

Daniel Kuettel

My mother was a Mayflower Descendant, a descent from an ancestor who settled in Texas before February 19, 1846 and a descendant of pioneers to Colorado. My father migrated to Canada and then to the US after being forced to leave Switzerland for refusing to serve in the Swiss military as a flame thrower. Today, he still lives in the house where I was born, in Greeley, Colorado.

Until the age of 10, my two siblings and myself attended the Greeley Catholic School, where I happily served as an altar boy at the nearby church. When my parents got divorced and my father lost his job, he couldn't find work in the US. So, he remarried and moved to Switzerland, bringing his two sons along with him, while my sister and mother remained in the US. After two years, my brother returned, while I remained in Switzerland for another 3 years. I returned to the US for the 9th and 10th grades, but then returned to Switzerland for the 11th grade and then returned to the US to complete high school.

Having no money for college, I decided to join the US Army, where I served for 3 years as a crane operator in Georgia. After getting an honorable discharge, I returned to Colorado and joined the Colorado Army reserves while taking classes at a community college and working in technical support. Yet, I dreamed of living in an IT environment, so I packed my bags and moved to the Silicon Valley. While driving to California, my car broke down and I didn't have any money to repair it, so I sold it in exchange for a hotel room for a night so that I could pack all my belongings into a box to store in the cargo bin of the Greyhound bus.

In the Bay Area, I continued working to finance college, fell in love, got married and then divorced. After the marriage collapsed, I wanted to get away, so I moved to San Diego. There, I continued working to finance college until the dot-com crisis. Early 2001, I flew to the Philippines, got married again and applied for my wife to come to live with me in San Diego. Yet, I then lost my job, had no money, the check for her Green Card application bounced and companies around the US were not responding to my resume, so I packed my bags and found work in Switzerland where my wife joined me.

In 2003, the dot-com crisis came to Switzerland and I lost my job again, but could find work again nearby within a month. I then worked for the same company for nearly 14 years. In 2012, in response to national origin discrimination caused by US policy called FATCA, I had to renounce US citizenship to refinance my mortgage.

Today, my wife is a Swiss-Filipina, my daughter is a Swiss-American-Filipina and my son is a Swiss-Filipino, while I'm simply Swiss with lots of American heritage. Our home is Switzerland and it is very important for us to be treated equally and not discriminated against due to our complex cultural background.