



Revealing History: Southeast Asian/American Writers in North Carolina Making Their Mark

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Conducting an oral history
interview on Zoom

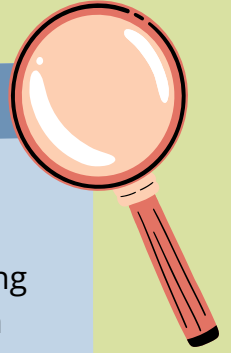


My Research Question



What?

How do Southeast Asian/American authors from North Carolina use writing to reconcile their racial and ethnic identities?



Why Is It Important?

Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial and ethnic population in North Carolina (Trippett, 2018). Thus, it is important that this underrepresented group is included in regional history. This project aims to showcase contemporary Southeast Asian/American voices by documenting their stories. The history has always been there, and this project helps to share it.

Tippett, Rebecca.
"Fastest-growing Asian population highly concentrated in NC urban areas." *Carolina Demography*, 2018.
ncdemography.org/2018/11/02/fast-growing-asian-population-highly-concentrated-in-nc-urban-areas/.

Five Oral History Interviews Later...



Where are they from?

Many of the writers that I interviewed have various ethnicities, some of which differ from their country of origin. This shows how Southeast Asian diasporas often consist of migrants that have faced ongoing displacements from colonialism and war in both Asia and America.

Community and Culture

The writers' families were their introduction and often their sole connection to their culture. Yet, because they were in predominantly white areas and schools in NC, all of them tried to assimilate to whiteness when they were younger. As adults, they found chosen communities that intentionally uplifted their racial and ethnic identities.

Writing

I interviewed writers who have made cookbooks and children's books, written theses and published poetry. These mediums are each unique, but they share in common the fact that the topic explores the writer's racialized identity in some fashion. For the interviewees, writing is a practice to deconstruct their complex identities and help others do the same.

Conclusion

Understanding the Southeast Asian American diaspora is crucial to American Studies and how we understand contemporary America, especially North Carolina and the greater U.S. South. From American military and political involvement in Southeast Asia to the experiences of Southeast Asian refugees displaced in the U.S., this diaspora is embedded in American identity. Learning these stories and histories is a must for everyone.