

Iole Bond nee Valentinuzzi
By daughter Amanda Bond
Italian Immigrant
Queen Frederica
March 16, 1958



My mother, Iole Valentinuzzi, was born 28 June 1929 in Casarsa della Delizia, Pordenone, Italy. She was the youngest of six children. Her early life was fairly typical but most of her teenaged years were during World War II while Italy was allied with Germany.

The war years were hard and food was scarce. Her northern Italian town was situated on an important railway line and the train station was



frequently bombed from the air. When this happened, my mother often jumped on a farm horse and rode terrified out of the town. Sometimes she didn't have time; sometimes the bombs missed their target and destroyed homes or shops. Italy joined the Allies near the end of the war and the Germans were slowly forced out of the country. As they retreated, they left a path of destruction – stealing livestock, vehicles, property and setting fire to buildings. Those years were a very fearful, anxious time for my mother and her family. The end of the war brought great relief and, like many people of that time, my mother felt invincible and full of adventure.

Many years before my mother's birth, my grandfather Antonio Valentinuzzi had travelled from Italy to Canada looking for work building the railroad. Upon his arrival in Canada around 1911, he was sent to an area near Prince Rupert, BC. When he returned to his family in Italy he told them all about the beautiful country of Canada which he'd seen plenty of on his journey between the east and west coasts.

My mother's oldest sister Maria and her husband Vittorio decided to bring their family to Canada in the 1950s and chose Prince Rupert, BC to make their home. My mother's only brother Luigi also made plans to move his new family to Prince Rupert. Another sister Pia would later arrive with her Scottish husband Jim and their young son Roy.

My mother was the only one of her family to arrive in Canada unmarried. Her passion was travel and any thoughts of marriage/children did not consume her as they did most young women of the time. Aside from Canada, she also dreamed of visiting Australia. In 1955/56 she set off for Scotland to stay with her sister's family while studying English in school. She worked in a dentist office to pay her way and toured into Ireland.

The year prior to immigrating, my mother and her friend found employment as nannies for two wealthy families in Monaco. My mother often proudly told the story of how she brought the young boy she cared for to the first birthday party of Princess Caroline of Monaco in early 1958.

My mother made plans to travel to Canada with her sister-in-law Gemma Valentinuzzi and her young nephew Joe Valentinuzzi. They went to Rome in February 1958 to secure their entry documents and then it was just a matter of packing their belongings and waiting for their sailing day. On 8 March 1958 the trio boarded the SS Queen Frederica at Naples, bound for Canada. Hundreds of people stood on a pier to wave their loved ones off. My mother was thrilled.

The voyage lasted eight days with the ship stopping in several ports along the way before setting off across the Atlantic. My mother enjoyed dancing, especially ballroom dancing so when the opportunity arose to judge a dance contest on board Queen Frederica, she accepted. Always a striking, beautiful woman, my mother was also a talented dressmaker and photos of her taken by the ship's photographer show a lovely lady poised elegantly at the start of an exciting, new life.

The Queen Frederica landed at Pier 21 in Halifax on 16 March 1958. It was a cloudy day and the harbour was choked with ships of all types. My mother stood with newly made friends along the rails of the Queen Frederica and drank in her first glimpses of Canada. After completing the entry procedure at Pier 21 my mother and her party later transferred to a train for the long rail journey across Canada to Prince Rupert, BC. As she approached the coastal town she would call home for the next 21 years, her train passed over the same rails her father had helped build over 45 years before.

In Prince Rupert, my mother lived at the home of her eldest sister Maria until her marriage to my father John Bond in April 1962. Five years later, she gave birth to twins – my brother Rory and I. Our family left Prince Rupert for Calgary, Alberta in the summer of 1979 and we have lived here ever since.



Aboard the SS Queen Frederica in Naples Italy. Iole is standing on the railing. Next to her on the right is Gemma Valentinuzzi (sister-in-law) and Joe Valentinuzzi (nephew)



I believe this is at the docks in Naples as the ship was leaving on 8 March 1958.



Photo of Iole Valentinuzzi, Gemma Valentinuzzi and Joe Valentinuzzi taken at sea on the first day.



Iole is seated behind and to the right of the gentleman with crossed legs. The other people are fellow passengers – I don't know their names.



A ballroom dance contest on board the ship. Judges were selected passengers. Iole is seated at the table on the far left.



My mother told me once that this gentleman welcoming her into the dining lounge was the ship's captain. I'm not 100% sure though.



Iole enjoying a pre-dinner cocktail with another passenger. I don't know his name. (This is my most favorite photograph of my mother)



Iole at the dinner table with sister-in-law Gemma Valentinuzzi on her right and nephew Joe Valentinuzzi on her left in striped sweater. I don't know the names of the other three people. They were not travelling with my mother, just part of the seating assignment.



Arriving in Halifax on 16 March 1958.



Arriving in Halifax. My mother is third from left with purse on her arm. I believe she told me the others were friends she'd met on board. I don't know their names.