Christian Guy
Canadian Returning from the United States
Baltrover
1940

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
PIER 21
HALIFAX CANADA

MEMORIES OF BALTROVER

Shortly after my father's death in Detroit in 1923, my mother and I returned to Sydney, NS where our home had been and where my paternal grand parents and family had settled on emigrating from Britain.

My mother secured a position as matron of a Girls' Home but by 1929, it was generally known that the Home would close down and my mother's position phased out.

Knowing she would have to seek employment and perhaps move about, she decided I should spend a year or so with my maternal grandmother in Aberdeen, Scotland. At the tender age of 8 (almost 9) I left for Scotland with a friend of my mother who was going to the Northeastern area of Scotland. We sailed on RMS Newfoundland.

In 1930 the home closed and subsequently, my mother secured an employment as a Matron of Bairncroft Orphanage near Sydney. She decided, however that it was in my best interest to stay in Scotland to be educated and during the 30s she made several trips over to come and visit us. In 1939 while in Aberdeen, W.W.II broke out; she stayed for a year after which time we returned to Canada together aboard Baltrover in 1940.

In spite of restrictions regarding travel to north America, which were necessary at the time, I, as a young adult, was permitted to return because Sydney was my birth place, my mother because she had employment in Canada.

The Baltrover had plied around the Baltic ports and England under various names as a freighter but was taken over to transport D.P.S' to Canada. Basic needs were met, this was no luxury liner and the crewmembers were sensitive to the needs of the passengers.

We travelled in a convoy made up of a variety of ships from fishing boats to freighters. The voyage lasted 21 days, our speed being determined by the smallest and the slowest boat in the convoy. On one occasion the

engine stopped and in spite of fairly believable rumours, it was ultimately determined that U-boats were in the area, and we were probably a sitting duck. However, looking out over the ocean, it was comforting to know the other ships in the convoy were in the near. We landed at Pier 21 in late July, then subsequently by train to Sydney, happy to be on Canadian soils again.

Since that time, I have had a sincere, respect for the members of the Merchant Navy. So many lives depend on their courage, dedication and sound judgment.

It was an interesting "blip" in the first quarter of my life.