

I: Did you ever salute officers?

H: Yes, we always saluted the officers.

I: Why?

H: Well, I considered it as just a formal way of saying good morning to a man or how do you do, so I had really never considered not doing it, though I will say at one time later on that an officer told me that an officer should not be saluted by me.

I: What kinds of work did you do while you were there?

H: Well, the only thing that we did was to keep our quarters clean. We were supposed to be able to do our own cooking, but because I was by myself most of the time that wasn't practical. So I used to do some police duty, but other than that I wasn't assigned anything.

I: Were you well treated while you were there?

H: Not too well. We were sent to the guardhouse when we refused to accept work. We were not mistreated by the officers, but when we got to the guardhouse they had what they called kangaroo court and it was common procedure that they should give the new incoming fellows a trial and some kind of a sentence. Because we were conscientious objectors, this became much more severe, of course. They were four of us at this time and we were beaten one day with straps, many strips. That continued for a number of days, I should say for about four days, and on the last day it was still worse. About that time the officials received information about this--I'm sure through some of the other prisoners--and they called us before them and I think I was by myself at this particular time. They asked me what they did and I told them that they beat me on my back and they asked me to take off my clothes to show them and there was sores and it was bloody. Officers said immediately, "Well, we can send these men to Fort Leavenworth and we are not going to have anyone treating them this way. We also will prefer charges against them." The upshot of the whole thing was that the second lieutenant who had seen the whole thing and seemed to have reveled in it, had a trial. I appeared at his trial. He finally got a sentence of one day in the guardhouse and he did serve it.

Very shortly after this we were sent back to our company and within a day or two, I was taken sick one night and taken to the infirmary and then to the hospital with a new disease, influenza. I was in the hospital for about three weeks, and when I got out of the hospital and went back to my company, my company that I had been with had left with the commanding officers. So I had a new group of people to deal with. So one morning I went to breakfast without a uniform and the company commander saw me and said, "I want to see you. You come to my office." So I had to go through this whole thing with him again. He said, well, we'll prefer charges against me, which he did, and I went back to the guardhouse again. While I was there, they placed me on bread and water for a period of two weeks. They are compelled by their rules to give the following two weeks regular food again. So while I was there I had a chance to send a letter out and sent a letter

to J.S. Hartzler* telling about my condition. When the twelve days was up, not the fourteen, my officer told me that they would take me off bread and water now. I'd been on for fourteen days now which hadn't happened but I didn't know the reason. Of course, the reason was that Hartzler had gotten in contact with the officials and they found out that I was on bread and water. They took me off and I was supposed to remain off, which I did. Then I was around there for several weeks until I was finally taken to Fort Leavenworth.

I: Were some conscientious objectors treated better than others?

H: Well, two of the boys after going through the first siege took non-combatant service. And the third young man said he couldn't take it all either, so he decided to take noncombatant service if he wouldn't be compelled to carry a gun. The particular officer with whom he was working at that particular time told him, "Young man, there was nothing in the army anywhere that you can do, but you'll have to carry a gun." And on that premise he also kept on with the C.O. position. So there were two of us, and I think that I had the more difficult deal of the two, possibly because I happened to be the spokesman. But other than that I had no experience with other C.O.'s in this camp.

I: Were you ever allowed visits home?

H: No. Of course, I wasn't in camp more than three months before I was sent to Fort Leavenworth.

I: Did you have any visitors to camp?

H: There was only one individual that came. D.H. Bender** was one of the regional visitors. He was down there and was with us and how much he accomplished, I don't know. He couldn't talk to us but very little and he did try to deal with the officers, but I never found out just how much he was able to do.

I: Were the C.O.'s segregated from the rest of the camp pretty much at Camp McArthur?

H: Most of the time, yes. Well, part of the time when I came back to the camp the second time, when I was wearing the civilian clothes, when I would go into the mess hall, the ones who were giving out the food was told to give us only one helping and not to permit us to go back again. Interesting thing happened, however. The head mess sergeant came to the others and told them, "Here's a fellow that can't come back a second time, so give him all he wants the first time."

I: Did you see any other C.O.'s mistreated?

H: No, I saw no other C.O. mistreated. In fact, there were no other C.O.'s around, hence, I had no experience in that line.

*An educator, author, minister and leader in the Mennonite General Conferences, J.S. Hartzler wrote Mennonites in the World War or Nonresistance under Test (1921).

**Daniel Henry Bender (1866-1945) was a bishop in the Mennonite Church and the President of Hesston College for many years.

I: Did you come before the Board of Inquiry?*

H: I did after I'd got to Fort Leavenworth. At Fort Leavenworth, the Board of Inquiry was there. I really think I had my discharge at the time, though I didn't know. While they were there, they were very much interested in the fact that my name was Hartzler. There was an Orie Hartzler on the Pacific coast that they had been trying to see for a number of months. They were never able to locate him because when they had got to the place where he had been, he was moved to another location.

I: Do you remember the members of the Board of Inquiry and what it was like to appear before them?

H: It is a very interesting experience to me. Kellogg was the chairman, and Stone was another man and there was a third man. I don't remember--

I: Was it a Mack?

H: Yes, Mack, possibly Julius Mack. A very interesting thing that I had there. I enjoyed it very much. They were men that understood, I think, the war, but at the same time they did understand, somewhat, the C.O. position. And I had a very interesting conversation with them, back and forth, though I don't remember the details of it too much.

I: Were you court-martialed?

H: Yes, I had been court-martialed at Camp McArthur. And on the results I was given five years at Fort Leavenworth.

I: Do you think the proceedings were fair?

H: I think they were quite fair. I was furnished a lawyer, that he proved himself was very able in defending me. Though, of course, the charges were pressed and the results as you'll find them.

I: Would you wish to describe more on your life at Camp McArthur and Fort Leavenworth?

H: Yes, in camp some interesting things experienced. Particularly always when we were mistreated, we always had soldiers around us that under the sly, they gave us all kinds of encouragement and gave us all the sympathy they could. In fact, while I was in solitary confinement--it was an old building about four feet room, by ten feet long--not much room to walk, but it was an old building with some knot holes in it. Many a time one of the soldiers, rather other prisoners, brought me something hot to eat. I wasn't supposed to have anything but a piece of dry bread and a cup of water for a meal. I did get some meals--I wasn't sure if I should take this but I was never quizzed about it and I appreciated very much. But time and time again, even when noncommissioned officers had been rough to me, privately, they would come to me and tell me that they were very sorry for that. They didn't want to but they were told to treat me in this manner. Time and again individual soldiers in the camp came to me and gave me what sympathy they could and

*See Henry J. Becker interview, footnote.

told me to stand up for my--what I thought. A very interesting experience
for me.