

Maria Palermo nee
Bonanna
Italian Immigrant
Saturnia
February 17, 1958



I was 19 years old when I left Sicily, accompanied by my husband who had already been in Canada for 5 years. We took the ferry from Palermo to Naples and then boarded the Saturnia in Naples for our journey to Canada. I was very seasick and remained in bed in my room for the majority of the trip.

We arrived at Pier 21 on February 17, 1958. Everything was covered in snow, which was an unbelievable sight for someone from Sicily who had never even seen snow before this time.

We made our way through Pier 21 to reach an immigration officer. Pier 21 was full of people and so were many Italians. Luckily for me, my husband spoke English so he helped me get our things and communicate with the immigration officer. My husband helped many other Italians that we had met on the Saturnia as well.

As many other Italians, we had cheese in our luggage and it was taken from us. Many of the immigrants were very angry when their cheeses and homemade salami and sausages were taken away.

We then tried to find some food to take on the train with us but we couldn't find any. We boarded the train outside Pier 21 and set with some new friends we had made aboard the ship. The train ride from Halifax to Windsor was 32 hours. All I could see outside the window was snow and I wondered where I was and what it would be like in Windsor? We arrived exhausted and were greeted by family and friends.

Maria Palermo (nee Bonanna)