**HMONG KEEB KWM**

**Nhia Thong Yang- Interviewee**

**Houa Yang- Catawba County Library, Interviewer**

**Nhia Thong Yang- NY**

**Houa Yang- HY**

**This is an oral history recorded on June 25, 2018 at the Newton Library in Newton, North Carolina as part of Hmong Keeb Kwm, a grant project awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities in partnership between the Catawba County Library, the Historical Society of Catawba County, and North Carolina Digital Heritage Center for the purposes of collecting and preserving the history of the Hmong in Catawba County and the surrounding area.**

**Total length of interview: 22 minutes and 41 seconds**

**Available format(s): Audio recorded on Audacity® available as a .WAV file, and video available as a .MOV file**

**Transcription and translation by: Houa Yang- Catawba County Library**

**HY**: Ua ntej no, thov hais koj lub npe nrog rau lub xeem. *(Please say your name, including your last name.)*

**NY:** Kuv yog Nyiaj Toob. Hmoob xeem Yaj nawb. *(I am Nhia Thong. I am a Yang.)*

**HY:** Koj nyob lub zos twg…*(Where do you live…)*

**NY:** Kuv nyob rau lub zos Burke County, North Carolina. *(I live in Burke County, North Carolina.)*

**HY:** Koj yug rau qhov twg? *(Where were you born?)*

**NY:** Kuv yug teb chaws Nplog. *(I was born in Laos.)*

**HY:** Teb chaws Nplog, lub zos hu li cas? *(What city in Laos?)*

**NY:** Xieng Khouang.

**HY:** Thov qhia mi ntsis txog koj tus kheej. *(Can you tell a little about yourself?)*

**NY:** Kuv muaj hnub nyug, tam sim no kuv muaj 76 xyoo. Kuv tau ua tsov ua rog rau thaum 1963 lub tsib hlis ntuj wan-thi 9 los coos cuaj txog rau lub sij hawm uas peb tau thawg teb thawg chaw. Kuv tau serve nyob rau hauv...tub rog nyob rau tom hauv ntej thiab. Thaum 1968, ces kuv tau los nyob rau hauv office uas *Bo-Kho* [Lao word 2:21] 21 los mus txog rau 1972. Ces peb thiaj tau tuaj mus kawm nyob rau teb chaws Thai, Thailand, Khao-Lak tau peb lub hli. Ces peb rov qab mus, lawv thauj peb rov qab mus rau Long Tien, ces peb thiaj tau mus sib ntaus sib tua. Tau peb lub hlis tom qab ces peb ho rov qab los *Pa-Khot* [Lao word 2:45] dua ib koob phanya nyob rau *Bo-Kho* 23. Ces peb ua rog coos cuaj los txog ntua rau 1975 uas peb poob teb chaws no. Los kuj tseem nyob rau hauv qhov *Khon-phan* [Lao word for “battalion” 2:57] tub rog.

Ces ntawm kuv tus kheej ua tau nyob teb chaws Nplog ntawv ces kuv...hais txog poj niam mi nyuam tau pos?

*(I am 76 years old. I was involved in the war since June 9, 1963 all the way up until it ended, when the country was lost. I served as a soldier and was at the front lines. In 1968, I was in stationed at the command station 21 all the way up until 1972. At that time, we went to Thailand in Khao-Lak for 3 months. After that, we were sent back to Long Tien and we were engaged in battle. Three months after that we regrouped and selected more leaders at command station 23. So we were at war all the way until 1975 when the country was lost and the war was over. Even then, I was still a part of the battalion.*

*For myself, also, when I was living in Laos I...is it ok to talk about my wife and kids?)*

**HY:** Yeah, tau mam. (Yes, you can.)

**NY:** Kuv muaj 5 tug kwv tij tiam sis pua leej ua than-han tag nrho tib si nawb. Ces peb cov kwv tij pab rau lub teb lub chaws ua tsov ua rog huv si. Ces peb nyob rau Long Tien ntawv ces hauv kuv tsev neeg ces kuv muaj...thaum nyob teb chaws Nplog ces kuv muaj 6 tus mi nyuam. Ces kuv tuaj rau teb chaws America no ces yog xyoo 1978 luv 10 hli ntuj, wan-thi 15. Ces kuv tuaj poob rau lub teb chaws no nawb, teb chaws America. Ces kuv tuaj poob nyob rau Virginia. Ces kuv ho nyob tau 8 lub hli Virginia ces kuv mus nyob rau Chicago tau ib xyoos ces kuv mam mus nyob rau Minnisota tau 10 lub xyoo ces kuv thiaj li los rau North Carolina no xyoo 1990. Los nyob txog niaj hnub no. Es los nyob rau lub teb chaws no ces niaj hnub no tseem nyob no tab sis tam sim no kuv laus lawm. Kuv muaj 76 xyoo ces kuv retire lawm. Ces kuv los nyob teb chaws no ces kuv muaj tub, muaj ki. Kuv tshuav 3 txiv tub nyab tseem nyob rau tim Minnesota hos 4 tug ces nyob qhov no. Kuv muaj ib tug tub yog dental doctor, niaj hnub ua caus hniav nyob ze ze rau kev…

