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Danish Immigrant  
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CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM  
**PIER 21**



I was born in Denmark (1931) and raised in Jylland. As a teen-ager I was endowed with an adventurous spirit; as I read stories of pioneering in Canada, I determined that I would someday emigrate to that country. In 1947, I began my blacksmith training in Erritso and technical training in Fredericia, and shortly after completion in fall of 1951 was recruited into the Danish Army for eighteen months. Upon discharge, I worked as a journeyman blacksmith, and continued until 1957.

In the fall of 1956, I had begun the process of obtaining my clearance for emigration to Canada, attended English classes, and on April 25, 1957 at age 26, I boarded the MS Stockholm in Arhus, Denmark with \$125 in my pocket, bound for a new life in Canada. I seem to recall that this was the first westward sailing of the Stockholm following the collision with the Andrea Doria on July 25, 1956 off the coast of Massachusetts USA with the loss of over fifty souls. In the company of scores of fellow immigrants, we set sail, and shortly into the voyage we encountered rough seas; I succumbed to seasickness, and spent the majority of the eight day journey in my cabin. On Saturday morning, May 4, 1957, I awoke to calm seas, sight of land, and my seasickness gone.

At about noon, we docked at Pier 21, disembarked, and entered the Immigration Hall. After several hours, processing was completed, and I proceeded to the grocery at Pier 21 to purchase provisions for the train ride westward. I was amongst those who could not afford sleeping and dining car service, so I sat on the train benches and dined on bread and canned meat as we journeyed to Montreal. I recall that there were a number of young women immigrants on this train, traveling with small children; they routinely laundered baby clothing and hung it on the luggage rack to dry. In Montreal the immigrants' coaches were shunted to a siding where we spent the night, and the following morning, after securing more provisions, I resumed my journey westward. I recollect being awed by the vastness of the country, as we rolled on day after day, and the magnificence of the mountains when we entered British Columbia.

After several days on the CN train, I arrived in Kamloops, B.C. Prior to leaving Denmark, I had made arrangements to stay with a Danish family

in Pritchard, B.C. Carl & Inge Jorgensen had immigrated to Canada several years earlier; they hosted me for several weeks, assisting me in obtaining employment at a sawmill where I stacked lumber. In the meantime, I took additional lessons to improve my English in order to be able to get into the blacksmith trade. In the fall of that year, my wife and son, Ole, arrived from Denmark via Montreal. When the sawmill closed in November, I obtained employment cutting Christmas trees and hauling them to the railroad for shipment to the U.S. market.

In the spring of 1958, I began working at a blacksmith shop in Kamloops, and was employed there for eighteen months; during this time, my wife left me, and my son and I carried on by ourselves. I then transferred to a machine shop nearby where I learned the machinist trade. In 1963, I moved to Port Alberni, where I worked for Argyle Machine Works until August 1966. In the summer of 1966, I formed a partnership and began operating Active Machine Works Ltd. in Kelowna, B.C. From a small beginning of welding, machining and repairs, the business grew into a major industry, producing structural steel for commercial buildings, sawmill and mining equipment, components for White Trucks (now Western Star) which are built in Kelowna, and the Girette, a self-propelled boom for fruit picking.

In 1971 I met a married Canadian gal, Phyllis Vasselin, who made our family complete once again. Active Machine Works remained in business until the spring of 1981, at which time the business was sold, and I retired. Since that time we have spent all our winters in the southern U.S., and have become involved with Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit organization which provides housing for disadvantaged families. I became a Canadian Citizen in 1962, and have now lived in Canada longer than I lived in my homeland. To me, Canada is now my home and native land.