

Jean Beryl Cameron
English War Bride
RMS Samaria
June 14, 1945

I married John Burton Cameron who served with the West Nova Scotia Regiment in St. Paul's Church, Worthing, England on June 5, 1943.



John died at the age of 91, on September 13, 1999 and is buried at the Maccan, N.S. (Harrison Orchard) Cemetery.

I left Worthing, Sussex, England on June 7, 1945 at the age of twenty to re-join my Canadian soldier husband, John Burton Cameron, who was repatriated back to Canada before me. John arrived in Canada on the SS Aquitania May 17, 1945.

My father and mother, Frederick and Phyllis Sargent, saw me off on a train from Victoria Station, London, to Liverpool, England where I boarded a troop ship, RMS Samaria for Canada. I felt very lonely not knowing what Canada was all about.

RMS Samaria

There were three other war brides and myself who were assigned a cabin (with bunk beds) on the top deck. We never saw any troops as we were kept far away from them. The seas were choppy and most of the war brides were sea sick, except me.



During the voyage, we were fed very well, roast beef, bacon and eggs, toast, jam and vegetables. British movies were shown.

We arrived in Halifax on a sunny morning, Thursday, June 14, 1945. The first sight I saw was a lighthouse at the entrance to Halifax Harbour. We were escorted to Pier 21 where we waited in line to clear immigration. I remember lots of people. The troops were cleared first, followed by mothers with children, and then war brides and single people. I showed my boarding pass and documents. Then I was met by a Red Cross Worker who drove me to the railway station in Halifax where I boarded a train for my husband's home in the village of Maccan, Nova Scotia, ten miles from Amherst, Nova Scotia. I remember the train ride because there was nothing to drink or eat.

John met me at Springhill Junction, N.S. with his sister, Dorothy Briand, and Dorothy's husband Bill. The Briands drove John and I to Maccan arriving close to midnight Thursday, June 14, 1945. Neighbours waiting in



their cars turned their car headlights on to light the way as John and I walked to John's Mother house, Annie (Moore) Cameron, who was waiting in her home doorway as John and I walked over the railway tracks to John's Mother's house.

Mother-in-law's house

I was greeted by Mother-in-law Annie (Moore) Cameron with a smile and a warm embrace. Annie who was from Dildo, Newfoundland, was difficult to understand as measles destroyed her voice box as a child. John's father, Johnson Cameron, had died the previous August 1944 from injuries sustained in a coal mine accident. I remembered a very nice letter Mr. Cameron wrote to me when John and I married warmly welcoming me to the family and promising to help me adjust to Canada.

Annie's house was rustic with curtains on bedrooms in lieu of doors. No indoor plumbing. Outhouse at rear of house. Eaton's catalogue was toilet tissue. No running hot water (had to heat water on stove). A coal and wood stove to cook. Breakfast was porridge. Annie made it clear she was the cook in the house. Meals were very simple.



I was the first war bride to arrive in the village of Maccan.

My three sons, Avard, Brian and Chris.

Friday, June 15, 1945 - The following morning, Friday, I woke up, looked out our bedroom window, gazed upon Maccan and sat down and had a good cry. It was so pioneer looking compared to Worthing, England.

Maritime Railway Train at Maccan, CNR Station



I thought I knew John but I was in for a shock. While planning for what I thought was John's 27 birthday on September 3, 1945, his mother abruptly told me that John was 37 NOT 27 years old. John looked so youthful that I never realized there was a difference of 17 years between us.

Soon after arriving in Maccan, Jean Cameron received air letters (see below) from her parents in England.

The first air letter was written by her father, Frederick Sargent, and posted at 10 am, June 7, 1945 at CTO. W.3 (London).

The second air letter was written by her mother, Phyllis Sargent, and posted at 5:30 pm, June 7, 1945 at Worthing, England.

What follows are the two letters written the day Jean departed England for Canada on the RMS Samaria and transcribed from the original photocopy. The original letters were sent to Jean's brother, Alec in Worthing, England in 2007 by Jean Cameron.



Post Note: Jean Beryl Cameron passed away Wednesday, December 23, 2009 at the Grey Nuns Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta, two weeks short of her 85th birthday. Jean lived for 49 years in Maccan until poor health saw her move closer to her son, Chris, in Edmonton, Alberta where she lived for

16 years. Jean was buried at the Maccan (Harrison Orchard) Cemetery on Tuesday, June 15, 2010 with her three sons present..... 65 years to the day when she first gazed upon Maccan.

