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McDermott
English Immigrant
Aquitania
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I came to Canada at the age of 9, with my Mother, Doris McDermott (nee King), recently deceased. My sister, Sheila age 7, and my brother Ted (Edward Patrick) aged 2. We left in late Spring 1948, to meet my father, who had emigrated to Canada in March of 1948.

My most vivid memories of the trip are the fish who followed the boat over the ocean. We children would line up at the railing each day (once or twice?) and watch as the float holding the garbage from the kitchens was tipped, and many fish would scramble to eat the leavings. Another memory is of the young couples who had probably met on the ship and were "courting"...one young man I remember began to scramble over the rail promising to jump if his wish was not granted (perhaps a kiss?). I have a vague recollection of sighting a whale and the shooting of the water from its blow hole.

My most vivid memory however, is the night we weighed anchor in Halifax harbour. We children were allowed to stay up, and scrambled up to the funnels and around everywhere previously forbidden. The lights on Halifax Hill is still one of my most cherished memories. A child coming from Britain and a lifetime of darkness to see the hill of lights was truly like a miracle. Previously, the excitement of light had been the daily visit from the lamplighter who would clamber up his ladder, open the door and light the lamp in front of our home in Leeds. When we disembarked the next morning, we were met by women I believe from the Salvation Army who helped parents with children, gave us sandwiches and drinks and told us where to go to get our train to Toronto. I remember the long hut-like buildings along the dock.

I will be forever grateful to my parents for choosing Canada for our home. At the age of 21 I became a \$5 Canadian - was there ever a bargain like it!