issue receipts. So if we change that structure, we lose that advantage. But if we get the funds that we applied for, through Carleton University, from Canadian Heritage, then the project won't be leaving for a few years. But we likely won't have news about that funding request for a few more months.
- *Anne*: The optimum is to keep the existing structure stable under Carleton.
- *Mondy*: The project could also fall under Stephanie's funding umbrella for the exhibits.
- *Mike*: A critical decision to think about is what are the critical advantages to maintaining an association with Carleton University. Are there different forms that it can take? The advantage for big funders, like federal departments, when you are with an institution like Carleton University it does give a guarantee of financial integrity to big donors. But we have to consider the administrative burden under a contribution agreement.

## 8. **Next Meeting** (Allan Moscovitch)

- December 1, 2021 was proposed as the date for the next meeting.