
Descriptive Summary

Title: Guire Cleary and Jade B. Ngoc Le collection of Hmong and Lu Mien refugee artifacts

Date: 1978-1982

Collection Number: MS-SEA008

Creator: Cleary, GuireLe, Jade B. Ngoc

Extent: 15.4 linear feet (19 boxes)

Languages: The collection is in English and Hmong.

Repository: University of California, Irvine. Library. Special Collections and Archives.
Irvine, California 92623-9557

Abstract: This collection is comprised of 55 artifacts collected by Guire Cleary and Jade B. Ngoc Le from Southeast Asian refugees. Cleary is a Franciscan friar of the Episcopal Church who served as assistant director of the Tolstoy Foundation in San Francisco, California. Le is the former director of the United States Catholic Conference transit center in San Francisco. The artifacts in this collection are mostly Hmong or Lu Mien in origin and were left behind by refugees at the Travelodge Transit Center in San Francisco. During 1979-1983, San Francisco, California was the entry point for over 50,000 refugees each year who arrived in the United States from refugee camps in Asia. Other artifacts were collected in the San Francisco area. The artifacts include clothing, cooking materials, English language exercise books, and identification cards.

Access

The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Guire Cleary and Jade B. Ngoc Le Collection of Hmong and Lu Mien Refugee Artifacts. MS-SEA008. Special Collections and Archives, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Guire Cleary and Jade B. Ngoc Le, 1997.

Alternative Forms of Material Available

A selection of eight images from this collection has been digitized and is available in the Online Archive of California.

Processing History

Processed by Julia Stringfellow, 2005. Processing was supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant.

Historical Background

In August 1979 Guire John Cleary was hired by the Church World Service, a voluntary agency in San Francisco, California that assisted in the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees. Cleary helped to provide transportation for the refugees, who generally spent the night in San Francisco before leaving on flights the next morning to their ultimate destination throughout the United States. After Cleary was injured in an automobile accident, he left Church World Service and was appointed assistant director of the Tolstoy Foundation in December 1979, another voluntary agency that assisted in refugee resettlement, predominately for refugees from Laos. Cleary remained with the Tolstoy Foundation until 1983. After working for a number of years as a business litigation paralegal in Los Angeles, Cleary returned to the religious community. Previous to 1979, Cleary was part of the Society of St. Francis, a religious order in the Episcopal Church. In 2000, as Brother Guire Cleary, SSF, he was appointed curator of the historic Mission San Francisco de Asis (Mission Dolores), the first Episcopalian and Franciscan brother to serve at the mission since 1845. As a scholar and writer, Cleary's work focused on the history of the Franciscan Order and the California missions, with a particular emphasis on the Ohlone and other Native Americans who originally settled in the San Francisco area. Cleary also served on the board of directors of the San Francisco History Association and the California Mission Studies Association. In

January 2004, Cleary was transferred to New Zealand. Cleary is the recipient of several awards including Friend of the Ohlone People, Honorary U.S. Park Ranger, and the Oscar Lewis Award for historical writing.

Jade B. Ngoc Le is the former director of the United States Catholic Conference transit center in San Francisco. She lives in La Honda, California.

For further information on Guire Cleary, see the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society's website (<http://www.sfhistoryencyclopedia.com/profiles/clearyGuire.html>) and the San Francisco History Association Award Honorees website (<http://www.sanfranciscohistory.org/awardsarchive.htm#lewis>).

Collection Scope and Content Summary

This collection is comprised of 55 artifacts collected by Guire Cleary and Jade B. Ngoc Le from Southeast Asian refugees. The artifacts in this collection are mostly Hmong or Lu Mien in origin and were left behind by refugees at the Travelodge Transit Center in San Francisco. During 1979-1983, San Francisco, California was the entry point for over 50,000 refugees each year who arrived in the United States from refugee camps in Asia. Other artifacts were collected in the San Francisco area. The artifacts include clothing, cooking materials, English language exercise books, and identification cards.

Collection Arrangement

This collection is arranged according to the item numbers assigned by Guire Cleary.

Processing Note

Description of the items is from Cleary's inventory that was received with the collection. There is no item 5 in the collection.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects

Refugees -- Southeast Asia -- Archives.
Refugees -- California -- San Francisco -- Archives.
Hmong (Asian people) -- California -- San Francisco -- Archives.
Hmong (Asian people) -- Social life and customs.
Yao Americans (Southeast Asian people) -- California -- San Francisco -- Archives.
Yao Americans (Southeast Asian people) -- Social life and customs.
Emigration and immigration -- Southeast Asia -- History -- Sources.
Emigration and immigration -- California -- San Francisco -- History -- Sources.

Genres and Formats of Materials

Artifacts -- Southeast Asia -- 20th century.

Other Authors

Lê, Jade B. Ngoc.

Titles

Southeast Asian Archive.

