

Betsy M. Sibbald
Scottish Immigrant
Athenia
April 1, 1929



I visited Pier 21 in August 1999 and was overwhelmed and not to say very excited because I landed here in 1929 as a landed immigrant and have never been back since in all those years. I talked with a very sensitive young and cooperative lady who brought all the information, on the computer, about my whole family as we were documented by Immigration. She also supplied me with a picture of the ship we came from Scotland on. I was so very thrilled and excited. You see, I came from Scotland with my family, father, mother and six brothers and sisters and landed in Halifax on April 1, 1929. We sailed across the ocean on the Athenia, a beautiful ship and this was a new experience for me. I shall never forget leaving our homeland as the Pipe Band was on the dock playing "Will ye no come back again." We had been told that the streets in Canada were lined with gold, which we soon learned was not so. I had my 15th birthday aboard ship and didn't enjoy it too much as I was seasick all the way over. My Dad rented a lounge chair for me so I could spend as much time as possible on deck and could watch others playing games. I remember very clearly first sighting land, as we had been on board ship for over a week. Everyone on board rushed to ship side as we pulled into Halifax Harbour and was shouting "Canada, Canada".

Coming through Immigration the officer in charge said, "Only one family at a time please." You see there were twelve of us and the oldest son and daughter were nineteen and seventeen years old and quite mature and were caring for some of the family, hence the officer thought we were two families. At that time we were supposed to be the largest family to come through Pier 21. So now, here I am 86 years old and still going strong and I hope to visit Pier 21 again before I pass on.

