

After coming to the United States in 1927 - I took English lessons at the Lake View Highschool Evening School on Irving Pk Blvd and Astland in North Chicago. It was a great experience for me and many others - German-Swedes and Norwegian Immigrants. We all were very happy and those evening classes helped us all over our homesickness. I also joined a Sport Club "The Chicago Sportclub".

The second year at Evening school I took Citizenship class - and learned about Government and the Constitution of the United States. I was well prepared to become a citizen and applied for my first paper, but neglected to go for the 2nd paper or the citizenship paper. Even after our marriage, while life was good and I had a good job and fine family I finally started to begin to take out my first papers again. By that time - war had broke out in Europe - and everything showed clearly, that the U.S.A would be involved too. By then - we heard of an german organization that urged all german "noncitizens" to join - so we could help each other in case of hardship - if war broke out. We joined. It was absolutely nonpolitical. And for sure, as war broke out Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> we all had to register as Enemy Aliens and our movements were restricted. That means, that we needed permits if we wanted to travel etc. I also registered for Draft. Every thing was like before - no hardship. Only we realized, what we missed by not having citizenship papers.

On August 6<sup>th</sup> <sup>1942</sup> in the evening - two F. B. I. agents came to us and took me away for a hearing.

I was delivered to a big private house on the South side, where there were many other Germans - Italians and Japanese. It was very crowded and I also met other fellows, I know. At a hearing the next day - it was very short - and also insulting between, I had the feeling, that I wasn't coming home. — And about 2 weeks later with a heavily armed escort we were shipped to Camp McCoy in Wis. (an Army Camp.)

In the meantime my family had to go through a harder time than I. Mama had to give up our home and did housework. Barbara lived in my sister's house for a while and Mama found another job as a Saleslady in a delicatessen-store. She was able again to have a little apartment and Barbara could come home again.

While at Camp McCoy - I tried to get a hearing - but the Army had nothing to do with us. In the Spring 1943 we were shipped to Fort Lincoln near Bismarck, N.D. This camp was also a former Army Camp - but the Immigration-Service took <sup>it</sup> over. It was very orderly but also crowded - Germans - Japanese - Italians. Many hundreds of Germans from every South American Nation. From Mexico to Chile. Mostly wealthy business men.

Then one day, the Forest Service appealed for Volunteers - as Fire fighters etc. on a bulletin in camp. I figured, that I would have a

Chance, to get home, if I show my loyalty and I signed up with the Forest Service. In a Forest Camp near Boise, Idaho we were trained to handle all kind of heavy equipment and we put out many big fires, that were started by Japanese firebombs. Japanese send those bombs attached to small balloons across the Pacific Ocean into the woods of the Northwest. (A report by the Forest Service said, "even now in 1985, they find unexploded bombs on the West coast. We were pretty free and associated with people in towns and were also very respected.

When not fighting fires - we planted young trees - built small ~~high~~ bridges (wood) - built roads and paths. I even worked in an office of the Forest Service to do lettering on maps.

We fought fires with many fellows in Montana, Washington - Oregon and Idaho and made many friends. In July 1945 (July 26<sup>th</sup>) I came home again to my family.

M. Nell - Lisa, Mike and Meggy: this is my story and you could probably give it the title: "The hard way, how to become a citizen!"

Your Grandfather.

But your Gramma and Mom deserve more credit, then they really went through it the hard way.