*(I have 5 brothers and we were all soldiers, all of us. All of my brothers helped our country in the war. When we lived in Long Tien, in my family… when we lived in Laos, I already had 6 children. When I came to America, it was October 15, 1978. That’s when I came to America. When I came, I first ended up in Virginia. I lived in Virginia for 8 months then I moved to Chicago for a year. Then I moved to Minnesota and lived there for 10 years and finally after that, I moved here to North Carolina in 1990. I’ve been here since. Since living here, I have grown old. I’m 76 years old now and retired. I have children and grandchildren. 3 of my children and their spouses still live in Minnesota and 4 live here. I have a son who is a dental doctor and he does teeth over near…)*

**HY:** Yog Doctor Bee lod? *(Is it Doctor Bee?)*

**NY:** Aws, yog Doctor Bee Lay. *(Yes, it’s Doctor Bee Lay.)*

**HY:** Oh! Koj yog nws txiv lod? *(Oh! You are his father?)*

**NY:** Aws, kuv yog Dr. Bee Lay txiv. *(Yes, I’m Dr. Bee Lays’ dad.)*

**HY:** Oh! Okay.

**NY:** Ces kuv muaj ib tug ntxhais hu ua Kooj. Nws yog ib tug pharmacy doctor. Nws ua hauj lwm nyob rau tom High Point. Kuv cov mi nyuam ces nim no puav leej nyias muaj nyias hauj lwm tag ces tshuav wb ob tug laus ces wb nyob wb lawm xwb. Ces hnub no wb nyob North Carolina no, qhia rau nej paub li ntawv. Nej leej twg cov qub tub rog li peb no, yog hais tias neej leej twg tseem tshuav muaj txoj sia li peb no los yog nej tuaj pom saib pom nyob hauv library los nej ho muab coj los xyuas hais tias peb cov qub tub rog ploj tag lawm tsuav peb tus puav ua pov thawj ua tus moj zeej rau peb cov mi tub mi nyuam teb chaws no kom thaum twg luag nug txog los hais tias peb tuaj lub teb chaws no. Tej zaum luag ib txhia mas luag hais tias peb pom lub teb chaws no, yog lub teb chaws vam meej, muaj noj muaj haus, tiam sis peb tsis yog nawb. Peb cov no yog tau nrog tsoom fwv America no tau serve lub teb chaws, pab America tiv thaiv lub teb chaws Nyab-laj qaum teb peb thiaj li tau tuaj. Mas qhov no mas yog kuv tham mi ntsis lus paj paws li no rau hauv no. Es txawm hais tias qhov zoo los nej ho coj mus kaws coj mus siv ho qhov tsis zoo los cia li muab pov tseg mus. Qhov peb tuaj nyob lub teb chaws no, vim peb tsis yog xav xav tuaj. Poob rau txoj cev uas peb nyob ces lawv yuav muab peb coj mus raug txim raug thuv. Yog li cov ib txhia lawv tuaj tsis tau yog vim cov ntawv yeej raug txim raug thuv nim no tsis muaj tag lawm nawb. Ces tshuav peb cov tuaj tim no los tshuav ib txhia xwb. Cov laus dua peb...nyob li peb twj no ces twb ploj tag nrho lawm ces peb cov no, thaum kuv tuaj rau lub teb chaws no kuv nim quav muaj 38 xyoo xwb. Es kuv tham li no rau hauv no ho tsuav dab tsi los mam ntxiv hos tsis tshuav ces yuav li no xwb.

*(I also have a daughter named Kong. She’s a doctor of pharmacy. She works in High Point [North Carolina]. All my children have their own careers now and are gone so there’s just me and my wife left in the house and we’ve continued on living here in North Carolina since. If there are any old soldiers left like me who are still alive and if you watch this video from the library, they can know that there’s still a few of us left. The few of us that are left can be witnesses of the past to the children who are in this country now. If asked, we can tell how we came to this country. Some might say we came to this country because we saw that it had freedom and wealth but that’s wrong. We fought with the government and helped them defend the country from the Northern Vietnamese, that’s why we had to come here. I’m just talking back and forth here so whatever is good you can use it and whatever is not good, you can edit it out. The reason we are here in this country is not because we wanted to but if we stayed [in Laos] we would be killed and tortured. Those who didn’t make it to this country were killed and tortured and they’re all gone. There’s just the few of us left who made it here. Those who are older than me or those of my generation, most of them died. When I first came to this country, I was only 38 years old. I’m just talking but any other questions, you can ask me.)*

**HY:** Lub sij hawm uas ua tsov rog thiab lub sij hawm us teb chaws tawg ntawv koj piav mi ntsis txog lub sij hawm ntawv rau koj yom? *(Can you elaborate and tell a bit more about the time during the war and when the war ended? How was that for you?)*

