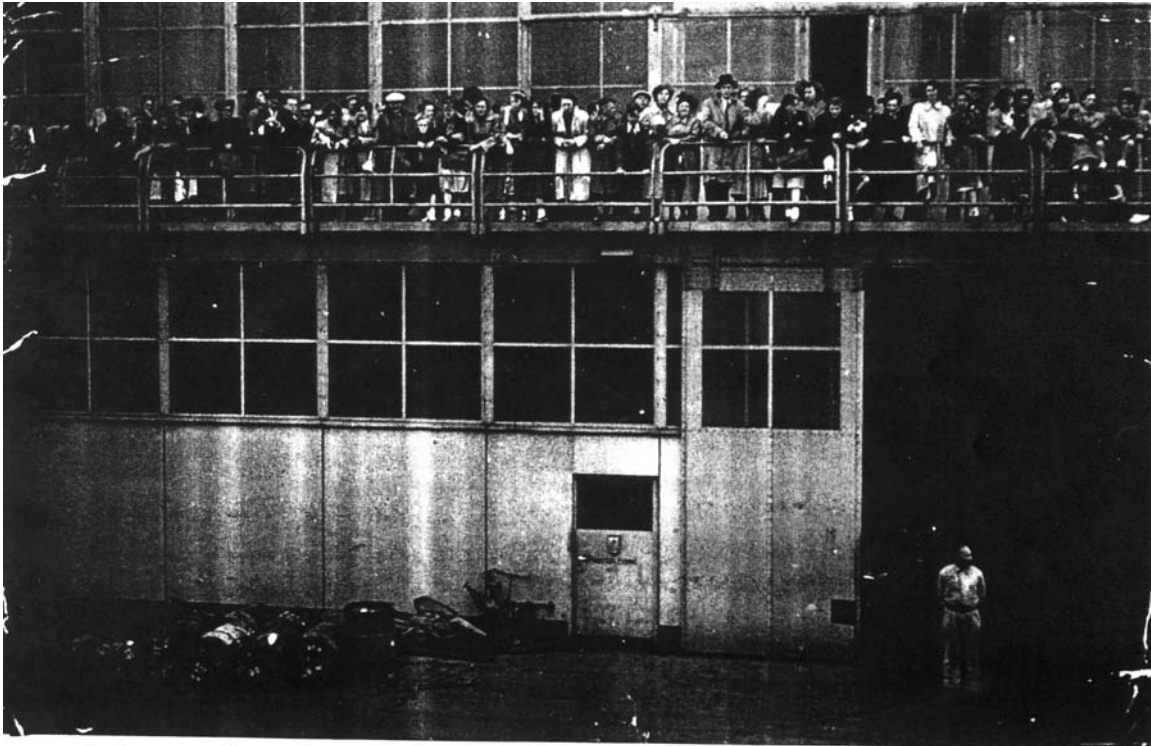


Inte Terpstra
Translated by
Daughter Hendrina
Parcels
Dutch Immigrant
Kota Inten
April 18, 1948

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
PIER 21



APRIL 8 1948 FAMILY AND FRIENDS WAVING GOOD BYE TO THE PASSENGERS OF THE "KOTA INTEN" LEAVING THE HARBOUR OF ROTTERDAM.

KOTA INTEN - 8-18 April 1948

Thursday - 8 April 1948

One pm in Rotterdam - drove the whole day. We saw huge boats. Finally the bus stood still. Everyone out, as well as suitcases which were put on a cart and taken to customs.

Paid the baggage and then found another department, the money we had was put in safekeeping, and still more paper work. Finally ready. Pietje Van Der Werf brought us to Rotterdam and stayed with us for some time. Father (Peter) Berardus (Bert) van der Werf was there too.

We boarded the Kota Inten at 3-4 o'clock 8 April 1948. Then we had gone by seven customs officers, but everything was found in order.

Five o'clock we departed. Looked for and found our bunks. Men fore and Hylkje (Hilda) (women) aft, with seven children.

