



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to *Threads of Survival*, 1991

Human Studies Film Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Human Studies Film Archives
Title:	<i>Threads of Survival</i>
Date:	1991
Identifier:	HSFA.1993.21
Creator:	Vander, Kathryn (Director)
Extent:	Film reels (25 minutes; color sound)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Received from Kathryn Vander in 1993.

Preferred Citation

Threads of Survival, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Scope and Contents

Edited film documents the Hmong immigrants to the United States in their struggles to maintain the culture and traditions from their native Laos. Weaving and sewing of elaborate clothing and storycloths are depicted as the main vehicle for cultural transmission. Large tapestries on which pictures are stitched are used to tell a story. Attire such as belts, dresses and jackets become particularly important during the New Year Festival. Featured in a New Year celebration are the extensive preparations in making the finest clothes for the celebration, the ball game during the celebration which serves as a courtship ceremony for the unmarried youths, and a dancing festival. Various Hmong people interviewed also explain the importance of being dressed in one's finest clothing for burial as to please the ancestors of the deceased and to insure their generosity in the next life. Despite the many religious and ceremonial roles ornate weaving plays, many Hmong women interviewed identified the storycloths to be the most important use of sewing and weaving for their historical and sentimental values in helping later generations remember and understand the Hmong culture that existed in Laos. Storycloths also depict the treacherous journey of the Hmong refugees to Thailand during the Vietnam War.

John Prusak, Director of Photography ; Paul Locricchio, Sound Recordist ; Doreen Matthews, Editor

Legacy Keywords: Dress makers Laos United States ; Clothing fashions industry, special styles Laos United States ; Sewing Laos United States ; Weaving Laos United States ; Looms hand Laos United States ; Festivals for New Years Laos United States ; Adornment Laos United States ; Design and patterns in decorative art Laos United States ; Decorations Laos United States ; Courtship Laos United States ; Assimilation Laos United States ; Death and rebirth in initiation ceremonies possessions after Laos United States ; Ancestor worship of Laos United States ; War economic adjustments to refugees Laos United States ; Refugees war Laos United States ; Story tellers Laos United States ; Myths texts of Laos United States Dress makers Laos United States ; Clothing fashions industry, special styles Laos United States ; Sewing Laos United States ; Weaving Laos United States ; Looms hand Laos United States ; Festivals for New Years Laos United States ; Adornment Laos United States ; Design and patterns in decorative art Laos United States ; Decorations Laos United States ; Courtship Laos United States ; Assimilation Laos United States ; Death and rebirth in initiation ceremonies possessions after Laos United States ; Ancestor worship of Laos United States ; War economic adjustments to refugees Laos United States ; Refugees war Laos United States ; Story tellers Laos United States ; Myths texts of Laos United States

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Local Number

HSFA 1993.21.1

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Hmong (Asian people)
- Weaving

Cultures:

- Hmong (Asian people)

Types of Materials:

- Sound films

Places:

- Laos
- North America
- Southeast Asia
- Thailand
- United States