

Maryke De Jong-
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Dutch Immigrant
Beaverbrae
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My Memories of Pier 21 by Maryke De Jong-Leyenaar
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When my family arrived in Halifax on the Beaverbrae in March, 1950, I remember that my parents had to go to a desk for paperwork and meanwhile I had to sit on a bench with my two little brothers. I was almost 6 at the time' Jacob was 4 years old, and Sjoerd (now Stuart) was 2 ½ . I believe we were wearing our wooden shoes.

I remember that we saw a black man at Pier 21. (I had not seen a black person before). While we waited on the bench, a friendly Canadian man saw us, and gave us each a chocolate bar. That was an unexpected favour!

My husband, Piebe De Jong, and I visited Pier 21 in 2004, and somehow the set-up looked familiar.

I remember our train trip in 1950 from Halifax to Winchester, Ontario where my Dad's new employer, a dairy farmer, was waiting for us with his new grey car to take us to our new home, which was a small farm house near his farm, about 6 miles from the train station.

On the train we received packages of corn flakes which seemed strange to us as we didn't know how to eat them.

The farmer that my dad worked for treated us well, and we stayed there for three years. During the first winter our house caught fire from a wood stove and was completely demolished, along with the beautiful new things my parents had bought before leaving Holland. However, it happened during the daytime and my parents were thankful that none of us died or were hurt by the fire.

My parents, Klaas and Anskje Leyenaar, had three more children in Canada. They always lived in the vicinity of Winchester and eventually owned their own dairy farm.

My dad died in 2002. Mother is still living on her own in a senior's apartment in Winchester. She is almost 86 now.