Seven-thirty before we ate - now that was something. Bad weather and hail and snow. The boat is rocking beautifully. We ate sweet potatoes (not yams(hsp)), vegetables, meat, soup, apple, two slices of bread with meat. Everyone left half of their potatoes. (They seemed to be "bad" potatoes. Hsp)

When we had been sitting for a while we missed Cecil from the table. She was standing a distance away sobbing. Quickly we took her to eat her supper, and everything was okay. Then to bed at 8:30. Hylkje was seasick already. Oh, yes, on the way from the cafeteria, Cecil ran into something and had a small "hoe" in her head. The children all to bed. Hylkje too. I gave them all some "Boldoot" (perfume) on a hankie and now 9 pm and all are asleep.

I'm sitting on Gerrit's (Gerard) bed (beside Hylkje) writing. Fetsie (Frieda) is lying beside Hylkje's bed so she can be closer.

I can just get through the hall because the boat was rocking badly. Now, rest well. Tonight half



asleep, some young men were having a loud good time. They were tipping each other out of their bunks and/or hammocks. You put your leg underneath and then out you go.

Friday, 9 April 1948

Up at 5:30am , washed and went to see Hylkje. On the way, a couple of girls said they could see the English coast.

Hylkje very sick. She can't be on her feet at all. I dressed the children for 6:30- mass. I went with 6 children - this was held in the officers' quarters. We have now passed out of sight of England. If the sea is as calm as it is now we will be having Mass and breakfast at this time every morning.

Hylkje is still in bed - I got her up again. We waited until we were the last, because it took us 1/2 hour to get to a table. She went back to bed quickly after breakfast.

The children are making out great. I have little Itje (Ida) with me and we are well. A plate of brei (porridge) and 12 pieces of beautiful white bread with cheese, meat and jam. Itje just loves it. Then we went up above. Itje and I stood in the sun out of the wind. The others are playing and "flying" all over the boat.

At 9 am I got Hylkje to go up on deck, she wove from side to side. We stood a while in the sun and later went to the observation room. It is now 9:45. Hylkje is much better here than below decks.

"Gerrit has to have a poop" Sietske (Cecil) called through the room to Hendrina. All the people laughed over that. Only now and then do we see one of the children - they are using the whole ship as their playground.

Ten am - the baggage room opens - here the large suitcase is stored. Hylkje and I went down six flights of stairs. Each has 15 steps - very, very deep - then you are deeper than a farm house is high.

We went together with Itje and Gerrit to the crates, but this experience was too much for Hylkje, so much so that she started to rant about pigs and more pigs. We took some things out of the crates, but I got Hylkje upstairs first, which is no small job, up all those steps. Hylkje to bed, and then I went back downstairs to get the goods. Met Osinga down there who couldn't get up. So first helped him topside because he was "off" too.

Eleven am - with five children to the cafeteria. I ate half of the meal. Picked up food for Itje from the baby room and then I had to pickup my spending money. Then quickly back to the dining room - there was still some food left. (Note: Money was not kept in your "room" - because we all slept on bunks in a hold - this boat had been a troop ship. Hsp) So the money was kept in a vault elsewhere onboard. I ate well - took two slices of bread for Hylkje with sour herring.

She's lying in bed - and enjoyed the snack. Itje is sleeping. Gerrit wanders with the children up and down the boat. People enough to watch them, you can't do it all yourself unless you have a rope. Hendrina and Geertje (Gerdie) are also lying down, tired from running all over the ship. Now they are all here by Hylkje's bed. Gerrit (3 yrs) walks very carefully up and down the stairs.

It is now past 1 pm and am going up above in the sun. Beautiful sight of England this morning, with the white cliffs of Dover. Now there will be sea and more sea, once we lose sight of the English shore. Friday night (Saturday) 2 am then we will be past England. It is 3000 miles (4500 kms). We are going to Halifax.

At two this afternoon Hylkje had given the Itje brei (thin milk porridge) and will now take them up above. Two forty-five PM the smaller ones stay with Hylkje because at three o'clock is English lesson time. Got back at 4 pm and Hylkje was up top with the smallest, sunning themselves. Now I will get some tea in paper cups - I need three. Spotted a long box, took it and used it to take tea up on deck to Hylkje and the children. The three cookies were divided and then tea. We then strolled for another half hour at which time it became too cold. Five pm an apple for the children to eat. Hylkje felt very well and went with me to the dining room. She lasted until almost the end of the meal. I'm eating and drinking very well. Then I washed six children and all to bed at the same time.

