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Nieuw Amsterdam
and Canberra

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
PIER 21



The reason our family emigrated to Canada was economical, and, consequently, the trip was not one of luxury. Our ship, the New Amsterdam, was a well-equipped ship, but we were kept well isolated



from the first class. To a ten-year old, everything was HUGE; the ship, the ocean, the waves (which were not really 'waves' but hills of water). Then the miles of trees (not forests in the European sense) without any of the wildlife I was sure we would see.

The train ride itself was memorable in that the coaches were giant diaper dryers! I can still see mothers trying to bathe the baby in a small steel sink with a few inches of water sloshing around.

My second trip across the Atlantic was in a troop-ship on the 27th of December 1940 from Halifax to Gourock, Scotland, presumably from Pier 21. Not much I can say about the third deck, but when I went to the ship's galley to get our breakfast, the cook gave me, out of the goodness of his heart and because I was a fellow-Dutchman, a huge bucket of kippered herring! That did not do much to improve the condition of my seasick mates, or to my popularity.

My third trip on the S.S. Canberra was uneventful, except that the ship was in a collision before we left Southampton, and was made waterproof by pouring tons of cement in the forward hold. Luckily it held! I was hustled through Pier 21 by a nice uniformed chap because the only 'papers' I had were my army discharge papers.

