

Nancy Jones
English War Bride



A New Husband; A New
Land

By Nancy Jones

There are many war brides in Prince Edward County. I came to Canada in August, 1946. In those days, you came by ship and a long journey it was. It was very sad leaving your family but you were young and you wondered what lay ahead in a strange land with different customs- a completely different world.

On the way over, the Adjutant aboard gave us a long talk on how we should try to adapt quickly and be a credit to the county you had just left and - uppermost in your mind- say, "I am now a proud Canadian."

I think maybe the immigrants coming now expect more than we did. I felt like Christopher Columbus when someone shouted 'land'. I was seasick, homesick and pregnant so I couldn't have cared less.

With great anticipation we arrived in Halifax and, of course, not having studied the geography of Canada too much, it seemed forever to get to Belleville. But then the train stopped at very available stop to let the brides off.

It was so frightening to land at four o'clock in the morning in Belleville. There of us got off and, of course only two husbands were there and it bad to be mine that wasn't there! He had been given the wrong time to arrival. I was petrified as you can guess and especially when the officials asked me if I had been on good terms with my husband when I had seen him last! Being five month pregnant I just burst into tears: "What had I done? I should have listened to my mother."

A very kind man phone to picton and got a very sleepy husband out of bed. They handed me the phone and I just wailed into the phone: "I want to go home!" About an hour later a taxi screeched into the station and this guy in a brown striped demob. Suit jumped out. All I could think was, "Gosh, I thought Al Capone was an American not Canadian." I only had seen my husband jack in uniform with a brush cut-Who was this with a shock of curly hair? However I was at home at last.

Life was very hard in '46, but it was for everyone, so we all

Pulled together in the same boat. I was young and very homesick and I cried a lot, it was a wonder I wasn't sent back to Scotland for keeps. I was lucky I came in to a warm loving and kind mother-in-law so in that way I settled down quickly - as I had a baby that I had to look after.

I know it was hard for most of us coming from a strictly rationed country to adjust to all that lovely Canada food. I still can taste my first piece of white bread from Morden's bakeshop. I had difficulty with my accent- it was a pretty thick one then. Once I went to buy 'brown pepper' and ended up somehow with 'brown paper& string'. They thought I wanted to send a parcel home! I learned to say, "I'd like a pound of something" instead of "I'll have a pound of Hamburg." I'd end up with half a pound of Hamburg!

My mother would always read the births, deaths, and marriages in our city paper when I was home. One day she read a girl's engagement to a boy from picton. She said let's get in touch with her and you will know each other when you get there. Well, she did, and to this day this same girl is like a sister to me -Sadie Manlow.We have laughed and cried together through the years.

There are lots of stories from other War Brides. One girl said her husband picked her up at the train, brought her home, left her in the kitchen with his parents and went out to the bran-chores had to be done.

It's great fun when a few of us get together and rehash it all; how we met our husbands - Most of us met them at a dance. I met mine at a dance, and as there was a demonstration going on I couldn't see the action, as I am so short. So he said get up on that table and lean against me. Of course, he got interested in the performance and he walked away and I fell on the floor and that was it- he's been sorry ever since.

Actually he was on a seven-day leave and he was going to Edinburgh but was directed to the wrong train and ended up in Glasgow. He said if he ever gets his hands on that man that directed him he'll have a lot to answer for.

I've come a long way since that fall on the floor. Canada has been good to me and I hope I have a credit to it. Sure, I cry when I hear the bagpipes but I also cry when I'm away and I hear Anne Murray sing Snowbird - they call it Transatlantic Blues.

I think that some of the immigrants coming now expect too much. You have to give of yourself and you can find extended family in any organization you join. I found it in my job at sears for 30 years; I met the

most wonderful people of the 'County', the people of Prince Edward are a special breed of people - warm and caring.

I feel I was one of the lucky ones to marry a County boy. Jack

And I have a lovely daughter and son-in-law Tom and Nancy Finora, two special grandsons Kevin, studying to be a vet, spends his summer at the picton Animal Hospital, and Chris with Toronto Dominion stocks and securities.

I hope my contribution as In all the brides who came to picton has been as the Adjutant said on that ship a long time ago: "a credit to the country we left and to the one we now live in." We brides may not have three generations in 'Glenwood', but we are new true country girls.

We do have an Overseas Club in picton it was started in 1969-70 by Kay Wright (Mrs. George) and Betty Payne (Mrs. Derek). It was originally the war Brides Club but is now the Overseas Women's Association, as we now have younger members. We meet once a month at the Carriage House opposite the A&P. We just get together and have a good lunch over a cup of tea.