

A Question and Answer Page for Foreign-Born

Questions on Americanization, Naturalization, Citizenship, Civil Rights and all matters of importance in regard to the necessary adjustments for foreign-born who have come here for the purpose of remaining permanently, will be answered promptly and as fully as possible, By Judge J. A. Buchanan, President Astoria Americanization Council in Astoria, and by H. J. Langoe, Editor The United American. Anyone asking a question may request that it be published under such pseudonym as he desires but the questioner must in all instances sign his correct name and address to the letter that accompanies the question. Anonymous questions will not be published or answered in this forum. People who are living in Astoria and vicinity may address their questions directly to Judge Buchanan.

Question.

Dear Editor:—As we get the United American I would like your opinion on the question of citizenship. In 1910 I married a foreigner although he was educated in America, coming to this country when he was ten years of age. He took out his first paper and as you know he could vote on that. In 1923 he was fully naturalized, but I am told that I, an American born, am not an American unless I get naturalized too. I do not think the law is right to take away a woman's birthright just because she married a foreigner. Is that a crime? In school I was taught you had to commit a terrible crime against your country to lose your birthright. Was this a terrible crime? And I know a woman who is a foreigner who married a foreigner who was naturalized and she became an American. What right has she to be an American without being naturalized, while I will have to go through a lot of red tape if I want my birthright back? I didn't know that by marrying I would lose all right to this country. What is your opinion?

A Reader of the United American.

Answer.

Your case is one of many thousands of American born women who married foreign-born men before September, 1922. At that time a law enacted by Congress went into effect which materially changed the conditions of which you speak. Since the enactment of this law, no American born woman will lose her American citizenship rights through marriage in this country with a foreign-born resident who is not a citizen of the United States. His status, though he may never become naturalized, will not at any time effect his native-born American wife's status in citizenship. Likewise, since this law went into effect, no foreign-born woman can obtain citizenship here through marrying an American, a citizen in his own right through birth or naturalization. Under the new law every foreign-born adult, women as well as men desiring American citizenship, must qualify individually for naturalization. The foreign-born wife of an alien, who takes no step to become citizen of the United States, will remain an alien though her foreign-born husband may become naturalized upon application, provided he can qualify according to law after having lived continuously in this country for five years. Had your husband sought to become an American citizen in the period between 1910, when you were married, and September 1922, his naturalization would automatically

have restored to you your citizenship, which you forfeited under the previous naturalization law by marrying an alien. It is true that at the time your husband took out his first paper, an alien possessing such a document of his intentions, could register and vote in Oregon, but as that practice was discontinued in Oregon many years previous to the passing of the Cable act of 1922, which changed our naturalization code as referred to, the realization that your husband was an alien and that you by marrying him had technically lost your birthright, should have caused him to seek citizenship before he did, if not for himself so much as for you. When he finally did in 1923, the law had been changed and his naturalization could no longer restore you to citizenship by any act on his part. Under these circumstances, which have technically made you an alien, there is only one thing for you to do, and that is to apply for restoration of your citizenship through the machinery of naturalization. Any number of American-born women who married aliens before September of 1922 have had to do this very thing to regain their citizenship rights, lost through such marriages. You will not, however, be required to take out the customary "First Paper" or Declaration of Intention. You will only be required to apply for "final" papers and go through the formality according to law. The Naturalization office in the Post Office Building, Broadway and Glisan, will give you further particulars. While you are a victim of circumstances over which you no longer have any control, you can see that the new law has put a stop to the practices of which you are complaining, and that henceforth American women will be protected in their citizenship rights regardless of their marrying aliens, as well as preventing an alien woman from automatically becoming a citizen of America, even the very day she lands, if she just happens to marry an American citizen. In view of these facts there is no justification for resentment against the law, even in your case, but the situation is one of many instances in our lives when we have to go to a great deal of trouble in doing a thing that would have been so easy and caused so little effort if we had not been inclined to be just a little negligent.

H. J. L.

Question.

Editor The United American:—We have had some discussion about the meaning of the word "Republic." If

you would explain what the word means we would be very glad.... Edw. Karmo.

Answer.

The word "Republic," like so many words in all modern languages, is of Latin origin. It is derived from the two latin words "Res" and "Publica." Res means things and Public means public or people. Joined together these two words mean "the people's things," or "the people's affairs" or, more definitely expressed, "the things or affairs of government belonging to the people." In the building of languages the attempt has always been made to express in one word, where possible, a definite meaning originally requiring several words, hence the modernization of Res Publica producing the word "Republic," meaning a government where the people rule. This does not, however, mean, as so many people argue, that a republic is not a republic unless the people make their own laws by the direct vote of the individual. A republic, being a form of government by the people, the people have the right to determine more specifically how they are to be governed and establish such rules as the majority believe in. The people of THIS republic established a representative system, and while in some states the people have initiated a direct machinery of action and may enact laws by popular voting the big majority of the people of the United States are still in favor of having their legislation done by representatives elected by the people. It affords greater protection and is a safeguard against the dangers of passion and thoughtless action by the untrained and uneducated who invariably are led to vote against their best interests. Seasoned and mature thinking is always preferable to rash action. According to that principle, the American people are conducting their republic, a true type of Res Publica—a government where thinking people conduct their affairs of government with more than one hundred million members taking part. — H. J. L.

Question.

Dear Editor:—We have no citizenship school here in the Nehalem Valley. Why not?

Eino P.

Answer.

Citizenship schools are unfortunately as yet only conducted in the main cities and towns of the West. There is now a movement on foot in the legislature to put Americanization training on a state-wide basis. If it carries you will shortly have a citizenship teacher also in the Nehalem school districts.

— H. J. L.