

Feliks Nieznanowski's Document Confirming That He Is A Professional Carpenter



This is my document confirming that I am a professional carpenter. I received it in Magnitogorsk, in the former USSR, in 1940, when I was only 14.

When the war began, in 1939, I was 14, had had my bar mitzvah, my brother was 15 years older than me. We escaped from Warsaw.

I completed a carpentry course in Magnitogorsk. Then I was assigned to a brigade that built coke-chemical furnaces. Before the war, the Russians didn't have the technology of building such furnaces, and had to employ Belgian, Dutch, American specialists to build them. Special luxurious developments were built to house them. They were paid in gold. Those were the experts in building coke-chemical furnaces. During the war, when they started heating up one of such furnaces, it collapsed. And without coke you can't make tanks. It means a great sabotage occurred. All those foreign experts had gone home, they were foreign citizens, the Russians couldn't stop them. And so they set up special brigades for building those furnaces, and I was assigned to one of those. We knew how to lay those bricks, because those are the chamotte bricks, maximum tolerance is 1-2 millimeters, there can be no deviation, and there you cook coke. We learned to build those furnaces. We were at first like students, and those who had worked under those foreign experts were our masters. We became craftsmen. An enterprise was set up to build coke-chemical plants. So after the Magnitogorsk project had been completed, they sent us to Novosibirsk.