**NY:** Peb ua tsov ua rog mas peb tau sib tua. Kuv tau sib tua muaj peb, plaub zaug thiab raug mob mi ntsis nawb. Tab sis txoj kev sib tua ua tsov ua rog no mas peb tsis tau yooj yooj yim li teb chaws no es mus caij nyoob hoom mus los puas hais tias caij tsheb mus es mus sib tua hauv zej hauv zos xwb. Peb mus tua hav zoov hav tsuag nawb. Nom xaj hais tias qhov no nhav ces peb nyob dam Xieng Khouang los peb tau mus puag pem qaum teb puag pem Xam Neua. Ib txhia ces lawv tau mus puag Savannakhet nawb. Thaum peb nob ntawv ces muaj ib txhia *khon-phan* 1 ces lawv muab xa mus Savannakhet lawm, xa mus pab rau *pha-san* [Lao word 7:12] ntawv. Hos peb cov no ces tsis tau xa mus tab sis peb thaiv rau sab qaum teb los mus rau Long Tien mus rau sab Sam Neua pev lawm. Ces peb kev ua tsov ua rog yog li no ces peb txom nyem heev, peb txoj kev uas tiv thaiv lub teb lub chaw. Cov ua nrog peb ib phaum ces tshuav tsawg tsawg. Thaum xub thawj peb ib pab *than-han* [Lao word for “soldier”], ib *khon-phan* *than-han* no mas, ib *kong-roy* [Lao word for “troop”] no mas muaj 105 leeg los 110 leeg nawb, tom qab no ib *kong-roy* 90 leej xwb tab sis ib *khon-phan* no niam qhuav muaj 3 *kong-roy* xwb. Thauv ub, ib *khon-phan* no mas muaj 5 *kong-roy*, tom qab no ces ib *khon-phan* muaj 3 *kong-roy* xwb vim peb cov neeg tuag tag lawm. Peb tuag 35,000 leej ua yog qhov sib tua tuag nkaus nkaus xwb. Mas qhia li no rau nej. Txoj kev ua tsov ua rog mas yog zoo li no. Nyob hav zoov hav tsuag, tso poj niam tub se nyob tom vaj tom tsev ces lawm tsheej qas 3, 4 lub hlis tej tus thiaj tau los, tej tug twb tsis tau los tsev thiab. Mas zoo li no. Qhia li no rau hauv no. Cov tub hluas nyob teb chaws no tej zaum nej yuav tsis paub txog peb txoj kev txom nyem es peb ua tsov ua rog pab lub teb lub chaw. Nim no cov tub cov ntxhais nyob teb chaws no tej zaum lawv twb tsis paub hais tias peb tuaj lub teb chaws no yooj yooj yim tab sis muaj ib txhia nom tswv mas lawv paub tab sis mas cov peej xeem nyob teb chaws Miskas nyob rau lub teb chaws no ces lawv twb tsis paub tias peb yog leej twg. Ces lawv hais tias vim peb pom lub teb chaws no muaj nqi thiab muaj kev kawm txuj thiab muaj noj muaj haus, peb tuaj tab sis tsis yog qhov ntawv. Peb tuaj no, peb tuaj political *kha-mueng* [Lao word 8:43] refugee uas ua tsov ua rog peb thiaj tau tuaj. Yog tsis zoo li no, cov zoo li peb no mas twb tsis tau tuaj txog lub teb chaws no thiab. Es kuv tham ob peb los li no. Tshuav dab tsi ntxiv thiab?

*(In the war, we had to fight...I was in battle 3 or 4 times and was wounded also. When we fought, it wasn’t easy like how it is now where you just ride in an aircraft or ride in a vehicle into a city and fight there. When we fought it was in the wilderness, in the thick jungles. Where ever there was heavy conflict and we were ordered to go, even if we were in Xieng Khouang and we had to travel all the way up north to Sam Neua, we would have to go. Some had to go to Savannakhet. Battalion 1 was deployed to Savannakhet to help over there but we didn’t get sent there. We defended the Northern region, down to Long Tien and over to Sam Neua. When we were at war, we faced many hardships defending the country. Those of us who fought are few now. At the beginning, in each battalion of soldiers, each troop would have 105 to 110 soldiers. Afterwards, each troop would only have 90 and each battalion would only have 3 troops. Each battalion would start out with 5 troops but after, they would only have 3 troops left because they all died. 35,000 died just from battle. I want to let people know that. War was not easy. You had to live in the jungle and leave your wife and children behind at home and you would be gone for 3 or 4 months before you got to return. Some never made it back home. I want to tell this because the young people these days, they don’t know how much we suffered during the war helping our country. Perhaps they’ll think that it was very easy to come to this country. Some leaders who are involved in government know but most regular American citizens don’t know who we are. They might think we came to this country because we saw that this is a powerful country with great education and wealth but that’s not why we came. We are political refugees of war and that’s why we had to come. If not for that reason, people like us would never have even been able to come here. That’s it. What other questions?)*

