

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with

Arvid Theodors Hammers

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Immigrant Stories Oral History project

Interview # IM-A-L-2014-031

Arvid Hammers, a Latvian immigrant to the United States with his mother and father in 1951, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Immigrant Stories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: June 6, 2014 & August 19, 2014

Location: Arvid Hammer's Springfield home and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Carol Esarey

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:10 + 1:46 / 1.17 + 1.77 = 2.94 hrs

Session 1: Growing up in Germany in post-war Europe

Session 2: Arvid's emigration to American in 1951, and his life in the United States

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 7, 2014.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Arvid Hammers, *Immigrant Stories*, IM-A-L-2014-031

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Arvid Hammers was born in Riga, Latvia in June 1942 to Arvid and Milda Hammers, who owned a small but successful chain and nail factory in the capital city of Riga, Latvia. At this time, Latvia was occupied by the German Army. The Hammers were forced to leave it all behind in 1944 before the Soviet Army occupied Latvia, and with the help of German friends, resettled in a Displaced Persons Camp in Germany. Between 1944 and 1951, Arvid's father worked for the International Refugee Program and several other organizations involved in resettling displaced persons in Germany and working with the refugees in various capacities. The family moved several times over the next few years. The Hammers family emigrated to the United States in December 1951, eventually settling in Chicago, Illinois where young Arvid grew up and attended school. Arvid's father and mother worked in factories or any work they could find.

Arvid attended high school in Chicago and college at Southern Illinois University, receiving a Master of Arts degree in political science. He served as a research associate at the IL Legislative Council and later, as a Public Affairs Consultant for the Youth Network Council for over twenty-five years. Arvid is the father of three children, Theodore, Alexander, and Margot.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Latvian immigrant; political situations in 1940's during German and Soviet occupation of Latvia; life in West Germany after WWII; language barriers as an immigrant; life in the United States as a child and adult; connections to Latvian life and Latvian culture.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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