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Ukrainian
Displaced Person
Marine Jumper
January 1949



My family was originally from the Ukraine, German-speaking Mennonites who, having lived there since 1805, were now displaced and had come to Germany with the help of the Germany army. With the help of some very generous and wonderful Mennonite people in Canada and the U.S.A., many of our people were allowed to immigrate to Canada. Our family was one of the fortunate ones for whom a sponsor had been found in Canada and thus we were all able to leave the refugee camp in Gronau, Germany where we had been living for nearly two years.

We boarded the ship in Bremer Hafen, my mother, grandmother, two aunts and I. Immediately upon boarding I felt sick and spent most of the 9 or 10 days in our room due to seasickness. My poor Mom couldn't even stay on deck to wave good-bye as she had to tend to me in the cabin. When I did venture to the dining room I found the new and (to me) strange food odors too strong and would immediately become nauseous. I had never before in my life seen a banana, or citrus fruits such as oranges and grapefruits, and these in particular were too strong-smelling for me. I also remember the ship heaving on the waves and watching the people try to dance on the small roped-off dance floor and being thrown about. My dear grandmother had desperately tried to save the dishes and food from sliding off the tables and the very kind waiters tried to tell her not to worry about it, that they would look after everything.

I was so happy to see land again when we arrived in Halifax, however my joy was rather short-lived as once we were processed, we spent 5 days on a train ride to Winnipeg. My first recollection of Canada was a lot of trees and bush interspersed with small red brick train stations along the way. Our family made a wonderful adjustment to Canadian life after the initial shock of the bitter cold prairie winter and not having the proper clothing. My grandmother was 63 years old when we arrived and although we were considered quite poor by Canadian standards at that time, we didn't know it, we thought we were rich, and above all, WE WERE FREE. Although our family had lived in Russia for so many years, they were never russified yet we so very quickly were anglicized once in Canada. I shall never forget the morning I came down the stairs to find my grandmother weeping in the kitchen. Upon asking her what the problem was, she said, "The king has died". She could not speak English

but she could understand most everything. She died at the age of 70, in 1956. The last seven years of her life, the ones spent in Canada, were the best! Canada is the greatest country in the world and we wouldn't live anywhere else. Now I tell my grandchildren our story and impress on them how fortunate they are to be Canadians and how thankful they should be. And they are!