Then the yellow cards had to eat. There are blue, white and yellow eating cards. So I went again for my portion - because from 6 pm to 8 am is a long time. When I got back Hylkje was in bed and felt not too badly. She asked for a piece of bread - I had taken four pieces with me and one "koek".

The children all some water and they'll have to go back to sleep. Gerrit sleeps like a marmot. Oh, yes, this afternoon as I was sitting on the top deck an English airplane flew over, also a pair of sea gulls were following the ship.

Seven pm went back on top deck front, wow, you are standing 25-30 meters above water level, a beautiful sight it was over the water. Just as I arrived on top, the sun was just dropping below the horizon. Yes, yesterday the clocks were put back 1 hours, now tonight 30 minutes. We can still see lighthouses and other ships.

We were able to obtain "Kogelflesjes" (beer) for us and chocolate for the children. On each child card 8 chocolate bars - so I came away with 56

bars and two bottles. On the way down I slurped down one bottle. Everyone was sleeping like a rose. So I wandered around with shipmates. At 9 o'clock doors closed. (Doors to the decks.) Then there was some music. At 9:30 I woke up Hylkje, and gave her the other bottle of beer. She said it was very good. Next week we're having child and folk plays, that'll be something. Now all the children some water and then I'm going to bed. It is almost 10 pm - goodnight.

Saturday, 10 April 1948

Good morning. Last night on my way to bed, from the front to the back of the ship, there were people singing and playing heaven knows what games. Slept well until 3 am, then the "milk" boat started rocking terribly. Went to the toilet and went back to bed. Woke up at 6:55. Washed quickly and made the bed and then to Hylkje. But Hylkje was very ill again - she couldn't be up at all. So quickly I got all the others up and dressed, but we couldn't get to Mass. Pretty soon the intercom said we could eat. I went with six children, because Hendrina couldn't be up either. Eight o'clock we were back down with Hylkje. We had a good breakfast and Hylkje said she thought she's like some. Back to the dining room to bring back something for both her and Hendrina. First you go up two stairs, then a long way further, another one down. Then I had to find two glasses, and a teapot. The first one I was empty. Now Hylkje lies where she lies and cannot be out of bed at all.

Next I have to do the laundry - lots of hot water and plenty of facilities. Clothes are hanging to dry. Weather bad, rain and more rain, it's literally being thrown down. But I have a clothesline spanned and things will be dry soon.

Story by Mr. Terpstra's daughter Hendrina Parcel

LEAVING HOLLAND

I remember being very excited about going to Canada. We seemed to be celebrities because we were going so far away.

The large wooden crates with the large black lettering - Ynte Terpstra c/o Wiebe Terpstra, 370 London St, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada.

I remember, as well as the boat's name "KOTA INTEN" in larger letters still.

How we got to Rotterdam, I don't remember. After all I have written, that part is a blank. Mom says we went on a bus. The boat was huge because I remember looking up at it. This ship had been used as a troop

ship to the East Indies, before they used it to ship people to North America.

It had two large holds which were filled with bunks, so there was no privacy for anyone. You heard people cough, snore, and being seasick throughout the night. Babies crying, and children running around, if



you yourself were put to bed earlier than the others this was annoying. We always went to bed early, even in Burgwerd. Other children used to call to us when they were outside and we were in bed.

Mom was seasick from day

one, and with seven children eleven years old and younger this was no joke. Ida had been born in October of 1946. Dad would come early in the morning and help to get the kids dressed. I helped as well, but just getting yourself dressed was an effort. As soon as I stepped out of bed I would become nauseous. So as fast as I could I put on one article of clothing, lay down, get up and put on another piece until I was fully dressed. Being down below you were more susceptible to being seasick - once on deck I was fine.

The food on board was pretty good on the whole. Except the potatoes - they were either yams or another type of sweet potatoes, or just bad - we never ate any. It was all cafeteria style with mealtimes staggered. Now if you were out playing and did not get to dinner on time, you missed out. This happened to me and I had to be satisfied with a chocolate bar until morning.

Because mom was so sick, dad would take her a bit of food or a cup of tea now and then.

Dad kept a diary while on the Kota Inten. I have translated it and will slip it in behind "Leaving Holland". It is quite repetitive, after all what can happen on a ship at sea for ten days.

