

William Hoskins
English Immigrant
Aquitania
March 6, 1948



Hoskins Family Immigration
- England to Canada - Feb
25th to March 6th, 1948

After many months the big day was drawing near. Feb 24th, 1948 our Dad played the piano (as he had done for many years) for the last time in our village pub. The whole village turned out to wish us luck and all night long sang the old wartime songs ending with NOW IS THE HOUR, WHEN WE MUST SAY GOOD BYE. Then after cheers from our neighbours, with few tear stained eyes we walked back home for the last time to the small house that had sheltered us through the dark years of WWII. We knew now that we would soon be on our way to join our sister Patricia who had departed our village in June of 1945 to join her husband Richard (Dick) Bell, an R.C.A.F. air gunner who Pat had married in our village on January 21, 1945. Dick had left for Canada shortly after the wedding to return to his native land in Edmonton Alberta. Now our turn to leave our beautiful small village Green Street Green in Kent England had arrived.

Early the next morning, Feb 25th, 1948, we walked out of our village to the local bus. We left with just the clothes on our backs and Dad carried a small brief case. The neighbours again cheered us off. Our local bus took us to the train station in Orpington, Kent, then off to London for the train to Southampton where the big ship Aquitania waited. We gazed in awe at this huge vessel as none of us had been at sea before in our lives.

The crossing was uneventful, and we enjoyed our first huge meals in the beautiful dining room. After our wartime existence the meals were fantastic. Our living memory of the crossing was the ship plowing through ice as we approached the Canadian East Coast. This was quite a shock to us who naively believed that salt water could not freeze! We plowed through ice for hours much to our amazement.

After docking in Halifax Harbour, we struggled on shaky legs into the massive embarkation center, Pier 21. Once the formalities were completed we were off to the Halifax train station to begin the second leg of our journey, destination Edmonton Alberta.

We sat looking out the train windows day after day as our new country flashed by, we were all amazed that we could ride a train for days on end. In England we had traveled once or twice from London to Manchester in five hours which seemed an eternity then.

Finally after five years we reached Edmonton Alberta and on Saturday, at 9:00 P.M. March 6th, 1948 to a joyful greeting from Sister Pat and husband Dick and a new addition baby Ricky age 3. Then off to their house, to our amazement a three room house awaited us. Our bedroom with one bed, living room, kitchen and small bathroom. The bedroom was partitioned off with a curtain. Dad and me slept on one side and Mum, sisters Lillian age 14, and Mary age 11 slept on the other half. Pat, Dick and young Ricky on a couch in the living room.

Monday morning I was off to work with Dick who had secured employment for me at his place of work. We walked eight blocks to catch the street car to downtown. It was bitterly cold and I was fortunate enough to be able to wear one of Dick's spare winter jackets. Our family existed this way for the first six months of our lives in Canada. Gradually there was improvement as sister Lillian found a job and was able to help out financially. Shortly there after Dad found employment house painting (his old trade).

After searching for some time, finally we found accommodation above a grocery store. Four rooms that seemed like a palace to us after our tight one room existence. Although Pat and Dick were happy to have us, I'm sure they were happy to have their small house to themselves once again.

We settled into our new life in our adopted country and soon marriages and new young families were growing. Dad lived to be eighty three years of age and Mum to the ripe old age of ninety-eight with twenty Grandchildren and numerous great grandchildren.

Our family remained in Edmonton except for me, who after sixteen years moved to Victoria B.C. in 1964 and still reside in British Columbia.

Newspaper Clipping from Kentish Times Feb. 1945

Pilot Officer R.V. Donald Bell and Miss "Pat" Hoskins

A wedding of much interest to villagers took place on February 21 at St. Nary's Parish Church, Green-Street-Green, between Pilot Officer Richard Victor Donald Bell, R.C.A.F., youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. R. Bell, of 11,231 St. Albert-road, Edmonton, Alberta and Miss Patricia Doreen

Lillian Hoskins, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Hoskins, of Tyron, Laxely-road Green-Street-Green.

The Vicar, the Rev. K.H. Joeclyn, officiated and the bride, given away by her father, wore a gown of white figured satin with head-dress of orange-blossom and carried a bouquet of daffodils and tulips. The bridesmaids were the Misses Eileen Merchant, Lily and Mary Hoskins (sisters of the bride), Shirley and Winnie Isden (cousins of the bridegroom). Miss Marchant and Miss Lily Hoskins were attired in blue taffeta and the other three bridesmaids in pale pink silk. They had head dresses of gold leaves with veils and each carried a bouquet of Spring flowers.

Mr. S. Isden, uncle of the bride-groom, was best man.

Mr. John Wade played the Bridal March (Lohengrin) and Mendelssohn's Wedding March. The Hymm O Perfect Love was sung.

A reception was given by the bride's parents at St. Mary's Hall.

The bride, who is shortly leaving for Canada has done much good work for charitable causes. She organized her own concert party, a troupe of talented village children, who have given shows on behalf of good causes.

The bridegroom, who is shortly to take up fresh duties in his native Canada, was recently awarded the operational wings of the Royal Canadian Air Force in recognition of gallant service, having completed a tour of operational duty against the enemy.

His father, a veteran of the 1914 -1918 war, and three brothers, are in the R.C.A.F. and another is in the Canadian Army. One brother, Flight Lieutenant Gordon Cecil Douglas Bell, was recently decorated by the King at Buckingham Palace.

