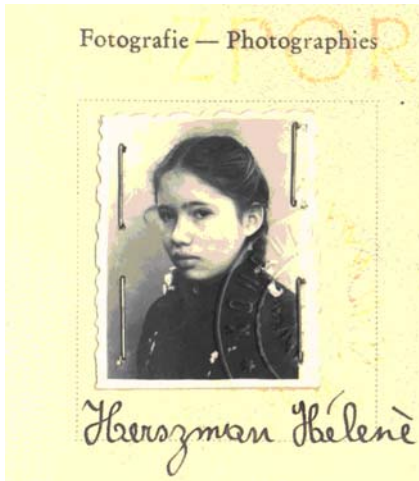


Hélène Mayor nee
Herszman
Jewish War Orphan
Aquitania
January 29, 1948



I remember vividly the journey aboard the beautiful S.S. Aquitania (a Cunard-White Star Liner) and in retrospect I am sure it was just as magnificent as the Titanic, with beautifully carved balustrades and chandeliers in the dining room. As children of the Holocaust, we were probably in Third Class or perhaps Steerage, but to me it was the most exciting adventure of my young life. I also remember the train journey aboard a train* which looked just like the one you have on display in front of Pier 21. My friends sang 'Happy Birthday' to me as I turned 14 years old the day after landing in Halifax, which was 28 January 1948 and so I can always tell people that I got Canada as a birthday gift! The strange thing I do not remember is disembarking from the Aquitania at Pier 21 and so I have no actual memory of the actual waiting area - yet I can remember things going back to age two or three.



When I began hearing the announcements over CBC Radio (and this being the only station I listen to) in the summer of 1998, my heart skipped a beat and I began formulating plans that I hoped would come to fruition. To have journeyed on to Halifax and to actually "see" that grand city for the first time, so to speak, more than exceeded my fondest wishes. I had to absorb everything as I looked over the ocean and gazed upon the lighthouse facing Pier 21 all the while retracing in a dreamlike sequence the steps of the 13 year-old child with the pigtails and carrying her only worldly possessions in that little brown suitcase. I am glad it is now in its appropriate resting place along with such others,



all having contained the tears and the hopes awaiting us in this new land.

* This train brought us to Montreal where we were placed with various foster families - not a happy time for the majority of us, as I have gathered over the years in speaking to other war refugees! I, for the most part, did not have happy experiences (This contingent of children was from Belgium for the most part).