In 1995 when Dad discovered his diary, low and behold, a letter which I had written at sea, fell out of it and onto the floor. It was written to Pake and Beppe (grandfather and grandmother) as well as Tante Sjoeke and Oom Yp - who were still living at home and unmarried. It goes as follows (translated):

"We're all on board now and I said to mom, I shall write a letter to Beppe because I am bored stiff. Bored? Yes really bored . Because there are no toys to play with and that is why I sat down here. Mom is laying in bed because when she is up she vomits. There are a pile of Negroes here. They are brown as shoe polish and their hair is as black as soot. We can have a lot of fun with them. Oh yes, when we eat we get large tin plates with sections in it. In one for soup, and another for potatoes, etc. And now I will end with many greetings from all of us. Signed: Hendrina Terpstra and the neighbour lady who sits next to me.

Byeyeyeye."

As this small letter says there were Negroes, there were also chinamen. We watched them stomp in hot and soapy laundry - their idea of washing. They would smile from ear to ear really putting on a show for us.

Hide-and Seek was a favorite game. The ship was large, so that you might never find all those participating. You would finally give up leaving these poor kids still hiding not knowing the game was over.

Once on a tour of discovery of the ship, and we had many of them so we didn't have to do any chores, we were thirsty. So you find a tap, put your mouth under it and have a drink of water. Guess what, the water was salty, it was awful. Never did that again.

One night there was a terrible storm, as only the North Atlantic can dish up. Dad and a few other men were still with the women helping to put the children to bed before they departed to the other end of the ship where only men and older boys slept. When they left they went up these metal grate type steps to the outside door. As the first man up opened the door a wave of water came rushing in knocking some of them back, and everyman, women, and child screamed. While crossing the deck, they had to hang on to whatever they could get a hold of. Dad had enough trouble carrying a very sick man who had been with his wife and children that day, as well as getting himself across the deck. Even when sick the men and women were separated at night.

We were able to go to mass each morning which kept some semblance of normality throughout the whole trip.

The following story is true. I remember it clearly and it is also written in Dad's diary. We were all in a common room, where the passengers could get together to chat etc. All at once, sister Cecilia comes running into the room and yelling "Gerrit moet poepe, Gerrit moet poepe!" Brother Guy had to have a bowel movement. The whole room roared with laughter. Being the oldest in the family, I went with Celilia to wherever Guy was and took him to the washroom.

I learned here how crossword puzzles were done. A fellow, I suppose in his twenties - which would seem very old to me, was sitting in the sun and leaning against a bulkhead solving a puzzle. I asked him how this was done and he told me. It was many years later when I remembered what he said about synonyms. I've probably done a "million" by now as well as other word puzzles.

The waves on the ocean were like mountains when they wanted to be, and other days it was quite calm. Dolphines? Followed us for a couple of days, but the seagulls lasted the longest. Maybe they came all the way, after all they do not need a tree to sit in.

CANADA

We arrived in the evening of 18 April 1948. It was dusk and just before going to bed we were allowed to go up on deck to see the lights of Halifax. This was an unbelievable sight and is imprinted in my memory to this day. In the morning, (we had packed the night before) we were allowed off the ship, each of us older ones carrying a suitcase or carton. Furniture, dishes, bedding and more clothes, which were in the hold, would follow us on another train to Peterborough. I think it took almost a week before it caught up with us. Then I remember a huge hall, where we had to stand with our luggage under the letter "T" and wait until we were called to go through customs.

The train ride is almost oblivious to me, except a jarring experience. I was in the washroom, sitting, when the train shunted. I was shunted right off the toilet. Also, customs people coming in twice, into the States and back into Canada. It reminded me of Germans checking busses.

Next, there us Uncle Wiebe and Aunt Joan. Hugs and kisses were the order of the day. Aunt Joan was wearing a light turquoise suit with black accessories - AND LIPSTICK. I had never seen anyone wearing lipstick before - my curiosity is seen in the now famous photo which was taken by the Peterborough Examiner. My eyes are "Right" looking at another lady with lipstick and makeup on. I remember in the next few

years, that whenever I was near berries or something red, I would leave some on my lips thinking I was quite grown up.

