

Eliane Angelique
Payment nee
Chanteau
By Deborrah Mehedan
French War Bride
Aquitania
September 6, 1946



My mother, Eliane Angelique Payment (nee Chanteau) came to Canada as a War Bride. Her journey on the Aquitania proved to be a terrible time for her as she was one of the unfortunate ladies that were very seasick. She remembers the girls that shared her cabin as being ill with babies of their own to look after and that she felt so sorry for them - babies & mums! During the voyage she was washing up and took her ruby wedding rings and watch off and when her back was turned for a moment they were stolen. She has never forgotten that moment - how terrible she felt. Upon her arrival in Halifax she was promptly hospitalized for dehydration 3 weeks, she remembers being given very dark beer to bring up her blood levels, after which time she went by train to meet my father, Allan Joseph Payment, in Toronto.

They then traveled to my father's parents, only to find that all the money he had sent home during his time overseas had been spent by his parents...what a way to start a new life, having to live with your in-laws and finding out that all your plans needed to be greatly changed. My mother spoke no English when she arrived and recollects learning to speak mostly by reading comic books...she still has a bit of an accent, has mastered English very well - but still misses saying "h" sounds! Life was not easy in the beginning - but over the years my parents raised 5 children, 3 boys, 2 girls and we are all very proud of our parents.

They celebrated their 50th anniversary 2 years ago and all but one brother and his family went to celebrate with them. It was a wonderful time and my parents were thrilled to have us all there with our families. We did miss our brother and his family very much though. My parents have gone back to France a few times and are glad to have been able to. They feel the trip is too hard now though so will probably not be able to return again. My mother has always loved being in Canada even though at times it was very hard for them, having little money when we were small and both parents working 2 jobs to make ends meet. My father lost part of his left hand in a cement mixer when he was in Toronto and my mother was pregnant with her first child, my brother Daniel. It was very, very hard for them and made things even more difficult. Over the years

though things have become much better for them and they have a good life and are happy with the way things have turned out over all.

My mother was thrilled when I sent her pictures and stories about Pier 21 and the war brides that I had found on the Internet so I thought I would tell you a bit about this remarkable woman that is my mother. I am so proud of the lady that she is.