

The Flinsenbergs
Family by Daughter
Carla Skillings
Dutch Immigrants
Zuiderkruis
February 12, 1952



Names at time of Departure:

Peter Hubertus Flinsenbergs & Catharina Huberta Gerarda Flinsenbergs
(nee Vessteegen)

Present Names of Children:

Gary & Olda Flinsenbergs
Hubert Flinsenbergs and Wendy Eaton
Hank & Norma Flinsenbergs
Carla & Wayne Skillings
Jack Flinsenbergs & Elsie McCutchen

Story:

Our parents, Gerarda and Peter Flinsenbergs, immigrated from Holland in early 1952, aboard the Zuiderkruis (Southern Cross). They had four small children, myself the youngest at two weeks (Carla). Their sons, Gary, Hubert and Hank, were aged four, three and one, respectively. A year later their youngest son Jack was born. After the end of World War II, our parents decided that Holland no longer held a future for them, and after reading an advertisement describing Canada as the land of milk and honey, felt that the best thing to do was to go overseas.

The voyage across the Atlantic on the Zuiderkruis was for the most part not a pleasant one. They encountered massive storms, where the waves were large enough to wash over the entire ship, locking everyone below deck. Our mother suffered seasickness for the entire ten-day trip.

The Zuiderkruis docked at Pier 21 on February 12, 1952. I was the youngest passenger on the ship (Carla). Their oldest son, Gary, recalled a lot of children crying. The necessary documents were in order, so it didn't take long for the Flinsenbergs to go through immigration and receive the stamp "Landed Immigrant." Our parents had to buy a few supplies for their train ride to Woodstock, Ontario. They purchased cream instead of milk for the boys. The result of that mistake were not pleasant for the next part of their trip. The train took the six of us from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Woodstock, Ontario. The farmer that sponsored our family met us at the station. Our father started work the very next

day for the farmer, earning seventy dollars a month. So, with only thirty dollars left in their pockets, they started their new life with their children in Canada.

Their first trip to the grocery store, our parents wanted to buy vinegar. When they opened the bottle it fizzed, they were frightened and would not use it, turned out it was just a bottle of ginger ale. Mom and Dad were homesick for years, but couldn't afford to go back home, they just made the best of a very difficult adjustment. Our parents worked hard and struggled for years, as all immigrants had, before they called Canada their home.

Our mother passed away at seventy-years young. Our father is now eighty-three and has said many times over the years he would never return to Holland. Canada is now his home. He still resides in Woodstock, Ontario. Our family was granted our Canadian Citizenship on June 27, 1963. Our parents have nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.