**HY:** Thaum teb chaws tawg ntawv, koj piav mi ntsis rau qhov ntawv yom? Thaum koj tuaj rau lub teb chaws Miskas ntawv nov, thaum koj tuaj txog teb chaws Miskas ho zoo li cas rau koj thiab? *(Can you tell us what happened to you at the end of the war? When you came to America, how was it for you?)*

**NY:** Vim cov laus li peb no ces nyob tim ub ces thaum mas peb nyob hauv toj roob hauv pes ces peb tsis muaj kev kawm txuj. Ces peb tuaj ces yog cov ua hauj lwm nrog cov C.I.A., cov *Sky* [Skyhook- a CIA aerial retrieval] nawb, cov U.S. Aid los mus rau cov *Fhet* [Lao word for “air field operator” 9:23] ua hu nyoob hoom-- cov ntawv ces peb tuaj poob rau Nam Pouy xwb ces, tau ib xyoos xwb ces ib txhia tuaj lawm. Cov U.S. Aid nrog America ua es xa khoom ub khoom no, ces qhov ntawv ces lawv hais tias, ib yam li tus Miskas lawm ces cov ntawv yog cov ua ntej. Peb cov *than-han* no ces peb khiav peb no nawb, ces peb thiaj mas tuaj tom qab. Dhau ntawv ces cov uas tsis muaj ntawv ces mam yog cov mi tub mi nyuam, cov tim no tos mas thiaj tau tuaj.

Ces kuv tuaj txog lub teb chaws no, vim tsis paub lus, niag laus ces tsis paub lus ces tuaj txog ces mus ua hauj lwm los mus ua hauj lwm ruam xwb. Luag hais tias kom koj ua yam twg ces koj ua tab sis mas peb Hmoob tsis paub lus tab sis peb nquag nquag. Peb Hmoob rau rau siab, yog koj tau yam hauj lwm ntawv ces koj rau rau saib. Koj ua yam hauj lwm ntawv ces lawv ho nyiam peb qhov hais tias peb niag tsis paub lus tab sis koj tau ua yam hauj lwm, luag qhia tias koj ua yam no ces peb ua yam ntawv ces kuj ho nyob taus qhov ntawv thiab. Yog hais tias yuav hais li lawv hais es kom paub lus ces lawv yeej tsis yuav peb cov no ua hauj lwm nyob rau lub teb chaws no vim teb chaws no yog laug cov professional ua kawm ntaub kawm ntawv xwb. Tab sis peb niag tsis txawj lus los lawv qhia tias koj ua li no, li no ces peb cia ua tau. Yeej kho siab kawg thiab nawb tab sis kawg yus tsis muaj chaw tawm rooj lawm ces yus yuav tau nyob qhov no ces ua li no xwb. Es qhov ntawv tam li no.

*(Well, the old people like me, we used to just live in the mountains and very rural areas so we didn’t have much education. When we were coming, those who worked with the C.I.A., the Sky [Skyhook- CIA aerial retrieval], or the U.S. Aid or those who worked as Fhet [Lao word- “air field operator” 9:23] and called the planes-- as soon as we arrived in Nam Pouy, within a year those people came [to America]. Those who worked with the U.S. Aid and worked with the Americans delivering aid and rations were considered to be like Americans so they got to come [to America] first. Soldiers, like us, had to find their own way. That’s why we came later. After that, if you had no papers [refugee/immigration] then you had to just wait to see if your children or relatives who were already in America could bring you over.*

*When I got to this country, because I didn’t know the language, I just did any kind of work that didn’t require an education. Whatever I was told to do, I just did it. But we Hmong, we are hardworking and we learn quickly. Whatever we are told to do, we can do it with little direction and that’s how we survive. If it was a requirement that we had to speak the language then no one would ever hire us in this country because they only want professionals and educated people. It makes me sad but there’s no other way and I have to live here so that’s just how it is.)*

**HY:** Ua ntej koj retire koj ua hauj lwm dab tsi xwb os? *(What did you do before you retired?)*

**NY:** Ua ntej retire ntawv ces thaum xub thawj kuv mus ua nyob rau Minnesota mas kuv mus ua lub control data, yog ua cov computer, cov qe qaum, cov ntaus, thiab cov tape uas sawv daws kaw kaw lus thiab cov ntawv. Mus ua cov qe qaum ntawv. Ces kuv ua 6 lub xyoos rau qhov ntawv ces lawv tsis muaj hauj lwm ces kuv ntawm. Kuv ntawm qhov ntawv ces kuv ho mus fill tau ib qhov ua cov khoom hoos-moom, cov lawv hais tias lub plawv tsis muaj zog. Lub plawv tsis muaj zog ces lawv tho dam no ces lawv kev txoj xaim coj mus pab lub plaws. Kuv ua tau ib xyoos ces kuv los rau qhov no lawm. Thaum los txog qhov no ces kuv khiav rau lub Spectrum tom no. Ces kuv ua tus los khuam xov lau, rau xov lau, ho cheb tsev lau, ua tej nyuag hauj lwm phem phem no xwb nawb. Ua ua ces kuv retire lawm xwb.

