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Scottish Immigrant
Aquitania
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At six years old, I was eldest of three children. Our family had driven from Paisley, Scotland to Southampton, where we boarded the Aquitania in May of 1947. I remember being surprised and worried that our parents had separate accommodations on the ship: Father bunked with some homeward bound officers; Mother and we children shared a cabin with two women. Mother said afterward that the ship was traveling "in austerity", although it felt like a palace to us, with huge columns in the dining room. We children were sick- not from seasickness but from the rich food and heavy mugs of tea with canned milk. The hissing of the waves and that indescribable smell of the ocean have always remained in my memory. Then there was the frequent sound of the public address system, with announcements in exotic-sounding languages as well as English.

After we had docked in Halifax, I remember watching the luggage being unloaded and a suitcase tumbling out of the cargo net. I watched with fascination as it floated for a minute or two before sinking to the bottom of the Harbour. My memory of Pier 21 is only a blur. I remember a queue and somebody at a desk. It all seemed to happen quickly.

Our furniture was to follow later by freighter but Dad had shipped his car with us on the Aquitania. It was an unusual car, a Railton, complete with right-wheel drive and a Hudson body. I think we had to wait overnight until the car was unloaded. We then set off for Vancouver, British Columbia, taking a southerly route into the United States at the Great Lakes. The police stopped us several times for a closer look at the strange car. They commented that they appreciated standing with one foot on the running board!

The drive was quite an adventure. I only wish that our parents had kept a journal of their trip.