

James Evans
by his children Eric and
Susans Evans
Welsh Immigrant and
WWI Veteran
Metagama
1919



Eric Evans:

I have only a vague recollection of our years in Mold, Wales. I seem to remember my 4th birthday party, but this recollection may have been reinforced by a picture in the family photograph album. My father was killed that year in France on September 1st, 1918. I remember my mother's grief when she received the telegram on Friday the 13th. Her Celtic superstitiousness was thus tragically reinforced. I can recall only two further incidents; the first was eating chip potatoes from a newspaper cone purchased from a vendor's wagon. The second was on board ship prior to sailing. We were gathered in our cabin with relatives who had come to see us off. I was fascinated by buttons by the door and pressed on which summoned the steward. Someone told me that if I did that again, I would be thrown overboard.

I was frightened enough that the memory has stayed with me. We returned to Canada in January or February, 1919, travelling by train to our home in Miniota, Manitoba. I recall that it was very cold and I experienced my first snow.

Susan Evans:

My father, Eric Evans, was born in Miniota, Manitoba, as were his brother Frank and his sister Gladys. When war was declared in 1914, my grandfather, Jim Evans, re-enlisted and was sent overseas via Halifax to England. In early 1915, my father still an infant, my grandmother, Edith, took her three children and crossed to England to be with her husband. He was training troops in musketry and continued to do so until March of 1918, when he took a demotion in rank to Captain in order to serve at the front. He was killed by a sniper September 1st, 1918.

Early in 1919, my grandmother decided to return with her children to Canada and her house in Miniota. My grandparents emigrated together from Mold, Wales to Canada in 1904, although my grandfather had first

travelled to Canada after serving in the Boer War. For reasons no one now remembers, he headed for Manitoba where he found a position managing a hardware store in Miniota for the Manitoba Hardware & Lumber Co. Once established, he returned to Mold to marry and bring my grandmother back with him. One by one her five sisters followed, to marry, settle on the prairies and raise families. Two of her sisters settled in Miniota so she was not entirely on her own.

My grandmother kept all the letters and documents from those years and they have since come into my possession. Among them is the passenger list for T.S.S. Metagama, which my father wishes to donate to Pier 21. I also published an edition of my grandfather's letters, 'My Darling Girl: Letters of James Lloyd Evans 1914-1918', for the family and I have written to the Public Archive of Nova Scotia asking if they are interested in a copy.