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Dutch Immigrant
Zuiderkruis
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We stood on the deck of the Zuiderkruis and craned our necks to see as much as possible of the harbour of Halifax. Finally after being on board for seven days we reached our destination Canada. Our trip had been really good, no bad storms. Our whole family shared one big cabin. It was the biggest step of my life. At the age of seventeen I left all my friends and many aunts and uncles and my dear grandmothers behind knowing that maybe I would never see them again. But here was Canada, the land of opportunity. My parents thought that they would be able to give us kids a better chance at life than we would have had in Holland. My first experience in Canada was seeing the dock-workers, with their strange looking green brooms, and after that of not being able to understand any body. Knowing that people looked at you and talked about you but not knowing what was being said. We stayed overnight in Halifax at some kind of Army barracks and in the morning I had my first taste of cornflakes. We were then put on the train to P.E.I. They put tags on our jackets with the name of our destination and off we went.

We arrived in Charlottetown that evening at around six o'clock. My Dad gave the station master the telephone number of the people we where supposed to stay with. While we were waiting my Dad took out his accordion and us kids sang to our hearts content. Our host family had a good laugh when he came down to pick us up. All of us kids piled on the back of his half-ton truck and Mom and Dad got in the front. Since it was spring and the roads were not paved, we ended up walking in mud up to our ankles. I honestly thought at that moment that Mom and Dad must be crazy to have left our beautiful Holland for this. But everything worked out well and Canada is now my home. I will always have a special place in my heart for the place were I was born and when I hear someone speak Dutch my ears perk up. However, I am thankful to my Mom and Dad for bringing me here. It took guts and courage for them at their age. No one will ever know except for those who did it. And thank you Canada for making me feel that I belong here.

