

Ilse Palisca
Austrian Displaced
Person
Fairsea
January 8, 1952

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
PIER 21



We had only one room to live in, in Villach Austria. Our two houses were destroyed by bombs and my husband was an Italian refugee from Communist Yugoslavia. We decided to apply in Tieste, Italy (free territory) for our immigration to Canada. I was pregnant. There was no hope for us to get a place to live in Trieste or Austria, so sometime in early November 1951 we went on an immigration train to Lesum, Bremerhaven Germany (refugee camp).

My husband boarded the Fairsea right away and arrived in Halifax Pier 21 on December 4, 1951. I was not allowed to go to Canada with my husband because I was seven and one half months pregnant.

I was placed in a camp at Blankensee near Lubeck Germany. I remember the long line-ups for meals and the corn husk mattresses that I slept on and the long walks to the refugee offices to see how long it would be before I could go to Canada. I didn't want to have my baby in the camp.

When I returned to the gate I could not walk any longer and two Polish guards carried me into the camp. I also remember being bitten up by bed bugs. I was at the camp for Christmas 1951 and celebrated an American style Christmas that year. Finally, I was



Auswanderer-Einschiffungslager Bremen-Lesum

shipped to Bremerhaven on December 27, 1951. I was put on the train on the very last passenger car. It was a very rough ride for me.

I embarked December 28, 1952 onto the Fairsea ship. When walking up the gangplank of this ship I saw very small snowflakes falling and I repeated "In God's Name I go." The crew put me in a room with many people and I saw only hammocks to sleep on. A young sailor (Italian crew) said to one of his superiors. This woman cannot be sleeping on a hammock so they put me in another room where there was a bed. Our toilet was a chamber pot. The sea was very rough. It was so frightening. A little woman put life preserver cushions around me.

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1881
Serial No 185117 15

Issued at Trieste

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

- The holder of this Certificate is the concern of International Refugee Organization.
- This Certificate is issued by the International Refugee Organization with the approval of the Allied authorities of Occupation in Germany and Austria to Refugees and Displaced Persons recommended for emigration to CANADA. It is issued without prejudice to and in no way affects the holder's nationality.
- This certificate is NOT valid for travel unless it bears the signature of the I.R.O. certifying officer AND the appropriate military exit permit has been granted.



FAMILY NAME **PALISGA** CHRISTIAN NAMES **Ilse Pleschberger**

MAIDEN NAME (where applicable) **Pleschberger**

DATE OF BIRTH **3.3.1930** SEX **F.** DP NO. _____

PLACE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH **Villach-Austria**

NATIONALITY **Undet. V. G.**

OCCUPATION **Housewife**

FATHER'S NAME **Hermann**

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME **Pinter Elsa**

Daisa Ilse
(Signature of Applicant)

Description of Holder

Height **157** cm Weight **25** kg

Hair **bl ond**

Eyes **green**

Nose **regular**

Shape of face **oval**

Special Characteristics **in**

K. F. MANNOK
CHIEF RESETTLEMENT OFFICER
TRISTE AREA
(Signature and Position of I.R.O. Certifying Officer)

Date **27.8.1951**

Place **Trieste**

Children up to 16 years accompanying holder. (Dependents over 16 years of age must have separate documents).		
NAME	SEX	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH

Exit Permit Visa No. _____

For insertion of **CANADA - IMMIGRANT -** visa

Visa No. **FD 16136**

Authority **PC 2156 para 4**

Valid for presentation at Canadian Port of Entry within **5-2-52** months from date of issue, such as on alternate

Issued at **Trieste, I.T.**

On **Oct. 9, 1951**

By **M. St. Jean**
Via Office - Trieste and Visa 131 - L.A.111

BULK LABOUR MOVEMENT
GENERAL L. ABOUWER

I was in the eating area twice only. I remember long tables with cornflake boxes on them picture of a big rooster on the boxes wondering what that was. I nibbled on a few cornflakes but wasn't hungry anyway. I recall seeing tall men with black suits and big hats on. I took so sick I was put in the hospital part of the ship. I didn't eat or drink anything because nothing would stay down. Because of the rough water the chamber pots were rolling all around the room and I could not find one so I will leave it to your imagination to know how I managed.

All I heard was noises with the ship hitting the waters so hard because of the wild storm on the sea. Every minute I thought the ship would break in half. Then I heard voices yelling "I see land, I see land" meaning that we had finally made it. The ship's doctor came to see me telling me

everything is made ready for me in case I had my baby on the ship. If the baby had been born on the ship it would have been a Panama citizen.

I arrived in Halifax Harbour on January 8, 1952, four days later than scheduled because of the rough sea. I saw some officials come up the gangplank and pin a medal on our captain's chest. (the Captain was directly in front of me). I now know the reason for the medal was probably because he had taken our ship away from a possible tornado/hurricane thus the four extra days at sea.

The ship's doctor wanted to place me in the hospital but I did not know that Pier 21 had a hospital so I refused to go saying that I would just go on the train. The doctor took my hand and guided me onto the train and said that he would clear up my immigration papers. He returned with an immigration officer and gave me my papers stamped Immigration Canada, landed Immigrant. The doctor said that a German nurse is going to be on the train going to Toronto. The train was waiting for many hours to process over 2000 immigration papers. I remember the seats were so hard that I was sliding from one side to the other. Everything was so depressing. Many tears were shed. I cried silently for my mother and father. Childhood memories flooded my mind of days with my school friends and little brother but I was alive and my baby will be born in Canada.



It was now breaking morning I looked out the train but all I could see was bushes and bushes and no houses. I questioned. Is this Canada? I was told when I left Austria that Canada was native Indians so I looked for tents and teepees believe it or not. I didn't see any, just bushes. We reached Montreal and I saw houses and it made me feel better.



We came to Trenton Ontario where my husband would be waiting for me. I arrived there on January 11, 1952. On February 25, 1952 my little girl was born. She had two teeth and the doctor removed them. I didn't know why my baby was not brought to me for two days after her birth. I thought that she was dead. After three months we moved to Belleville Ontario. Because we lived beside the airport in Trenton and the planes had maneuvers around 11:30

each night and I could only remember bombs in my country being dropped. It bothered my nerves so much that we had to move.

This is my story of my journey to Canada.



Ilse returns to Pier 21 by train