

## Ying Thao

*Ying Thao is forty years old. She is from Nan Fia in Laos. Ying works at the Neighbors Place in downtown Wausau.*



(unable to locate first part of interview which was recorded on another tape)

*Who do your children think they are -- Hmong or American?*

Well, they don't have very much knowledge about their own culture and ancestor but I'm sure they know they are Hmong.

Yes.

Sometimes I talk to the children about my hardship life back in Laos. They don't seem to be interested and express not wanting to live there.

*If you were still young, like 18-20 years of age, would you like to live here or in Laos?*

If I am still that young it doesn't matter where I live.

*Really!!*

At that young age I'm still capable of learning new skills and still energetic so it's easier to adjust to a new life style. Right now, I feel sorry that I am too old to learn new skills and it has been difficult for me to find a job that is adequate to raise my family. I decide to come over here. However, the dark side is I have the skill to find a job that is adequate to make a comfortable living in this country. Besides that, living in this country is okay.

*When you came to this country did any of the Americans, did they not like you or were they mean to you?*

When we arrived there were already Hmong people here prior to my family. Therefore the white people know us people well. So nobody did anything mean to us. Our relative taught us not to stay outside too much or do Hmong cross stitches outside because American people don't like people to stay outside. Anyway, when we arrived here it was summer season and it was very hot so I stay outside a lot. After my children arrive from school they also stay out a lot too because of the hot weather. My neighbor then stay outside too. Sometimes they even eat outside.

*Oh really.*

They sometimes came over to see my traditional cross stitches and told me that it was very beautiful. They would watch me sew. They don't hate me.

*Do you think that Thailand is better or do you think that America is better?*

They are the same.

*What is your impression when you first saw snow?*

In our country we only have freeze in the morning during winter season. Therefore, I have never seen this much of snow in my life. Therefore, I don't really have any thought or feeling until after I shovel a couple of times and my hands and feet get so cold. After that I question myself -- do I want to live like this for the rest of my life? Can I adjust to this kind of weather. Anyway, after a couple of years I get used to it. So now it's okay.

*If you have a choice would you prefer snow or hot?*

I don't prefer either one. When I first arrive there is so much snow. Snow is everywhere in my doorstep. I can't go anywhere. I then record a tape cassette to my brother and told them that I am very lonely and sometimes depress. I sometimes thought I want to jump into the river.

*Do you have anything else to say?*

No, I don't have anything else.