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Nielsen
Danish Immigrant
Stavangerfjord
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I was a lad of 11 years, when my mother and father decided to immigrate to Canada. A year later we boarded the S/S Stavanger Fjord, a Second World War converted troop carrier, on a rainy dock in Copenhagen. My mother, father, sister and I said many tearful farewells to relatives we would never see again.

Our journey took us first to the Majestic Mountain surrounded by the Fjord of Stavanger in Norway, and then on to Bergen, Norway. After these short stops it was off to the wild Atlantic and eight days of March storms with fierce winds. When I think back it is frightening, however, as a 12 year old boy it was a great adventure.

We spent our last night on the ocean crossing the Grand Banks in a dense fog with the sound of foghorns coming from all directions.

March 24th (my mother's 40th birthday) arrived sunny and bright, and my father proudly announced to my mother and us children as we stood and watched Pier 21 (did not know that at the time) and all of Halifax, that his gift to her would be all of Canada. His only apology was that he could only wrap it in the golden sunshine, like it now appeared, and without any ribbons.

The exit off the ship and entry to that hall full of hundreds of people was confusing and a little frightening, but we were luckier than most in that my father spoke good English. It was not too long before we were boarding the train for our long journey to Windsor, ON.

Three days later, with brief stops in Montreal and Toronto, very tired and sore from a rather uncomfortable train ride which seemed much longer, we looked at the "dirty" little border town of Windsor, ON.

We were whisked away to a shelter operated, I think by the Catholic Church, located on, of all places, Cadillac Ave.

After a few days here, my father found a job in London, ON and we once again went on the train.

I have now spent 42 years in Canada and on this Canada Day I fondly cherish all those memories and wish to tell this little story in memory of Mr. Henning Ove Nielsen (my father), deceased 1981. Mrs. Ragna E. Nielsen (my mother), deceased 1991. And Mrs. Sonja Corbett (my sister), deceased 1997.

We had many hardships and many joys during the first difficult years, but we flourished and had children, who in turn, are proud and free Canadians. They are now carrying on having their own children all in this breathtakingly beautiful and free country.