*(Before I retired, at first when I lived in Minnesota, I worked in a factory where we made parts for computers such as the motherboard, keyboards, and the tapes that people used to use for recording. I made those. I did that for 6 years until there wasn’t anymore work, then I left. After I left, I went to work making medical equipment for hospitals. I made those [pacemakers] for when your heart isn’t working and the tubes that go into your heart. I did that for a year. When I moved here [North Carolina] I worked at Spectrum hooking wires, coiling wires, sweeping the floors, and other low jobs like that. I did that all the way up until I retired.)*

**HY:** Thov piav qhia tias koj pab txhawb lub zej zog thiab haiv neeg Hmoob li cas? *(Can you tell, in what ways you involved in your community or with the Hmong people?)*

**NY:** Hais nyob teb chaws Nplog ces peb cov no ces ua Tha-han nyob tom hav zoov thiab tom vaj tom tsev los sawv daws tuaj lawm tas ces tseem raug ua nom nyob tom tsev thiab. Kuv tau ua ib tug *nay-khon* [Lao word- “captain”] thiab, ua tus *nay-khon* mas ua tus saib pej xeem thiab. Ces mus tom hav zoov thiab ho mus tom tsev thiab.

*(In Laos I was a soldier and I served in the jungle as well as in the villages. So many people left that I also had to serve as a leader for the village. I was also a captain and I helped oversee the civilians. So, I served in both the jungle and in the villages.)*

**HY:** Thaum nim no neb? Thaum tuaj txog rau teb chaws Miskas ntawv no, ib yam li koj pab rau Hmong Southeast los sis… *(What about now, when you got to America? For example, you help with Hmong Southeast…)*

**NY:** Oh. Tuaj nyob lub teb chaws no ces, koom hoom tshiab peb caug Hmong Southeast no ces kuv mus ua tau 8 lub xyoo los yog li cas. Mus pab ua tus marketing. Ho dhau li ntawv ces kuv raug mus ua ib tug ua pab saib xyuas ub xyuas no. Ces tus marketing mas kuv ua tau ob xyoos es tus nrog cov taj-laj uas lawv tuaj muag khoom nyob rau hauv ces yus mus ua tus qhia lawv thiab yus mus ua tus show cov nqi uas lawv tuaj pab ntawv. Ces hauv lub khoom haum no ces pab li no.

Tam sim no muaj lub koom hoom 18 Xeem mas tuag lawm tab sis lawv rov qab tsa lub tshiab. Ces lub koom hoom 18 Xeeb no ces lawv kom kuv mus ua ib tug txwj laug nyob hauv pab hais plaub hais ntug thiab.

*(Oh. When I lived here, in the organization that hosts the New Year festival, Hmong Southeast, I’ve served for about 8 years with them. I help with the marketing. I also help oversee general operations. I’ve served in the marketing position, for 2 years now and I work with the vendors at the New Year to help with their inquiries and with the pricing for their booths. That’s what I do in that organization.*

*There’s also the 18 Clan organization that died off but is being restarted. They’ve asked me to serve as an elder on their board to help resolve disputes and conflicts [amongst the Hmong clans].)*

**HY:** Hnub no koj tuaj es koj hnav koj tsoos khaub ncaws ko [wearing military dress] thiab koj nqa dab tsi tuaj? Koj piav mi ntsis txog tej ko yom? *(Today, you came here wearing your uniform and what else did you bring? Can you tell us a bit about those things?)*

**NY:** Hnub no mas vim peb tuaj tham rau hauv lub library no mas yog ib qho tseem ceeb muaj nuj nqi nawb. Vim hais tias lawv tau hais rau peb tus Pha-than Hmong Southeast Puavpheej tshiab peb caug hais tias lawv yuav xav paub peb Hmoob history, tias peb tuaj lub teb chaws no yog vim li cas peb thiaj tau tuaj. Ces qhov ntawv yog qhov uas kuv hnav kuv ceb ris tsho no. Yog kuv yog ib tug qub tub rog. Coj cov hnub qub no yog ib tug Captain. Cev riv tsho no yog ces riv tsho number sam [Lao word for “three”] number peb rau teb chaws… cev no mas yog cev tos nom thiab cev uas muaj party li cas mas mam hnav ces no mus party. Ho cev nstuab uas nej pom pom ces yog cev peb mus sib tua rog pem hav zoov nawb. Ces cov riv tsho no mas li no. Ces dhau ntawv…

*(Today I wore this because I am here at the library and it’s a very special occasion of great importance. Our president of the Hmong Southeast Puavpheej was contacted and told that they wanted to record our history and stories about why we came to this country so that’s why I wore this uniform today. It’s to show that I was a soldier. The stars here show that I was a captain. This is uniform 3 from Laos...this uniform is for wearing when you are receiving leaders or for formal gatherings like parties. The green uniforms are for combat when we were in the jungles. Also…)*

