

Hans Brouwer
Immigrant
March 26, 1953



My parents names were
Johannas and Catherine
Brouwer (now deceased), my
sister Frieda (is married [Nyhof] with two children [four grandchildren]
and lives in Trenton, Ontario) plus my brother Michael (married with one
child) lives in Southern California. I am married with one child and
reside in Seattle, Washington.

My recollection of the whole "leaving Europe" process centers around
saying goodbye to my grandmother and the voyage itself. In relation to
the first I did not understand at the time what "leaving" really meant
(never seeing her again!). As for the second it was absolutely exciting, a
wonderful kids adventure where every step was a new experience! I loved
it! The ship was my playground and raiding all the meal "seatings"
(three). My disappearances caused some consternation for my parents
and punishment for my siblings for loosing track of me. But, I did not
care: I needed to explore the ship.

Our arrival in Halifax, has left some questions, between family members.
The Passenger List Route Chart shows arrival on the 26th of March
1953, The Pier 21 records indicate the 28th. My sister recalls the ship
staying out in the harbour and workmen removing a cable from the
propeller. However I feel the ship was placed under a medical quarantine
and did not dock or process us through immigration until the 29th or
30th.

Not much sticks in my mind about the immigration process itself. My
next major recollection is the train. We got on late at night and I can still
hear/smell/see this big black hulk of a locomotive belching steam and
smoke. Where were we going was of no concern to this youngster! My
adventure was continuing and for three days I don't remember sleeping.
The view was everything, large buildings, automobiles everywhere, rivers,
bridges and best of all, the railroad stations along the way. Why you ask,
because of the snacks that I became addicted to, especially orange crush!
To this day I can still taste that soda pop. It was my welcome to Canada.

For my parents things were much different, not speaking any English
(not that we kids did, but it was easier for a child), and not knowing what
lay at the end of the rail, as the prairie loomed. It only dawned on me
later in life (when it was too late to give my folks any credit) what a trek
this really was (considering my dad was forty-eight and my mother forty-

four plus three children to take care of!). And, I have to thank the Canadian government (at that time) for their Immigration Policy, that helped bring trained people into the country, with programs that included starting jobs and housing (as long as the immigrant guaranteed to stay at the initial location for one year). There was also a children's annual monetary subsidy called a "Baby Bonus" which was paid per each child (\$500.00 I think).

However, Kindersley, Saskatchewan was not the place for us! The boom towns of Ontario beckoned. My sister settled in Trenton while my brother and I grew up in Brighton. But with my Dad's health deteriorating there was another immigration planned! So what do the remaining Brouwer Four do - why, pack up and move to Southern California. What the heck, what could be that different between Brighton and Los Angeles! From there, life's paths have scattered the remaining family members east and west, north and south!