Coincidentally, Dorothy and Bill Briand's son, Billy Jr, was at the grave side to bid farewell to Jean.

Written by Frederick Sargent (Father).

Mr and Mrs. J.B. Cameron,
Maccan,
Cumberland, County,
Nova Scotia, Canada

June 7, 1945

My Dearest Jean and Johnny,

Haven't lost much time tonight. As soon as I arrived at my lodgings my first thought was to get these few lines off to you so as I hope it may reach you both on the day you set foot on shore and Johnny waiting to hand it to you. I

know only too well what a line from home means who don't know. Johnny can give that answer for me, and I hope and trust you have found everybody there in the best of health. That of course goes for Johnny as well. Me and mother after seeing you off at Victoria on Wednesday went with you found the Sargent Wife and had a cup of tea and etc and had quite a nice chat until it was time for mother to catch the through time to Worthing at 4.25 (pm). So I saw mother off and I must say we are closer together now and feeling the part of you. You may not realize it Jean but we are going to miss you for awhile, all of us. We know Johnny is going to take our place by watch(ing) over you and feel sure he will make you happy and trust you will never have any regrets. We as parents didn't want to part with you, no parents do, but I know as well as everybody else we have all got to part some day and to see you all settle in your own homes is a delight to every parent and I trust both of you will be happy for all times and be able to look back on life with a smile, both of you, and may God Bless you both and be with all times. We shall often wonder how you are getting along and shall always be glad to hear good news from you both. You know that. Address your letters as one to home. Don't trouble to send to my lodgings address. Me and mother was please indeed to know you had the company of so nice a person on the journey. It meant such a lot to us and was happy because of her being with you . Feel sure it meant a lot to you as well. Mother left Ok and like me looking forward to receive our first letter from you and then it won't seem so far away. Expect you will have much to write about all that happen on the way. Did you make friend with the sea and a good sailor? Don't forget to give us how things turn out after leaving Victoria till you got on the boat. I hope it was one long pleasure and enjoyment. Well Jean and Johnny excuse this rambling letter. So now I hope everybody there took you into their hearts and found everybody and everything better than you had expected and grand at that. Well I must close this for the time being and wish both a long life and a happy one and hope some future time we may see you both, either this side or us that side. Who can tell. I shall be home again on Saturday. Well love and best wishes to you both and hope Johnny didn't miss the boat and so I expect he got there and had to wait. Remember me to all there.

Love to you both. Always same Dad xxxx

F.C. Sargent
21 Goldsmith Rd
Worthing, Sussex
England

Written by Phyllis Sargent (Mother).
Mr and Mrs. J.B. Cameron,
Maccan,
Cumberland, County,
Nova Scotia, Canada

June 7, 1945

My Dear Jean,

It seems funny writing you an air mail. I hope by the time you receive this you will be feeling quite happy. You will never know how bad I felt on Victoria Station yesterday. I had such a lump in my throat but I managed it with a smile as I didn't want you to start your journey unhappy. Dad and I went and had a cup of tea and some beer with Bessies' husband. We left him at seven as he was going to spend two days with his Uncle in London. He is a very nice fellow but I think he was down in the dumps at saying goodbye to his wife. It was easier for me you having Bessie for company. I didn't seem leaving you all alone. Hope you stayed together through the journey. I didn't go to Mrs Middlehursts today as I remembered I had to go to Olives about my frock and it would have been too much of a rush. I left London on the 7.25 a thorough train and got in Worthing at 10 to 9. I called in the Norfolk to get some cigs and saw Sophie. She came over to speak to me and that finished me. I couldn't take it so came out. I had to call at Bessies with a message for her mother from Johnnie but only saw her sister. I couldn't face her mother so I arrived home at 9.30. Chris was in bed. Poor John was upset at you going he had a cry when he got down the Odeon but they were very nice to him. He was OK when he got home. The house seems empty today. I shall have to go out. I miss you so dear. Well Johnnie I hope you will make Jean very happy although I know you will. Well I must say fare well. Fond love to you both and kind regards to Mrs. Cameron.

Love from the boys. All my love. X Mum xxx

Mrs. P Sargent
21 Goldsmith Rd
Worthing, England