**HY:** Cev ko yog cev thaum ub lod los yog cev tshiab? *(Is that your uniform from a long time ago or is it new?)*

**NY:** Cev no mas yog cev nyob teb chaws Nplog nawb. Teb chaws no mas lawv tsis hnav cov zoo li peb hnav no od. Cov no mas yog peb cov tha-han Nplog nawb. Ces peb thiaj hnav cev no, ntoo lub kaus mom no. Muaj ob yam, ib lub kaus mom yog lub kaus mom casquette, ho lub no mam yog lub kaus mom liab, lub no nrog cev no los tau ho ntoo rog cev riv tsho txaij los tau. Ho lub casquette ntoo nrog cev no thiab ntoo nrog cev loj loj xwb thiaj tau nawb.

Ces hnub no kuv tuaj ces kuv nqa tau ib co ntaub ntawv no tuaj rau hauv no ces yog coj tuaj rau lub tuam tsev cia thiab tsoom fwm peb Hmoob tej dab neeg tej kev pov thawj tim kawv uas tau pab lub teb lub chaw los lawm thiab koj muaj txiaj ntsim dab tsi thiab koj tau ua dab tsi rau lub teb chaws thiab koj tau pab lub teb chaws thiab koj ua dab tsi los lawm thiab. Qhov no ces yog cov ntawv pov thawj no thiab cov duab no, yog kuv nqa tuaj coj tuaj cia sawv daws tej dab neeg thiab tej pov thawj tim kawv no. Coj tuaj tseg rau hauv no es yog leeg twg ho xav paub lo ho tuaj xuas hauv no. Yog leej twg tsis xav paub los tsis ua cas. Cov no mas yog pov thawj tim kawv. Peb cov ntawv peb nqa tuaj no mas yog tsoom fwm Miskas rau peb xwb od. Tsoom fwm Miskas muab rau peb hais tias peb tau pab Miskas xwb no od. Cov ntawm no yog ib co lawv recognize hais tias peb tau nrog lawv ua tsov ua rog pab lub teb lub chaw es lawv muab cov medal. Medal ces nej paub lawm. Ces yog lawv muaj cov medal rau peb no nawb.

*(This one is from Laos. The uniforms in this country are different than these. This is what the soldiers in Laos wear. You wear this uniform and this hat. There are two different hats, one that’s like a casquette and this one that is red. You can wear this one with this uniform or with a camo uniform. But the casquette, you can only wear with this one.*

*Today I also brought some documents here to show and tell about the Hmong’s history and as artifacts to show how we helped the country, how we fought, and what we did for the country. So, I brought these documents and photos to be preserved as artifacts to show that. Anyone will be able to see them but if they don’t want to, that’s okay too. All these [documents, awards, etc] were given to us by the Americans. These documents are to recognize us for our service during the war, to show that we helped the country. We received medals too.)*

**HY:** Koj muab koj ib daim ntawv...koj xaiv ib daim muab show rau peb es peb thiaj li saib tau yom? Koj piav mi ntsis txog daim ko yom? *(Can you choose one and show it so we can see it? Can you tell a bit about it?)*

**NY:** [Holds up Lao-Hmong American Coalition Certificate] Daim no mas lawv recognition hais tias kuv yog ib tug tub rog. Tus no mas yog tus *Nay-Phon* B.G.[Brigadier General], General Aderholt...yog tus uas tuaj nrog peb ua tsov ua rog thaib tus no yog tus, thaum tos peb kawg kiag, peb tuaj no. Tus no yog tub nyob tim Udorn es xa nyoob hoom tuaj tos sawv daws nawb. Muab daim recognition no rau kuv hais tias kuv yog ib tug tub rog tau pab lub teb lub chaws, li no ces nwv thiaj muab daim recognition no rau kuv.

*(This one is for recognition for being soldier. This one was awarded by B.G. [Brigadier General], General Aderholt...he fought with us in the war and he was the one to bring us to this country. He was the one who was in Udorn and called the planes to evacuate us. He gave this recognition to me for my service to this country as a soldier.)*

**HY:** Daim ko yog xyoo twb uas koj tau? *(What year did you receive that?)*

**NY:** Daim no...tau muaj 10 thawm xyoo lawm nawb. [Pointing to the certificate] Nws tsis ua wan-thi hauv no tab sis mas nws muaj rau peb cov tau ua tsov ua rog no ces nws yuav tsum tau muab daim recognition no. Ces muaj tus chij Miskas thiab muaj tus chij Nplog nyob rau hauv no. Ces nws sau ntawv no hais tias “Yog nco txog peb Hmoob. Lao-Hmong American Coalition” Lub npe yog lub no nawb. [Puts the certificate away]

*(This one...it’s been over 10 years now. It doesn’t have the date but it has that it’s a certificate of recognition. It has the American flag and the Lao flag and there’s the writing “In grateful appreciation of your support. Lao-Hmong American Coalition.” And it has my name here.[Puts the certificate away])*

