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Dutch Immigrant
Waterman
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My five day journey from Rotterdam, The Netherlands on the ship ss. Waterman was smooth and without incident. The accommodation was that of a troop ship with male and female passengers separated, I believe ten to a cabin. Having been discharged from the Dutch Army only three months earlier, this didn't bother me.

Upon landing in Halifax at Pier 21, we were sorted like cattle at a market and had to stand in long lines to pass different officials. I had a big disagreement with one of them when I asked if I could go to my cousins in Woodstock, Ontario as they were expecting me. He got mad as hell, banging his fist on the desk and insisted that I go to London, Ontario. It was good that I did not understand too much English, but I can remember him using the term "S.O.B." directed at me. So I was somewhat intimidated and not having command of the language didn't help. I found a Dutch Field man and he told me not to worry and that once I was in Woodstock, Ontario to get out of the train and forget about London because, he continued, in Canada you are as free as a bird in the air. I took his advise and did just that and went with my cousins to London to get my luggage that had been checked right through.

In Halifax the same officials made me open my suitcases (2) and again I got hell for having some gifts for friends who immigrated earlier. At long last we got warm food, which I mistakenly thought was spaghetti and it turned out to be yellow beans which I had never seen before. Outside Pier 21 we had to walk over cinders and railroad tracks to get to our train. The train trip was pretty rough. Just wooden benches, no sleeping cars and no food. If you had not bought food before you left Halifax, you were out of luck. The train had a steam engine and everyone was dirty and gritty by the time they reached their destination. The lights on the train were gas and one of the lights in my car was leaking, so it was turn off leaving us in the dark at night.

On the outskirts of Quebec City, the train stopped to take on coal and water. We were allowed off the train to stretch our legs and buy snacks at a dirty little store that was close by. Before anything could be eaten it had to be dusted off. With part of the \$15.00 they gave me in Halifax, I bought some bread, butter and a case (6) of Coca-Cola. Because we were used to sweet butter (no salt), when we tasted this butter, it was so salty

that we thought it was no good and I threw it out the window. This left us to eat dry bread and washed down with coke cola. Another thing I will never forget is when we arrived in Toronto and the conductor was walking up and down the cars hollering, "Trona!" "Trona!" Not understanding his slang, I asked him three times if this was, "Toronto" - enunciating every syllable and he kept repeating "Trona!" "Trona!" Finally I stuck my head out of the window and saw a sign that said, Toronto.

The reason I came to Canada in 1953 - I just had my discharge from the Dutch army and didn't like civilian life in Holland and was ready for an adventure. My Dad and my Uncle were talking about starting a contracting business in Canada and I was to go ahead and look things over. I understood that the Dutch Government would pay my travelling expenses, so I had nothing to lose. However, in the end, I stayed in Canada and no one in my family ever came here and joined me. I have worked at Stelco in Hamilton, Ontario. Served six years with the Canadian Militia, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Master Corporal). Spent twenty years in Labrador with the Iron Ore Company of Canada and twelve and half years with General Motors of Canada. In between I spent plenty of time on my education. Night school, home studies, Province Institute of Trades, George Brown College and Memorial University. In 1964 I married a Canadian woman. No offsprings. Canada has been good to me. It gave me a chance, but I had to work hard for it. With the same amount of hard work, I would not have had what I have now if I had stayed in Holland. Thank you Canada!