

## Pai Vue

*Pai Vue is from Houasalite in Laos which is near the Banao River. It is in the Xieng Khouang Province. Pai did farming and housework in Laos. She left Laos in 1975. She has one child.*



*What is your name?*

My name is Pai Vue.

*How old are you?*

I'm 59 years old.

*Do you have a job?*

No, I don't. I farm a little.

*Do you go to school?*

No, because I am old.

*Did you go to school when you were younger?*

No, because in my mother and father's land, there were no schools. The only thing that you did there was farm.

*Do you have any brothers or sisters?*

My mother and father gave birth to a lot of kids, but they all died. Right now, there is only three of us left.

*Where were you born?*

I was born in Laos, in the village of Hosalite??.

*When you left your country, what was it like?*

When I left, the Communists were invading our towns, and the only thing to do was run.

*How old were you when you left your country?*

When I left my country, I might have been around 35.

*Why did you and your family leave Laos?*

Me and my family left Laos because the country was falling apart. That was the only reason why we left.

*Was it hard for your family to adjust to things in America?*

Yes, it was very hard. It was very hard because in this land, the people here speak their own language, and you speak another. In America they eat their own traditions of food. We are Asians. We are from Laos. We eat our own traditional food. It was hard for the parents and adults mostly.

*What about the children?*

The children? Well, they grew up here on this land. They can adjust to it in no time because they are not so set in their ways of life yet. They can learn the language, eat the food, adjust to a new way of life very easily from the pressure of their American peers.

*How did you manage to leave your country? Did you walk?*

Of course, we walked. There is no other way. We went the Mupang (?). Then they said that we couldn't stay so we had to go to the land of Persanoi (?). Then the Communists came. We then ran to Na Su. After that we went to Hang Her. There were some fighting over there. We walked through the battlefield. People were dying at our feet. We then went back to Na Su. Then we thought about it, and we didn't like the Vietnamese's traditions so we ran past Van Ga (?). Then we lived there. They guarded the gates and would not let us past into Thailand. We lived in Van Ga for about four months. It was then that they were not guarding the gates as well as they used to. So we escaped to Thailand. We lived in Thailand for about four years. We thought that we would not come to America, but since our families had died on the way here. That's why we had to come here. That's why we register to come.

*Did you come straight to America?*

Yes, we came straight here. When we left Thailand, we went to Kong Tae(?) for one night. Then our name came up, but it was a mistake. No wait, it wasn't really a mistake. It was because my younger sister who had come here earlier was still dumb in the ways of America. They called her up and asked if she had a sister coming to America and instead of saying yes she said no. So we had to stay in Kong Tae for 20 days. Then they checked the list of names again. That's why I landed in Colorado, instead of Milwaukee. My uncle's son sponsored me over to Colorado. I then live in Colorado for one year and one month. Then my younger sister came over and brought me to Milwaukee. I came straight here but live in a lot of places.

*What cities did you live in, the states, and how long?*

I lived in Colorado for one year and one month. Then I move to Milwaukee and stayed there for fifteen years. Then I moved here to Wausau and had since lived three years, maybe four.

*What was the hardest thing for you about adjusting to America?*

The hardest thing for me is that I don't know how to speak the language, don't understand it. I can't drive, and that is why it is hard.

*How old were you when you first came to America?*

I was forty-four years old.

*When you first came here what did you think?*

When I first came here I thought that they had said this land was full of opportunities, but it wasn't so for me. I didn't have a lot of opportunities, I was miserable.

*Did you get a job when you first came over here?*

When I first came, I went to a school where they taught you how to babysit. I babysit for a good portion of a year, but I had arthritis so I couldn't babysit any more. After that I didn't have a regular job. I just sit and do nothing.

*Did you know a lot of people when you first came over here?*

When I first came, there were not a lot of people. Right now, there is probably around 280 families in Milwaukee. As for Wausau, I don't know how many people were originally here. When I moved here, there were a lot of people here already.

*Who sponsored you?*

Chong Chang (?), who is my uncle's son.

*Did churches help you out? Did they give you money to spend?*

No, they didn't help at all. My uncle's son only bought me a blanket. I didn't have any body's help in getting my food or my money. No churches helped me out. Nobody help me out with anything at all.

*How did you manage to go to the store and buy groceries if you did not know how to drive?*

Children of my nephews and nieces, other relatives here who know how to drive.

*Well, I do not have any other questions. Thank you.*

Thank you.