

**Student Handout**  
**Oakland Museum of California**  
**What's Going On? California and the Vietnam Era**  
**Lesson Plan #3**  
**Coming to Terms: Stories of Southeast Asian Political Refugees**

**Oral History**

**Himm Chimm**

**Himm Chimm came to the United States as a refugee from Cambodia. He had gone to college in the United States before the war in Vietnam and now is the head of the Cambodian American Community Center in Long Beach.**

... the first group of... first wave of refugees came to Camp Pendleton. They have some other come in Arkansas, someplace ... But one major camp was in Camp Pendleton, where the United States bring Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees to the first place to *[inaudible]* here. It started like this. Those are military personnel, diplomatic personnel, government employees in training abroad, or student receiving the study abroad. All of a sudden the country fell, and the U.S. government say, "Look, you guys don't have country to go back to, but we would welcome you to our country as refugee." That's why they start to bring them from the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, some other place, or from all over the world to here. At Camp Pendleton. Then the former students who happened to be the information that a Cambodian refugees and Vietnamese refugees came to the camp, and they drove down to the Camp Pendleton to meet with them. Compatriots. They also Cambodian. They look for... Of course they look for their families and friends and acquaintances, but Cambodian then start to work together. This the idea of the Cambodian Association also.