

Rose Purdy  
English War Bride  
Aquitania  
June 29, 1946



I am a Canadian War Bride.

In the year 1943 I volunteered to join the NAAFI, they had canteens throughout England, serving the sailors and soldiers who were on leave with a variety of light meals and refreshments. I was stationed in an army camp in Witley, Surrey for Canadian soldiers. I was 18 years old and my family lived in Muswell Hill, North London. I was very sad that I was not in London with my Mum and Dad but at the same time I felt I was doing my "bit" for the war effort. My job in the canteen was to serve the refreshments to the Canadian soldiers, and after a while I noticed this handsome soldier always hanging around more than the other soldiers. We finally got friendly and he introduced himself as Jack Purdy from St. Catharines in Ontario.

We started dating and the manager of the canteen (a very miserable elderly woman named Mrs. Baker) was warning me on a daily basis that dating a Canadian could have drastic results! So needless to say I ignored her and took Jack home to London on leave to meet my parents (who I might add thought he was wonderful but dreaded the thought of me coming to Canada). We were married on August 11, 1945 in "Our Lady of Muswell" Catholic church in North London. It was a lovely wedding thanks to my mother's sisters. Clothing was rationed during the war so I could simply not spare my precious clothing coupons on a wedding dress. My aunt was able to borrow a beautiful white gown, another aunt made three bridesmaids dresses for my small cousins. It really turned out to be a lovely wedding day. When the war ended Jack went back to Canada in January of 1946. Then in June of 1946 I was notified to report to Southampton and board the Aquitania to Canada. It was an extremely difficult day to say goodbye to my family but at the same time I was so excited about coming to Canada. We arrived in Halifax (Pier 21) after a six day trip with hundreds (cannot remember how many) of war brides. Many of them with young children and babies.

We came by train to Toronto and there was Jack waiting for me. It was Dominion Day (now called Canada Day) and I thought I would never survive because it was very hot and I remember saying to myself "what on earth have I got myself into!" Jack's parents were very good to me and accepted me with open arms. The first year here was the hardest to get accustomed to not only the heat but the snow in the winter. This August 11, we will be celebrating our 55th wedding anniversary. We have

one son, one daughter and two lovely grandchildren and I can honestly say I have no regrets and I have been fortunate to have married one of the "good" Canadians! When I say "good" I had heard that some weren't quite so lucky.