

Mollie Munzar
Daughter of Irish
Immigrants and
Survivors of the 1939
Sinking of the
Athenia



I realize that my story of Halifax association must be one of thousands of immigration tales so important to our Canadian history. I wonder if you have encountered the Athenia tragedy because my parents were on that ship on Sept. 1, 1939 when the Germans torpedoed it, on their way back to Canada from England after visiting my only brother who had gone there to join the R.A. F. Reserve at the young age of 18. Mother and Dad were rescued from a life-boat by an American freighter and brought back to Halifax where I met them (I was at school in Saint John).

My mother kept (and I now have them) newspaper clippings of that tragedy and although some are pretty tattered, I wonder if they would be useful to your project.

I'll just add a short outline of the dates involving the port in my family's history.

Early 1900: My father and brother arrive at Halifax as Irish immigrants.

1915: They leave for France after joining the Can. Army (4th Canadian Mounted Rifles)

1918: They return after the Armistice. My dad met my mom in 1916; married her in 1918 and accompanies him to Halifax. They settle in Toronto and then Moncton when Eaton's mail order opened in 1922; Yours truly is born (!)

1939: Passengers on the ill-fated Athenia, but rescued and returned to Halifax.

1944: My husband, Zelenek, leaves from Halifax, with his R.A.F. Czech squadron, for England after training in Canada (where I met him).

1945: I leave the port with our first son (3 months) on a bacon boat to join Zelenek who was injured when his air crew crashed during coastal patrol in Tain, Scotland.

You probably remember that he returned to Czechoslovakia after that and I also went there with our son, where we lived for 2&1/2 years until the Communist Coup in 1948 when we had to leave and return to Canada.