Box 1, 16 **01-04 Hmong woman's embroidered costume, front piece used as an apron, Hmong in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979**

Box 2 **06 Hmong woman's skirt before dyeing, appliqué, and embroidery, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979**

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| Box 1 | 07 Two green Hmong sashes, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 3 | 08 Six pieces of black cloth used by Hmong women to make clothing, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 4 | 09 Handmade woman's bag with 7 spoons, 2 combs, 2 pencils, a small knit bag, and a silver pen holder, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 5 | 10 Baby hammock, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 6 | 11 Handmade quilt, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 7 | 12 Mosquito net, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 8 | 13 Cloth bag containing 3 cultivation tools, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 9 | 14 Handmade purse containing hand forged scissors, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 9 | 15 Pot used to cook sticky rice, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 15 | 16 Cooking pot possibly made from metal salvaged from an aircraft, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 10 | 17 Twelve enameled plates, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 11-12 | 18-19 Two wooden chopping blocks, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 9 | 20 Tin box containing fishing lines and medications, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 8 | 21 Neck ring made of copper with silver traces, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, purchased at a pawn shop in San Francisco by Guilre Cleary 1982 |
| Box 8 | 22 Cleaver, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 13 | 23 Three pieces of Hmong adult clothing including pants and jackets, Hmong in origin from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 14 | 24 Hmong children's clothing, including pants and jackets, Hmong in origin from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 15 | 25 Bag containing Mien sewing materials, Mien in origin from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 8 | 26 Two English language exercise books and 2 pencils, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
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| Box 8 | 27 Mien refugee identification cards, Mien in origin from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 15 | 28 Lao sticky rice basket, believed to be ethnic Lao in origin from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 15 | 29 Lao miniature sticky rice basket, ethnic Lao in origin from the Thai refugee camps, typically given as a gift, gift to Guire Cleary by Thongpanh Douangpanya 1981 |
| Box 8 | 30 Machete with wooden scabbard, believed to be Hmong or Mien in origin, from the Thai refugee camps, left at the Travelodge Transit Center by a refugee family 1979 |
| Box 18 | 31 Steamer used to cook rice, collected by Guire Cleary 1980 |
| Box 9 | 9 Small wooden lamp with animal figures, ethnic Lao in origin, likely purchased in Thailand, typically given as a gift, gift to Guire Cleary from Sengthong Chanthavong 1980 |
| Box 8 | 33 Wooden plaque with carving of the That Luang stupa, ethnic Lao in origin, made in the refugee processing center, typically given as a gift, gift to Guire Cleary from an ethnic Lao refugee 1982 |
| Box 9 | 34 Wooden figure of a deer, ethnic Lao in origin, likely purchased in Thailand, typically given as a gift, gift to Guire Cleary from an ethnic Lao refugee 1981 |
| Box 5 | 35-37 Lao shoulder bags, ethnic Lao in origin, likely made in a Lao refugee camp in Thailand, typically given as a gift, gift to Guire Cleary from an ethnic Lao refugee 1981 |
| Box 9 | 38 Glass ashtray and door keys from the Travelodge Motel, souvenirs from the refugee transit center at the motel, south San Francisco, California, acquired by Cleary 1979 |
| Box 9 | 39 Metal buttons with the label "CWS," from Church World Service used to identify refugees and refugee workers, acquired by Cleary while employed by CWS 1979 |
| Box 9 | 40 Coffee mug from the Travelodge Motel, souvenir from the refugee transit center at the motel, south San Francisco, California, acquired by Cleary 1979 |
| Box 8 | 41 I.C.E.M. plastic bag used to hold refugee x-rays and documentation, from the refugee transit center at the motel, south San Francisco, California, acquired by Cleary 1979 |
| Box 16 | 42 Mien child's hat with red pompoms circa 1980 |
| Box 2 | 43-44 Hmong women's skirts circa 1980 |
| Box 9 | 45 Lao wood matches in a box circa 1980 |
| Box 6 | 46 Ethnic Lao women's skirt circa 1980 |
| Box 1 | 47 Woman's scarf circa 1980 |
| Box 8 | 48 Three metal soup spoons circa 1980 |
| Box 1 | 49 Two Hmong or Mien needlework squares circa 1980 |
| Box 5 | 50 Black child's hat decorated with metal coins and small circles, beads, pink and white feather pompoms circa 1980 |
| Box 6 | 51 Blue denim women's blouse, possibly ethnic Lao circa 1980 |
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- Box 17 **52 Five Laotian cooking pots 1978**
- Box 6 **53 Embroidered storycloth with images of animals and people, believed to be Hmong in origin from Thailand circa 1980**
- Box 8 **54 Handmade scissors circa 1980**
- Box 8 **55 Incense sticks circa 1980**
- Box 19 **Lao Association of San Francisco and Tolstoy Foundation Lao Temple Project, correspondence and information on refugees living in the United States 1980**