**HY:** Dab tsi yog qhov ua koj txaus siab rau thiab quas tshaj plaws nyob rau hauv koj lub neeg? *(What are you happiest about or most proud of in your life?)*

**NY:** Nyob hauv kuv lub neej ces vim yus muaj poj niam tub se mi tub mi nyuam. Ces luag hais tias zoo tham los tsis mloog. Thiab mi tub mi nyuam los kuj rau siab, nyias khwv tau noj tau haus. Thiab yus los yog niam yog txiv ces yus nyob rau hauv qhov hais tias yus qhuab qhia yus tej tub tej ntxhais tej tub tej kis kom sawv daws xyaum zoo, es nyias muaj nyias laj nyias kam. Qhov ntawv ces yog qhov yus txaus siab es yus tsis muaj kev nyuab siab ntawm yus lub neej nawb. Yog hais tias yus ua niam ua txiv es yus tsis coj zoo es mi tub mi nyuam es, tus yuav khiav mus laj fab toob fab, tus yuav mus ua neeg dab tsi los mus ua, ces ua rau yus nyuab siab yus nyob tsis taus. Tab sis yus kuj xav hais tias yus ua niam ua txiv, yus yuav ua tus qauv zoo es yus tub mi nyuam thiab sawv daws, zej zog sawv daws thiaj pom hais tias, “Tus neeg no yog ib tug ua qauv zoo nawb. Nej yuav tsum xyaum luag. Luag muaj tub muaj kis los luag tej tub tej kis xyaum txim txiaj. Luag tsis tau ua neeg phem dab tsi li.” Qhov yus txaus siab ces yog txaus qhov no nkaus xwb nawb. Es kuv tham li no txawm tham tau hlob tau yau los thov zam txim pub nawb.

*(In my life I have a wife, children, and grandchildren. Some say you can talk all you want but they don’t listen. But my children are hardworking and they each have their own careers. As parents, it’s always been our priority to teach our children and bring them up to be responsible and decent and to be able to provide for themselves. That’s the thing that makes me the happiest- that I don’t have to worry about my children. As parents, if you don’t lead your children by example and your children don’t have good character, they just become whatever kind of people they want-- this will lead to much stress and worry. But if you strive to be good role models for your children and others, then the world will see and praise you, “This person is a good role model so try to be like them. They have many children but their children have great character. They are righteous in all they do.” The thing I am proudest of is simply that. This is my opinion so I hope it doesn’t offend anyone but if it does, I hope they’ll forgive me for it.)*

**HY:** Yav tom ntej ntawm no, koj xav kom neeg paub dab tsi txog Hmoob, Hmoob lub neej thiab Hmoob kab lig cev cai? *(In the future, what do you want people to know about the Hmong, Hmong history, and their traditions?)*

**NY:** Dhau qhov no mus, kuv xav tias...daws li kuv xav xwb os… luag mab luag suav nyob li Nyiv-Phooj los mus rau Suav tuaj nyob rau lub teb chaws no tau 100- 200 xyoo lawm, luag tseem nco ntsoov luag culture. Dhau ntawv kuv xav kom peb Hmoob nco ntsoov peb Hmoob culture. Qhov nej yuav mus tseeg luag culture kuj tau kawg tiam sis qhov ntawv luag li od. Tiam sis thaum luag nug hais tias nej yog yam neeg dab tsi no, peb teb tsis tau hais tias peb yog Miskas. Peb tuaj Miskas los mas, kuv yog xam xaj Miskas los mas tab sis mas kub plaub hau los tseem dub, kuv hais lus los kuv tseem hais kuv cov lus. Tsuas yog kuv cov mi tub mi nyuam hais luag lus ntau lawm xwb tam sis mas.. Tham mas zoo tham tab sis yuav tsis mloog mi ntsis. Nyob li tam sim no peb cov Hmoob nyob hauv no lo teb neeg Miskas luag nug hais tias, “Koj yog Hmoob los koj yog Japanese los koj yog Chinese los koj yog Vietnamese?” Peb cov Hmoob, twb tsis hais cov laus li peb no, peb cov mi nyuam me me uas 7-8 xyoo no mus kawm ntawv, mus txog tom *rong-reiyn* [Lao word- “school”] xwb lawv hais tias, “Are you Chinese?” No. Kuv yog Hmoob. Qhov no ces xav kom peb nco ntsoov tias peb Hmoob yog dab tsi.

Dhau qhov ntawv, peb cov laus mas tsis txawj nawb tab sis cov mi tub mi nyuam, nej txawm mus kawm luag teej luag tug los qhov ntawv kawm los nrhiav no nrhiav haus. Thov nej nco ntsoov hais tias nej culture yog dab tsi. Nej nco ntsoom hais tias nej txawm mus church, tsis mus church, dab tsi los nej noj peb caug nej yuav coj nej lub xaus nawb puas yog? Nej yuav hnav nej cev khaub ncaws Hmoob nawb. Txawm muaj dab tsi los kav liam tab sis nej yuav hnav khaub ncaws, nej yuav ntoo phuam. Qhov ntawv yog qhov culture ntawm Hmoob.