We stayed in a hotel - which I don't remember at all. The next morning most of us older ones remember breakfast. Toast we had never tasted, but it was just bread after all. Then we had a choice of red or yellow jam. Yellow jam we had never heard of, so of course we chose it - real adventure. It was horribly bitter and we would not eat it - poor Dad, he ate most of it. It must have been Seville marmalade, because years later when we could afford to buy "yellow" jam it tasted just fine.

Uncle Wieb owned a dark blue 1947 Pontiac. He had built a seat with a roof and sides around it into the truck, so that passengers could sit in it through thick and thin. The front had clear "mica" for a window. Well, it started to rain that morning, and at least three of us were put in the "rumble" seat. That left eight for inside the car. I was in the back seat looking after some of the younger children as well as one on my lap. It rained and rained as we drove to Peterborough. I remember looking out through the windshield and seeing these very high mountains. We had never seen anything higher than a knoll, and thought that we would never get up and over. But after a half dozen or so our trepidation vanished, and so we were on our way to become Canadians.

Between Montreal and Peterborough, we stopped for lunch. Here we go again. Soup and a sandwich was the order of the day. Sandwich, I don't remember. It was the tomato soup which we all recall - and so does dad. We had never had this soup before, so why not, we're in a new country, we might as well get used to it. We didn't, and dad had to eat most of the soup because it cost money. I don't know at what point we did learn to eat tomato soup, but we did, along with a lot of other foods.

We stayed with Uncle Wieb and Aunt Joan for about a week, until the crates arrived from Montreal. They lived on London Street alongside Jackson's Creek. Their family consisted of six boys, a lady named Nell Schell (Dutch) who boarded there and worked at Lynch's Drugstore, and we moved in with them, all nine of us. The boy's names were Johan, Gerard, Vincent, Carl, Anthony and Francis.

It seemed all we did was wash, iron, and cook meals. Aunt Joan was a fussy housekeeper, so it was sort of hard to please her. One thing was the wash. It had to be hung outside, just so. From longest to the shortest and by colour. To this day, this is how I hang my laundry out, and I love doing it in the spring, summer and fall. She also had a mangel, which she taught me to use. This is a huge iron which is mainly used in laundry facilities. No wonder she had one, because all those six

boys were dressed in white sailor suits on Sundays, and just think of all the bedding, which was ironed as well.

Then it was on to Springville on Highway 28 just west and south of Peterborough.

SPRINGVILLE

We moved into a huge old house. Stucco, lots of windows, a summer kitchen, a cellar way into a dirt basement. A central hallway with four bedrooms upstairs. A huge L-shaped living room with a smaller room off it which we called the toy room, but had mostly unpacked things stored in it. It was hot that summer, but we nearly froze in the winter of 1948-49. A glass of water froze standing beside the bed. Probably the only thing that kept us warm was each other. There were so many of us that we all slept at least two to a bed and sometimes the little ones three.

Dad had come to Canada with \$500.00. It took \$100.00 for the train ride and even Wiebe expected something. So with probably \$300.00 or so in his pocket dad started out working for Harold Cathcart. He was a hired hand on this man's farm, doing exactly what he had done in Holland all his life up until then. We helped dad in the woods sometimes cutting down trees, getting the horses to pull them to a clearing and cutting them up for firewood. John and I cut the grass for the Cathcarts on Saturdays. This mower was so hard to move it took two of us, one to pull and the other to push, both at the same time. They paid us 25 cents for almost the whole day. We stooked wheat on top of Springville hill, just north of the church. A highway runs through it today. When driving through here it takes one back to the summer of '48 and age 11.

We went to school in Peterborough at St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. Same names as in Holland. St. Mary's was across from the front door of St. Peter's Cathedral. Our names were changed here. I kept mine because it was the only one they could pronounce easily. Johannes became John, Geertje - Gerty, Fetje - Freida, Sietske - Cecilia, Gerrit - Gerard (later Guy), and Itje - Ida. I started in Grade five because that is where I had been in Holland. For the month of June I was put into Grade one. This was fantastic - here I learned about Dick and Jane and all the other small English words. In September I went into Grade six, it was hard but I managed it. I learned to play baseball in the far corner of this school ground. We did not understand English, but you just did what the others did. I swung the bat, and whether I hit the ball or not, I ran to the first base fence post. We rode on Ivan Fletcher's bus. This was a high school bus and we were not allowed on it, but Uncle Wiebe talked nicely to this kindly gentleman, and he let us come. It cost mom and

dad \$25.00 per month. Gosh, dad only made \$100.00 working for Cathcart.

