

The Man and His Descendents

JeiVah Xiong was a young Hmong man who migrated from China to northern Laos during the early 1800s. During the early 1800s, the Hmong relocated to Laos both for political and economic reasons. The Chinese and the Hmong for centuries had battled one another for territories and political power. When the Chinese became victorious and ruled the territories that once was largely occupied by the Hmong, many Hmong had to give up their ways of life. For some, this struggle had led them to look for opportunities else where. The relocation to Laos provided many of them with unoccupied, fertile soils and without any government intervention. Without the constant oppressions from the Chinese, the Hmong were able to enjoy both economic and political freedom once again.

In Laos, the Hmong seldom ran into conflicts with the local tribes because of the different agriculture methods practiced among the ethnics. The Hmong tend to live in the highlands while the local tribes prefer the lowlands. The Hmong farmed on newly cultivated lands on hillsides. The Lao and other ethnics prefer the traditional lowland farming method utilizing water irrigation systems.

The Hmong assimilated well into the Lao culture, and for many - were embraced by the locals. By the mid 1900s, many Hmong men became respectable leaders among the ethnics of Laos. This shift in power and economic prosperities among the Hmong clans had also gained the attention of international powers such as the United States of America and France. For decades, both France and the United States had relied heavily on the Hmong for military support in Laos, particularly the French. The majority of the Hmong people lived, farmed and enjoyed their traditional ways of life in Laos for almost two centuries. The Vietnam War between the United States and North Vietnam had ended the Hmong ways of life during the 1960's when many of the Hmong men joined the US for guerilla warfare support.

JeiVah's descendants continued to prosper in many ways. Some of them had become leaders in Laos for both the Hmong and the local ethnics. Others became successful entrepreneurs and were well-known through out the regions. After the Vietnam War, many of JeiVah's families journeyed to Thailand and eventually to America. There are several families that had remained in Laos and Thailand. However, majority of the families, approximately 98%, had taken new residence in the United States of America. The majority of these families reside in Wisconsin and Minnesota. There are several families in Michigan, Missouri and California. The JeiVah family has stemmed from one married couple during the early 1800's to nearly 90 families in 2007.