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Community-centered Archives Workshop

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Authors

Tribbett, Krystal

Vo Dang, Thuy

Arroyo-Ramírez, Elvia

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Community-centered Archives

UCI Libraries

Special Collections & Archives



Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez
Assistant University
Archivist
elvia.ar@uci.edu



Dr. Krystal Tribbett
Curator for Orange County
Regional History
ktribbet@uci.edu



Dr. Thuy Vo Dang
Curator for the Southeast
Asian Archive
thuy.vodang@uci.edu

What are archives and why do they matter?



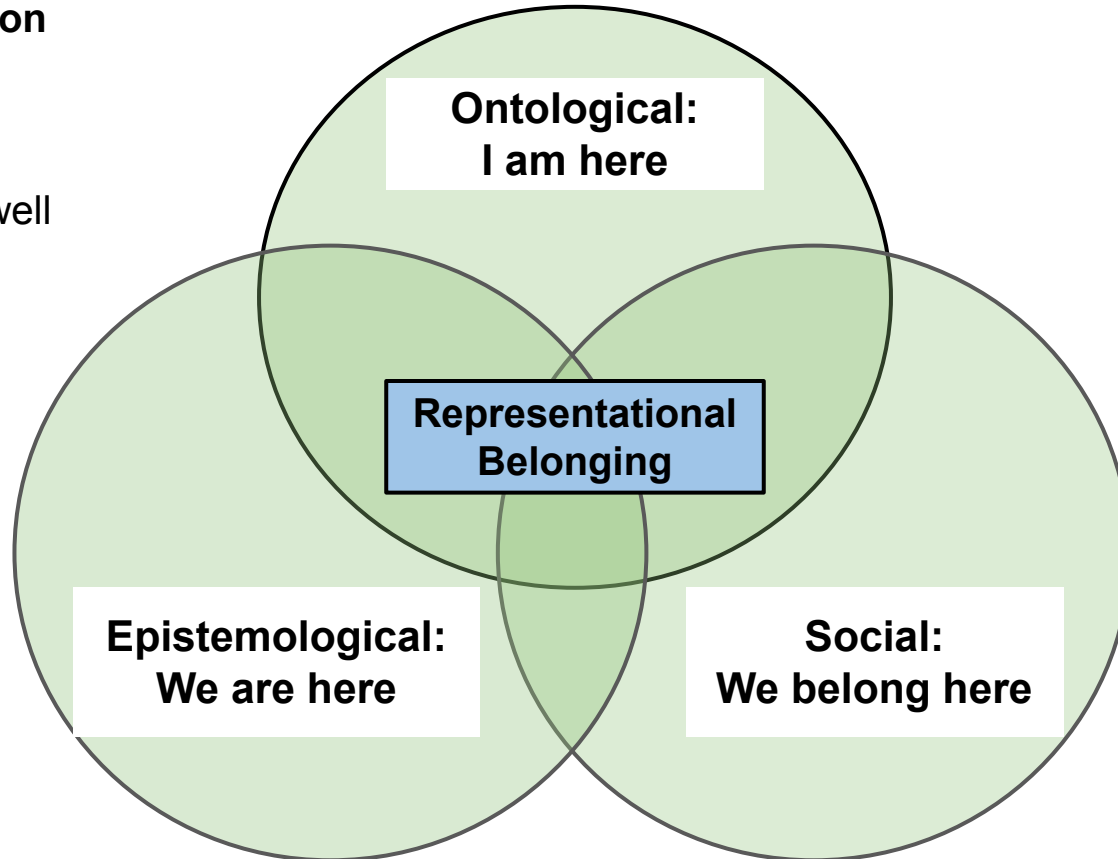
“a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people”

Society of American Archivists, 2018

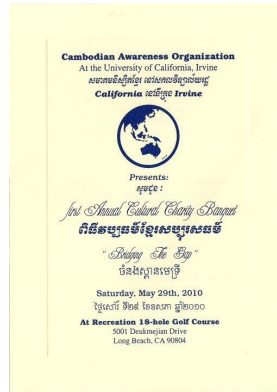


“Where am I?”

**Background on
Symbolic
Annihilation**
Courtesy of
Michelle Caswell



“Representational Belonging”



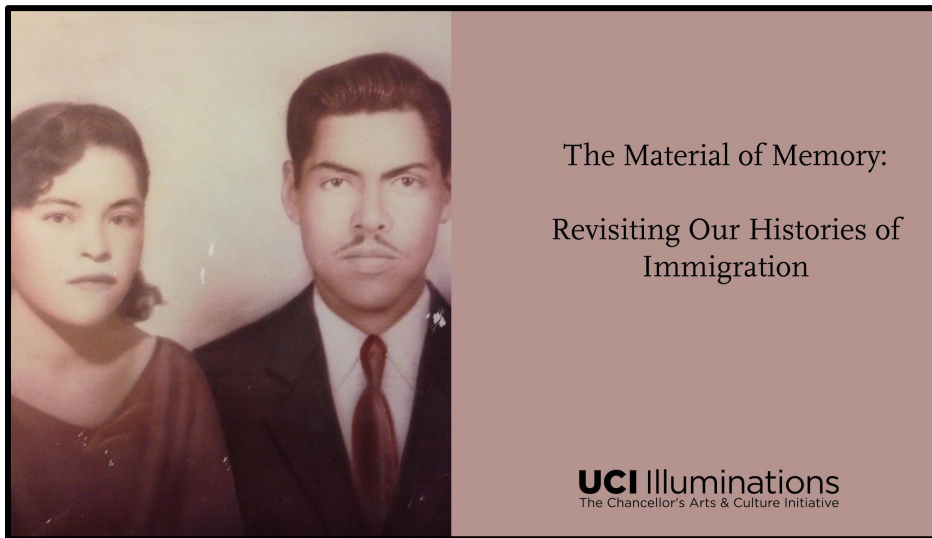
“If I didn’t define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people’s fantasies for me and eaten alive.”
~Audre Lorde

