

Heather Ann Wilson
English Immigrant
Ascania
December 20, 1957



Coming to Canada

Our story started by my father Bill Wilson and Uncle George Jones. Xmas 1946. The Governments of South Africa and England were asking for tradesmen to immigrate to these countries, both men, flipped coins, heads, Uncle George went to Africa and started a tile business in East London. Tails, it was decided that the Wilsons would go to Canada. And so it was that October 1947 father came to Canada to get a house, he got a great job through the government of Premier of Ontario at that time, he was to come to London, Ontario and be a Gold Artist & commercial tradesman.

And so it was that mom Edith Annie (Jones) Wilson and children Heather Ann and Malcolm Kendrick embarked on the Ascania on the 20th December 1947. It was a lovely trip aboard the boat and I have many memories, too many to mention. So along with war brides and others from other countries, lived and sail together, there were 9 people in our room, I think 4 adults and 5 children could have been more. So, on Xmas eve the captain had a lovely dinner, and dance for the ladies and men. I was left with the children to look after, there was a terrific storm that night the children were falling out of their bunks as soon as I, only nine years old put them back on one side, the others fell out. Well, I was confused? Would you say? I went to the captain's party with pyjamas on and hands on hips said "All you Mothers who have children, would you please come and look after them?"

I am sure anyone who was on the Ascania at that time would remember this. The food was lovely, everything was easy to get, I do not to this day eat Mars bars or Mcintosh toffee, reason being I was sick of it, while others had sea sickness. My brother didn't want to come to Canada climbed up the Mast of the Ship and wouldn't come down for some time, however a ship mate talked he into getting down.

I think that around the 28th of December, at 4:30 am I couldn't sleep because of the excitement of seeing land. I was up on deck, and waited, then I saw land, as we pulled into the Halifax Harbour, it had been snowing, the trees had a lovely covering but, me not knowing ran down and woke up everyone yelling reindeers on the hillside.

Yes I laugh today, we entered Pier 21 got landed immigrant papers and where on our way to the rest of our lives to London, Ontario. Three days on a train, and finally got to London, had to stay at the Red Cross Lodge, for the night, the next day was January 1, 1948 and awful ice storm had hit during the night, the buses didn't run too far and you had to walk, awful it was, I don't think there has been such a storm since, perhaps I remember it because we had reunited with father and my brother had shorts pants on. We saw our house and were to settle in our new Home.

And so be it, we have been back to England many times, my self have sailed on the Ascania wirh my mom and brother, we went back in 1950 on the Samaria, Dad was gone to see all of the United States, he came to England, then one week later we were sailing back to Canada on the TSS Canberra.

I myself took the last trip of the Empress of Canada to England for a two week holiday. If I may say so, we had such a wonderful trip, I really needed a Holiday when I got back.

And so I say if they every put ships back on the water, I will be one of the passengers The finality of all this, is Father had his own business, Mother worked all her live unt ill retirment and my brother Mal has had his own business and works for an oil Co. My self I am going to be into retirement in July.

Canada has been good to us!