Dhau ntawv, nej txawm yuav mus coj ab tsi los kav liam tiam sis nej ua tshoob ua kos, nej tseem yuav tau mus hais rau niam rau txiv, yuav mus nrog niam txiv sib tham. Tsis yog cia li hais tias, hnub no kuv yuav koj, koj yuav kuv ces wb cai sib yuav xwb. 100 leej mas tsuas muaj ib leeg, ob leeg xwb od. Ho dua li mas yuav tsum mus ntsib niam txiv yuav mus nrog niam txiv tham tias, hnub no kuv tau koj tus ntxhais. Qhov ntawv yog culture los ntawm peb Hmoob. Peb yuav tsum kawm peb Hmoob culture. Thaum twg luag nug hais tias, qhov no ua li cas? Nej Hmoob culture yog li cas? Yog koj tsis kawm ces koj rov qab tsis paub tias peb Hmoob culture yog dab tsi. Ces rov qab mus nug cov laus. Peb laus mas peb tsuas tham tau xwb, peb tsis txawj ntawv. Ces nim no cov hluas li nej ces nej yuav tsum tau muaj sau rau hauv ntawv hais tias, peb Hmoob culture yog yam no, yam no. Ib, yog tshoob yog kos nawb. Ob, yog ua neeb ua yaig nawb. Peb, yog ab tsis nawb, hnav tsoos hnav tsho thiab nawb. Tsis paub tias qhov twg ua ntej li tab sis cov no mas yog cov ua peb Hmoob culture. Peb txawm hais luag lus ib tsam los peb yuav rov qab los hais peb cov lus. Qhov ntawv yog peb Hmoob culture no nawb.

Kuv tham mi ntsis li no. Txawm tham tau tsawg mi ntsis los tham tau dhau mi ntsis los ho zam txim. Los ho tsis txaus los ho zam txim thiab, ho tham ntau dhau los ho muab tshem tseg. Qhov zoo mam khaws, qhov tsis zoo los tso pov tseg.

*(This is my opinion: Japanese, Chinese, and other foreigners, they have been in this country for a hundred or two hundred years but yet, they still remember their cultures. I want our Hmong people to remember their culture. You can adopt a culture but that’s their culture, not yours. When you are asked what your culture is, you can’t just answer that you’re American. Yes, you are from America. I’m an American citizen but my hair is black, I have my own language. My children mostly speak a different language. They can speak my language but don’t understand too much. Even here, we get asked, “Are you Hmong or are you Japanese or Chinese or Vietnamese?” It doesn’t just happen to the old people. Even the little children, 7 or 8 years old, when they go to school, they get asked, “Are you Chinese?” No. I am Hmong. So this is why we need to remember that we are Hmong. The old people aren’t educated but the youth these days, even if you adopt other cultures, that should only be so you can work and earn a living. However, please remember your culture. Whether you go to church, don’t go to church, or whatever, during the New Year you’re going to wear your xaus [Hmong necklace], you’re going to wear your Hmong clothes, and you’re going to wear your phuam [Hmong head wrap].*

*No matter what, when you get married, go talk to the parents and don’t just decide amongst yourselves that you want to get married and then just do it. Out of 100, hopefully only 1 or 2 will do that but for most, when you are getting married you need to talk to the parents and let them know, “I want to marry your daughter” and so on. This is our culture and we need to know these things. Whenever you are asked, “What’s your Hmong culture like?” If you don’t study these things and you don’t know, go ask the older people. The older people, we can’t write. We can only talk so the young people need to write it down to tell that our culture are these things: first, is marriage and weddings, second is shamanism and ancestors, third is our traditional clothing. Those are not in any particular order of importance but all these things are a part of our culture. We can speak others’ languages for a bit but then, we need to come back and speak our own language again. These things are our Hmong culture.*

*I’m only speaking briefly so if it’s not enough or if I spoke too much then I apologize. If it’s too much, you can edit it and only keep the good parts.)*

**HY:** Hais li koj hais xwb zoo lawm mas. Puas muaj lwm yam uas kuv tsis tau nug koj tab sis koj xav piav thiab qhia txog? *(Your answers were great. Is there anything else I didn’t ask that you would like to tell about?)*

**NY:** Tej zaum tsis muaj dab tsi lawm. Lwm zaus yog tau tuaj ntsib nej no mam tham dua hais tias tshuav dam twg tseem tsis tau txhaus nawb.

*(I don’t think there’s anything else. Next time if we meet again we can talk or if there’s anything else that you need.)*

**HY:** Kuv xav tias Hmoob tej history thiab culture, yog tham mas yuav tham ntev mam tham tag, yom? Ua koj tsaug ntau.

*(Yes, I think, talking about Hmong history and culture, it would take a long time to talk about all of it. Thank you.)*

**NY:** Ua li. Ua tsaug. *(Yes, thank you.)*