

Ruby Fletcher
English War Bride
Letitia
June 27, 1946

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
PIER 21



I can still hear the noise and feel the excitement of the day I met my husband to be.



Plymouth, 1945, VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) and we were celebrating, Church bells were ringing, (that was formally reserved for invasion warnings) But not this time, this time the war was over, and my friends and I were off to have a good time. That night, after work we linked arms and were off down the middle of the road, anybody and everybody joined us singing and dancing our way to the Hoe to have a good time. I was one end of a long line, and my future husband at the other. I was a member of the WRNS (Women's Royal Naval Service) and Walter, or as I came to know him Ken, was at the other end, but had spotted me as I came to find out. I had joined the WRNS in 1944 from Sidmouth Devon, with a group of friends.

Middle child of five, and working as an usherette in a movie house, where we showed patrons down the aisle with our flashlights, and served tea that they had ordered on their way in, we had decided to look for some excitement.

Sent to London for basic training, and then to Plymouth, attached to HMS Drake in Devonport, I was working as a Steward, Ken was attached to a Mine Sweeper working out of Plymouth. We danced the night away, going back to our billet, and having to sneak in the back door of what was originally a boys school until the Navy took it over for housing. Of course we made a date, and promised to see each other. Neither of us was able to keep the date. Ken was sent on duty to sweep mines and I was given leave. But true love had beckoned and Ken write to a friend,





because he had neglected to ask my last name, and asked her to give me a note form him.

Ken had been wounded and was hospitalized with a knee injury, but continued writing me. A date was made, cab drew up, and there was Ken smiling and inviting me to go to a movie. I was so embarrassed. Cabs in those days were not used to take young ladies to the movies, particularly when you had to get out in front of a group of friends who would hoot and holler at you. It was a very romantic movie, really enjoyed it, went to the Longbar afterwards, and then walked home.

There were many letters between us, and many dates. I

invited Ken to come and be introduced to my mother. The only thing was she at this point didn't know I even had a boyfriend that I was serious about. I had phoned the restaurant that she worked at and told her I was bringing a friend with me. Mother made up the double bed all ready for us, and nearly dropped a tray of dishes when I walked in first with Ken following me. That weekend I accepted his proposal and his ring that came a few days before we were married. We set the date for September the 20th, 1945, and since bridal dresses were hard to come by, my mother who knew a friend who had a white dress and some bridesmaid dresses, made all the arrangements.

I was the 7th bride to wear the dress, 2nd bride to wear the veil, and all the pretty colours of the bridesmaids dresses made for a very pretty wedding, with silver horseshoes to compliment



my bouquet. I wonder how many others wore that dress and where it is now? We didn't have a honeymoon, duty called and we had to return to duty. Ken returned to Canada and I came on June 17th, 1946 after being demobbed, I sailed on the Letita, formally hospital ship during the war.



What a greeting I received in Hamilton, I had arrived at Pier 21 on June 27, 1946, was put on a train, and tired and weary was greeted by about 20 people, who were with Ken. Hamilton was celebrating as well that weekend, it was their centennial, and everything was closed.

Off we went to an apartment all fixed up for us, 223 Balmoral Ave. One Bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom. The one thing I really remember about this first home was the copper Beatty washing machine that was proudly given to me. I had never seen a washing machine before, so I decided to give it a try. Unfortunately, I didn't know you had to turn your husbands pockets out before you put his pants in the wash. The washer whirled and the screw driver in his pocket came out and gouged a hole in the side of the washer. The water leaked, and I had a mess. All was fixed, the side was welded, and I learned you turned all pockets out before you started to wash them.

