

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Dr. Patrick Lam

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Immigrant Stories Oral History project

Interview # IM-A-L-2014-032

Dr. Patrick Lam, a Vietnamese who fled the country when he was seven, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Immigrant Stories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Aug 14, 2014 Location: Office of Brown Hay & Stephens in Springfield,
Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Edward Cunningham, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: Kathy Mueller, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Richard Herndon & Jan Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 27 pgs Total Time: 1:05 / 1.08 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 7, 2014.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,
Illinois.

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Abstract

Dr. Patrick Lam, *Immigrant Stories*, IM-A-L-2014-032

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Patrick Lam was born on January 20, 1972 in Saigon, Vietnam (formerly South Vietnam). At the age of 7, Patrick left Lai Thieu (45 miles northeast of Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City) in a wooden junk with several of his aunts. After being lost at sea for a week, the family happened upon an oil rig, and the oilmen then took them to the island of Kuku, which was a part of Indonesia. At that time, KeuKeu was a deserted island. Patrick and his aunts, who were now classified as “boat people”, stayed there for several months, surviving on fish and supplies brought by relief agencies. Patrick and his aunts were taken by a relief agency to Hong Kong, Singapore, and finally to San Francisco. They remained in San Francisco for one day before moving to Port Arthur, Texas. Shortly thereafter, Patrick and his aunts moved to Rogers Park in Chicago. As jobs became available, they moved out of the city and into various suburbs, including Palos Park, Sullivan, and Palatine.

While he was growing up, Patrick frequently switched grade schools and high schools as his family moved around the Chicago suburbs. After finishing high school, he attended Harper College before transferring to the University of Kansas, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. Upon completing his undergraduate career, Patrick went to Saba University in the Dutch Caribbean, where he obtained his MD. Patrick met his wife, Mary, while he was doing his clinical internship in the United States. Patrick currently lives in Chatham, Illinois with his wife and two daughters, Isabella and Melodie. He now works as a director at Reflections, an assisted living facility in Chatham for Alzheimer’s patients.

Subject Headings/Key Words: South Vietnam; escaping Vietnam as Boat People; KeuKeu Island, Indonesia; emigrating to the U.S. as a Vietnamese refugee; impressions of the United States

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