There was a Dutch connection living in Springville. Bert and Edna Visee. They lived beside the church. Bert's father came from Holland years before, but Bert knew enough Dutch to converse with mom and dad. Just visiting back and forth now and then probably saved mom's sanity, who did not get out from under seven children at all, except church on Sunday. Wiebe always picked us up after they had been to a very early mass.

Father Butler was the pastor at St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral. He let us do our confessions in Dutch. We thought this was great, and didn't mind going one bit.

Dad acquired some laying hens, so John and I took a crate of eggs into Peterborough every Saturday morning. We hitchhiked and started selling eggs at the top of Charlotte Street, where Clonsilla starts today at the Medical Centre. There were just a few homes beyond this point. We had usually sold the eggs by the time we got to Park Street (the OPP Office was at this corner then). Then onto the A&P to get some groceries. Then walk all the way back to the top of Charlotte Street and hitchhike home. In the summer we carried the crate between us and in winter we used a small sled.

Mr. Visee took dad fishing to the Cavan Creek at one point. John and I were allowed to go. It must have been chilly because we had mittens with us. Here we discovered fireflies, caught some, put them in our mittens and watched them light up inside. That's all I remember about that outing.

We thought traffic was heavy on highway 28. One day I counted 50 cars in one hour, and promptly wrote a letter to Holland to tell them so. One Saturday I was shaking dirt from a mat at the back door, when I heard a noise. I looked up and saw a cloud of dust. When it settled all I saw was a bus, stopped. John and I ran as fast as we could. When we got there, an old Model T, I guess, had gone right over the front of the bus and landed in a deep ditch. To this day I can still see a man lying in all that debris - there wasn't a piece (to me) that was recognizable as a piece of car. I shook for hours afterwards. Mom consoled me and had me drink some hot sweet tea.

At the corner, where the accident had been, was a gas station. Harley Cathcart, younger son of Harold and brother of Manson, could not go by this gas station without stopping to buy a bottle of pop. This we found ridiculous - I think. We had never had a bottle of pop, but we found that

this was the way of Canadians, and we got to like it. He probably met his neighbours here to talk and catch up with the latest gossip. We know today that that's what it was all about.

I once read something. It had to do with immigrants. If you work hard, stand back and watch how Canadians live and behave for five years, you have become a Canadian. I would say that really sums it up. We wanted to come to Canada, Canada did not ask for us. We found at first that Canadians were somewhat laid back, if it didn't get done today, there was always tomorrow. And so, we found ourselves being just like Canadians. Mother made us use any new English words which we learned as time went on, otherwise, she would never learn the language, being tied down with all the children.

At this writing (1998) mom and dad will be 85 and 88 respectively and they still speak English to each other. They will get on the telephone to Holland and mix up the two languages as they speak, but as soon as someone at the other end says "What did you say?" they will switch to Dutch.

Each day at noon hour, John and I went from school to the A and P store in Charlotte Street to pick up four loaves of bread. We put this in a straw suitcase which held exactly four loaves. As time went on, we got bolder about discovering Peterborough. We would go down a different street each day to get to George Street, go south to Charlotte and back. One day, we must have used Brock Street. When walking along George St. a huge bear scared the living daylights out of us. We now know that it was Lech's Furriers. Today, 24 January 1998 Dorren Parcels and I were having coffee at the Party Place after having made some purchases at the Uptown Silk Shop, and there was that beer still, after fifty years. Maybe it has been replaced with a new one, and it looks much smaller than when we were young.

Kreske's, corner of Simcoe and Gorge, was another favourite haunt. We had no money, but a fantastic place to dream for an 11 and 10 year old. I was into a Kreske's in Belleville a few years ago. I did not realize it was a Kreske's. But I commented on the fact that it smelled just like the one did in Peterborough back then. We discovered it was in fact a Kreske's.

In the spring of 1949 we moved to Hastings.

