

Renate Hoffman Rooke
German Immigrant
Arosa Kulm
March 6, 1953



In 1953, when you came to
Canada, you had to have the following:

- 1.- Passport
2. - German I.D.
3. - Single Round Trip Internation Pass
4. - Police documentation stating you were never in trouble
5. - International Certificate of Innoculation and Vaccination, issued by
Internation Refugee Organization
6. - Passage Contract-ship ticket
7. - First payment to Department of Citizenship and Immigration
8. - Last Payment to Immigration for the whole trip, amount \$173.55
9. - Possess only \$5.00

On February 17, 1953, a bus full of young Berliners started on a trip of
their life.

We all were in our twenties and were filled with the great hope of a better
life. In East Germany, we had to go through four check points and our
passports had to be sent ahead to the ship. We were questioned by the
Russian police as to where we were headed. We answered to the
Carnival in West Germany, in hopes this would suffice. Each of us only
had \$5.00, which was about all we had to our name, but was also the
amount allowed for us to bring to Canada.

We boarded the ship named Arosa Kulm, on February 17th, 1953.
March 6th was a very warm night on the ocean. When we arrived in
Halifax on March 7th, all we could see was ice-every nut and bolt of the
ship was covered in ice. This was Halifax. All I could think was-What
had I done?

When we got off the ship at Pier 21, no one knew what to do or where to
go. Still full of hopes and dreams, I was blindfolded and placed in front
of a very big map of Canada. I pointed to Woodstock, Ontario. I, and six
others, headed to our new destination.

From Halifax we headed to Montreal by train. We were told if we like it
there, we could stay, but of course we had already made up our minds to

head to Woodstock. As Berliners, we are determined to stay committed and focused on our destination.

Our next stop was Ajax, Ontario. There we stayed until March 14th, and then we headed to Woodstock. Once in Woodstock, the ladies were employed as Domestic Workers on farmers, and the men worked in farm labour. We had no idea what a person does on a farm, but we had no choice since we had to pay our way back in the amount of \$154.00 (which might as well have been a million).

After one year, I only knew where two of us were. At this time I got married and found employment at the hospital where I worked for 34 years.

I am now married for 46 years and have two children, a boy and a girl. We live in Beachville, Ontario, which is just outside of Woodstock. I have been a Canadian longer than I was a German, and am very proud and happy. In the fifty's, we were the real immigrants. We worked very hard and were determined to pay our way because Canada allowed us to have a better life. We never asked what will Canada give to us, we always asked what can we give to Canada.