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Scottish Immigrant
Banfora
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On March 31, 1942 I left my hometown of Glasgow, Scotland along with my husband John and our little boy William. Our destination was Halifax, Nova Scotia where my husband had a two year contract at the Halifax Shipyards to build Tribal Class Destroyers for the Royal Canadian Navy. I knew it was a dangerous time to cross the Atlantic but we wanted to escape the heavy bombing in our area of Scotland and looked forward to what we thought would be our "sojourn" in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Our crossing was stormy and the ship rolled in the ocean. At that time the German "wolf pack" patrolled the Atlantic and we had constant life drills aboard ship. We had black curtains covering the port holes for we could show no lights at night. Our ship was filled with Canadian soldiers and German prisoners of war to be interned in Canada. I prayed no submarines would sight us as we made our way across the Atlantic.

I had brought my wedding china from Scotland and it was packed in a cast stored below deck. I worried about it being smashed to pieces as our ship heaved in the waters. However, my concerns about something so relatively unimportant were put into perspective when a baby aboard ship died. The little girl had been sleeping in a lower berth and the rolling of the ship caused a coat to fall from the upper berth and smother her. I'll never forget standing on the deck shivering in the cold wind as the ships captain conducted the funeral and the baby was buried at sea.

Our ship arrived safely in Canada and the kindness of those at Pier 21 was so appreciated. They gave my son William a banana and I remember him being quite frightened. After years of being rationed he had never seen a banana and thought it was a spider! When we left Scotland we had to keep our departure time a secret for security reasons. Certainly our arrival in Canada was no secret because the Halifax paper came and took our picture and there under the caption, "Shipbuilding technicians arrive in Canada", are the three of us along with the other members of our group.

Our Canadian "sojourn" turned out to be longer than our anticipated two years. We loved Canada and became Canadian citizens and our last two children were born here.

I am now 82 years old, very active and interested in everything. When I saw the motion picture "Titanic" it brought back all the memories of my own Atlantic voyage. I crossed the Atlantic 30 years later during the same month. When I saw those people in the cold waters I was so thankful our journey ended with our safe arrival at Pier 21.