“I am here”

“My dad died...a little over a year ago. And the [oral history] interview that I did with him [for SAADA] was the only one that I did with him. And it's there. And that is a treasure to me [...] So, for me personally, the value of the archive is profound. And I think that that may be true for a lot of people who **suddenly are able to discover themselves, existing, being documented.**”

-Unknown

“We were here”



“We belong here”

“Participating in UCI Stories helped me feel more a part of the UCI community and the mission of the university more than anything else has since I began my tenure.”

-Dr. Tiffany Willoughby-Herard



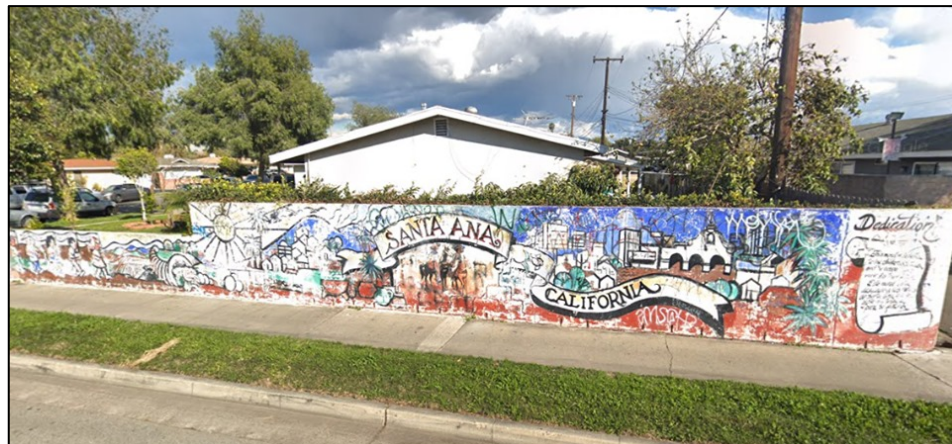
What are community archives?

“[...]independent grassroots efforts emerging from within communities to collect, preserve, and make accessible records documenting their own histories outside of mainstream archival institutions. These community-based archives serve as an alternative venue **for communities to make collective decisions about what is of enduring value to them**, to shape collective memory of their own pasts, and to control the means through which stories about their past are constructed.”

-Michelle Caswell



What might be considered community based archives?



UCI Libraries Southeast Asian Archive (est. 1987)

Documenting the histories of Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong and Vietnamese diasporic communities



VIETNAMESE PROM
• DIA DIEM: OLD WORLD 7561 CENTER AVE., HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA 92647 (714) 985-0020

PROM 1987
Sunday, June 28th
7:00PM - 11:00PM
Do like nothing, high school all night.
We are giving the idea back to you!

THE FANTASY

- Dr. Li Ling Dorem
- Anh Sang Hoi Xie
- Hmong Queen Xie Suijin
- Ben Thuan Tuong Van
- Parking Hmong Old Air Tahn

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER PROM '87

FORMAL

THE FANTASY

WE WELCOME

Mor Vang
Hmong, Age 78

Grandmother from her native Laos with her husband Phou Dine in 1962. In Laos she and other women ran a school. When she was asked to help, all of her belongings were taken from her. She and her husband fled to the U.S. and her husband died in a camp. She and her husband fled to the U.S. and her husband died in a camp. She and her husband fled to the U.S. and her husband died in a camp.

Social Justice: bridging activism, ethnic studies, and community archives



To learn more see:
<https://special.lib.uci.edu/blog/2017/07/beginnings-activism-department-asian-american-studies-uci>

Solidarity on campus documented in the University Archives



ESCAPE (Ethnic Students Coalition Against Prejudicial Education)
Cross Cultural Center records, 1993:

<https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt967nd67n/>

Community-centered Archives

Community-centered archives come into being through collaborative partnerships between mainstream archival institutions and communities that are underrepresented in the historical record. The goal is to empower communities in the process of telling and preserving their own histories. In a community-centered archive partnership, archival institutions like the UCI Libraries Special Collections & Archives, Orange County & Southeast Asian Archive Center are:

- **Attentive** to historical inequities reflected in archives
- **Responsive** to the community's needs
- **Collaborative** through shared authority
- **Cognizant** of the divergent priorities of communities

https://ocseaa.lib.uci.edu/community_archives



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Thank you and stay safe!