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German Immigrant
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My mother and her family, ten in number, immigrated to Canada in groups, the first group in 1912. The children were born in a German settlement in the Province of Volhynian, Russia. When World War I broke out, the family was transported, for their safety, further into Russia. Upon returning to their home at the end of the war, they found they had lost practically everything. The family was then transported to Germany with the promise of work for Father and his sons. However they had to make their own living and life was hard. Father died in Germany. Since one daughter and husband and one son had already immigrated to Canada prior to the war, the decision was made to follow them. Through churches in Canada individuals there sponsored the families, paying their fare. This fare was paid off by working for the sponsor for 1.5 to 2 years.

Since I was thirteen years of age, my earliest recollection of leaving Germany was on the train trip to Hamburg. I do not recall embarking on the R.M.S. M'Clare. About December 24, 1924 the ship departed from Hamburg, Germany sailing to Liverpool, England, a 2 day trip and then on to Canada, a nine day crossing. I was travelling with two brothers, one sister and a niece. We were the second last group of the family to emigrate from Germany.

On board, I can recall the children's party, even Father Christmas and the movie that was shown. This was particularly exciting for me as this was the first movie that I had ever seen.

The rest of the trip was a nightmare as I was seasick for the duration. The air below the deck was so stale and fetid that it was enough to make one sick. Add to this the rolling of the ship in stormy waters. The high waves made a trough for the ship. I cannot remember being on deck as the weather was too harsh.

I really wasn't aware of where I was going, just following along with the family members. Upon disembarking at Saint John, New Brunswick we had been tagged with our name and destination as our German language was a barrier for communication. We travelled by train to our destination, Clifford Ontario. We were housed and worked for a farmer within a German community. For me, it was all somewhat bewildering

but I seemed to accept the fact that this was a beginning in a new land. It was difficult for me to learn the English language as I attended school for only one year. Since we were in a German community, there was no access to the English language outside of the classroom. Therefore there was no opportunity to practice this new language.

In retrospect, life in Germany had been difficult in my parents and those older than me, I was the youngest. Canada was welcoming immigrants and this seemed like an opportunity for a better life.

The members of the family were employed by individuals until they were able to become established on their own. We took turns in providing a home for my mother. The New life was not easy but with determination, diligence and hard work, each member of the family made his or her own way and prospered.

I am the only one living now. My wife, Canadian born and I have been married fifty-two years. We have two children and I am now in my 90th year. I am proud to be a Canadian.