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English Immigrant
Georgic
May of 1950

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
PIER 21



My late husband, Albert,
immigrated to Canada in

Nov. 1947. He flew to Toronto and was to send for my two young



children and me as soon as he found accommodations. He already had a job to go to. Unfortunately, I became a victim of the ravaging influenza epidemic which was prevalent at that time in Europe. Having been so undernourished and weak, I developed pneumonia which took several months to control and cure. When I was back to good health I was told that I would have to stay in England until the Canadian Government was sure that I hadn't developed tuberculosis. It took over two parents cared for my 2 ½ year old daughter and a friend took charge of my 12 month old son. The money that had been put aside for our fares to Canada was spent on their keep and so I had to work for another year to help regroup.

Finally, in early May of 1950, we boarded the S.S. Georgic at Southampton ready for a five day trip to Canada. But, again these was one more delay. Somehow, a chain had tangled around the propeller of the ship and we were towed to the Midlands and into dry dock for repairs. I cannot recall how many days we were there but do remember that there was some concern about relatives who would be waiting at our destinations. But finally, we were under way. I was placed in a cabin below decks with two other families. One was a war bride who had returned to England from Detroit to give birth to a son. She also had a very young daughter with her. The other was also a war bride and she

had a small son, I remember that she was so afraid of what the future was going to be and she cried a lot and seldom left the cabin.

We must have been close to the engines because I well remember the throb of the them which never stopped. My daughter, Sheila was seasick the whole voyage, as were many people. The entire ship smelled awful. One thing that I remember was the amazing food! We hadn't seen some of the items in over ten years and must admit that I ate my way across the Atlantic, and had to teach the children how to eat a banana which they had never before seen.

We arrived at Pier 21 in the evening, twelve days after boarding! The huge hall was buzzing with people, a nurse took the children while I was processed by immigration officers. We then went through customs and I was afraid because my mother had hidden 1 lb. Of sugar in my suitcase in case the children needed it on the journey. I held my breath while the officers walked around the bags, hoping that they wouldn't find my contraband sugar! My father had built a wooden crate and filled it with surplus Army blankets because his father, a sailor, had told him how cold it was in Canada.



Finally, in the wee hours of the morning we were taken outside the pier and onto a waiting train. It had wooden seats and I was given two facing each other. My husband had sent money for the journey and had told me to rent a berth but I had no knowledge of the currency and was afraid that I may spend too much so we sat up all the way. It seemed a never ending journey and to this day, when I hear a train whistle, I remember that ride. One night, in Quebec, we stopped on a siding and were told to walk across the tracks to a little store to buy food and necessities. Still having no idea of money value and not understanding French, I ended up with a bag of maple cream cookies. They were our means of survival for the rest of the journey.

When we arrived at Union Station in Toronto, my husband was there to greet us and take us to our new home. This was the second floor of a

stranger's house! It was a Friday and as soon as we arrived the homeowner looked after the children and my husband took me to be interviewed at the employment office, and on the Monday morning I started work in a small arms factory. The noise was deafening. The work was hard and all of the people around me were talking but I didn't understand what they said. It sounded like a foreign language!

We struggled for three more hard years and finally bought our own small house and had two more sons. It didn't take long before I felt at home in this new country and have never regretted the decision to uproot. When I see my children and grandchildren enjoying the freedom and bounties of Canada I tell them how fortunate they are that we made that momentous decision so many years ago.



