

Elizabeth 'Betty'
Boxall
English War Bride
Queen Elizabeth into
New York
December 12, 1946



Elizabeth (Betty) Boxall : A War Bride with a Different Story

Elizabeth (Betty) Boxall came to Canada as a war bride in 1946, but her life up to that time was quite a bit different than most of the girls who met and married Canadians during World War II.

Betty was born Elizabeth Ayres, in 1910, in Manor, Saskatchewan. Her parents were British, and had come to Canada in about 1905. Betty's Dad worked on a farm nearby, then the family moved to Melville, and later to Winnipeg.

When Betty was about five her Dad decided to enlist to fight in WWI, and with his family now consisting of his wife and four children, they returned to England in 1915.

Betty grew up in Devon, near Exeter, attending boarding school there along with her two brothers and three sisters.

When Betty was aged 22 she met and was courted by Arthur (Bob) Huntley, who lived near Maidstone. They were married in 1934. They settled in Wateringbury, near Maidstone, and ran a little tea shop that also sold sweets and other goodies.

The marriage didn't work out, so Bob and Betty separated shortly after war broke out. Bob enlisted, and was posted elsewhere, while Betty continued to run the tea shop and bring up her son, Don, who had been born in 1936.

The aerodrome at West Malling was nearby, and airmen from there often dropped into the shop for tea, cigarettes, etc. One of these fellows, Bill 'Rocky' Boxall, was from Vancouver, Canada. Bill had come to work in England before the war, then joined the RAF after war broke out. Betty of course was intrigued by Bill's Canadian accent, and soon found out where he was from. She later told him that she was Canadian by birth and filled him in on the rest of her story. Bill told her his nickname

'Rocky' was given to him by his airforce buddies who knew that he came from somewhere close to the Rocky Mountains in Canada.

Betty and Bill were married in 1944, and, when the war ended, decided to return to Canada as soon as possible, together with her son Don, plus Wendy and Gary, born in 1944 and 1946. They planned to go to Vancouver, where Bill's mother, sister and many friends still lived.

Bill returned to Canada in December 1946 aboard a Canadian navy vessel, while Betty and the three children boarded the Queen Elizabeth in Southampton, bound for New York, arriving on Dec. 12th. This voyage of the Queen Elizabeth was one of the first after the ship had been converted back to its passenger status, from its wartime troopship duties.

Betty and family traveled by train from New York to Toronto, where they met Bill, who had landed earlier in Halifax, and together they carried on to Vancouver by train.

For a short time the family lived in Vancouver with relatives, then moved to Chilliwack briefly, before buying their own home in Burnaby, where they lived for about ten years.

While in Burnaby Betty met several other war brides, and helped to form a local war-brides' group. Betty was almost obsessed with the idea of returning to England to visit her friends and family there, and eventually saved enough money to do just that. In 1953 she left her family in the care of her mother-in-law and journeyed to England. But to her surprise England wasn't what she had envisioned over the years, due to the many changes since she had left. Betty found that she was more than ready to return to Canada when her few weeks in England were ended.

Betty and her family eventually moved again, to Mission, British Columbia, where she lived the rest of her life.

And she really was a 'war bride with a difference': Born in Canada, moved to England, met a Canadian, married a Canadian, moved back to Canada. Betty never ever really broke her Canadian ties.

