

## The Van Helvert Children By Carrie-Ann Smith

Many Dutch families arrived in Canada during the 1950's. Land was scarce in the Netherlands so many farmers found the idea of Canada's wide-open spaces and fertile anchorage appealing. This photograph was taken on the day that the Van Helvert family arrived at Pier 21, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1950.



Here Harry Van Helvert describes his immigration experience:

“I came to Canada with my Dad and the whole family. The news media took all kinds of pictures because we were such a large family, fourteen in all. We were amazed at the snow and all the lights. 'This is our new country', but even having learned English we could not understand 'Canadian'.”

The Van Helvert family made a success of farming in Southern Ontario and added two more children to their numbers.



Years later one of the boys in the photograph, Harry Van Helvert, met a young Dutch woman named Dorothy. The two were married in May of 1957. Interestingly, their parents had met in the Emigration Hall in Hague and again on the Volendam during their voyage to Canada.

Dorothy Van Helvert wrote:

“A few years later, a friend of ours, together with Harry, built our house. We are blessed with two sons and two daughters. Then in 1965 we received our Canadian citizenship. Canada has truly been a great country for us!”