

Lillian Ashe  
English Immigrant  
Empress of Canada  
December 25, 1945



I came to Canada as part of a family. Mother (Mary) and Father (Thomas Edward) Walker, plus two sets of twins. Tom and Joyce age 12 and Lawrence and Lorraine age 2.

We left Barrow-in-Furnace, Lancashire for a better life, sponsored by a family Lowery . He had been a prisoner of war with my father during the war and they and the families had maintained a friendship over the years. They had come to Canada two years prior to join an old aunt and help run her farm.

The trip over was wonderful as it was the Christmas season and there were all manner of parties for the children. The food was unbelievable to those of us who didn't know anything but wartime rations.

When we arrived at Pier 21 it was hustle and bustle and My Dad found that the trunk they had purchased from two old maid ladies from their European trips, had fallen apart in the hold. He was able to tie it up with rope and two belts (generously donated by two of the workers near him. and in the meantime we went to sit under the big W on the wall. Our admittance to Canada was quite fast as we had all the documents and health forms required and of course we spoke English. Twice my father went to the assistance of a couple with three children who only spoke German.

We were rushed to buy our train tickets west and at the station a ladies auxiliary were handing out toys to all the children. They had stayed open to ensure that each child processed from the Empress received a gift. My twin and I were too old (12) but a lady gave us each a scrap book made up of Christmas cards and all occasion cards and we treasured them. I remember my sister Lorraine was not well at this time and had been throwing up and running a fever. She had broken out with measles the morning we landed and Mom kept her covered up so we wouldn't be turned back (or so my Mom feared).

We boarded the train to Hastings, Ontario and were disappointed that it was dark out when we left. It must have been a very early or very late docking of the ship. There we were faced with cold white immense countryside. Three days it took to get to Hastings and when we arrived

there it was again the middle of the night . The Station Master, Mr. Burnham was a WW1 vet missing a hand and he telephoned the family Lowery, that we were at the station. My father was shocked to be told that the Lowerys had fallen on hard times and had sent a letter to inform us not to come. They had no car so we were to wait for a gentleman who drove a station wagon for school children.

The family had made up a lot of stories to make their new life in Canada better than it was. We stayed with them for just two weeks and left to start a new life in Canada. God Bless the men who gave up their belts to help my Dad as they saved our Christmas decorations that were in that trunk. There must have been much more, but every year my Mom often thanked them for saving Christmas for us...

Thank you for letting me tell that little story.