

## Ye Yang Moua

*Ye Yang Moua lived in Souaphan in Laos. She farmed and had daily chores. She came to Wausau in 1988. She has nine children and works at Fiskars.*



Today is January 18, 1998. Today, I am going to answer children's questions or asking things and tell them things to learn or keep as stories or take it to school because they can't talk that well anymore (in Hmong). That is why I have to come to tell and answer the questions the children have asked here.

*What's your name?*

My name is Ye. My last name is Yang.

*What country were you born in?*

I was born in Long Chieng.

*What year were you born?*

I was born in the fourth month on the sixth day in 1963.

*How was life in Laos?*

Talking about life in Laos, there is a lot of things, we farm, kill pigs and chickens, clean the house, help our parents to clean the house, a lot of things, carry water, cut wood, there was a lot of things about our life in Laos because living in Laos we were just farmers.

*How long did you live in Laos?*

In Laos, I lived there till I was about ten years old.

*When war came in Vietnam, how old were you?*

When the Vietnam war came I was about ten or eleven years old.

*What do you think about the war?*

Talking about the war, it was a time of heartache because my mother and my father and the old and the women and children were living behind the good things. But the men became soldiers with America helping the country fight against Vietnam so I had a lot of heartache talking about our life when the war was here, about our heartaches or being poor and without a lot of food.

*Did you go live in the jungles?*

Talking about living in the jungles, we did go through the jungles. The life of living in the jungles -- you eat banana leaves in the jungle only.

*While living in the jungle, how was it trying to find food? How was it living in there?*

Talking about living in the jungles, you are poor, and you don't have a house to live in. You just have a banana leaf shelter to live in.

*Was life in the jungle hard or easy for you?*

Talking about living in the jungle was one of the hardest things in the world, and I don't like it at all.

*When did you go to Thailand or cross the river to Thailand?*

We had war until the end when we lost the country. Our leader came to Thailand. That is why we ran through the mountains until the end, we decided to cross the river to Thailand.

*Who took you to Thailand?*

It was the soldiers who fought, that is how we came to Thailand.

*What was Thailand like?*

Talking about getting to Thailand was not easy. It was very hard.

*How did you cross the river?*

Talking about the way we crossed the river, it was a very hard thing. The people who had rubber tubes, used rubber tubes to cross. The ones that didn't had one cut bamboo and used it to cross. Some cut banana trees to cross. It just depended one how you prepared. Some made it across the river, some didn't.

*When you got to Thailand how did you live? How was it living in Thailand?*

When we got to Thailand we went to Ya ta na [spelling?]. Talking about eating, they did help us with food. We became people of Ya ta na (spelling?)

*How long did you stay in Thailand?*

We lived there for about eighteen or nineteen months in Thailand.

*Why did you come to America?*

Talking about coming to America, we didn't want to come, but then the Americans came and started a war in our country. The Americans promised us if the country lost, then they help us. In the end, the Americans did come and help the soldiers and the officials to come, and we didn't have a country anymore. That is why we decided to come to America.

*Who sponsored you or was your guardian to come to America?*

Talking about coming to America, it was our relatives and cousins that did the paperwork and sponsored us to come to America.

*What city did you move into?*

We moved only to Wausau, Wisconsin only.

*How long have you lived here?*

We have lived here six or seven years.

*Is life in America harder or easier than living in Laos or Thailand?*

Talking about living here in America, there are things that are hard and things that are easy. Coming to live in America has been easy to the young people, but for the older people it is hard because we don't know English and learning it is hard.

*Have you gone to school to learn? Or to a schoolhouse?*

Talking about that, I have gone to school at church or at ESL, but I am old, and I can't learn good, so

it is hard.

*Learning in school or speaking English is it hard for you to do?*

About school and speaking, it is hard for us old people because we speak different.

*Have you ever worked or haven't you?*

About me, I have worked a little.

*About the children in America, how are they different than the children in Laos?*

About the children in America and children in Laos and Thailand are very different because in Thailand and Laos we told our children to go work. They listened and helped their parents, but when we came to America the children came to a carefree country where you can't say anything or hit them. You can't teach them. That is why they don't help their parents, and they don't listen in the house or listen to their parents. In America we have a bigger heartache for the children than we did in Laos and Thailand.

*What do you think the Hmong traditions or the children will be like in twenty years?*

Talking about that in twenty years, I don't know how it's going to be, but I think that today, I look at the children today and think that they won't know Hmong traditions and our language that much anymore because right now they don't even speak our language anymore. I think that our Hmong traditions will eventually die.

*Do you think that the Hmong children should learn Hmong, Hmong traditions, or how to write in Hmong?*

Talking about learning how to write Hmong or Hmong traditions, I think that it is a good idea for them to learn, but then our children in America don't do what we want. The ones, who want to learn, go and learn. The ones, who don't want to learn, don't learn that makes it hard on us Hmong parents.

*Thank you for answering the questions. We are happy that you helped. This is just a conversation or just questions about how life is like coming to America so if you want more information you have to come and talk. This is just for children to take to school to study and for stories. If there is anything wrong, I am sorry. That's all. Thank you.*