

Jeanne Scott nee  
Jenkins  
English War Bride  
Queen Mary  
August 13, 1946



Editor's Note: The following

memoir is based on an interview that was conducted by Elinor Maher and Beverly MacLellan for the Colchester Historical Society Museum & Archives as part of the museums Year of the War Bride research and exhibit of 2006. The Pier 21 Society would like to thank Ms. Maher, Ms. MacLellan and the war brides that contributed to this collection by sharing their experiences and impressions of the war years and their early days in Canada.



Name: Jeanne (nee Jenkins) Scott

Parents: Thomas and Marion Emmie (nee Parker) Jenkins

Home: Jeanne was born in Eastbourne, East Sussex but grew up in Hastings

Birthdate: May 24, 1920

Wartime memories:

"I left school at sixteen and took night courses to qualify for secretarial work. At first I did bookkeeping and secretarial work at several dairies in Hastings.

My mother and I were evacuated to Manchester when there was fear of an invasion on England's south coast. All women and children, who had not already been evacuated with their schools, had to leave the coast. My two brothers were included in the plan; they had been packed and

ready to go to Canada under the Overseas Evacuation Plan. They were supposed to be going to Saskatchewan as two of my mother's brothers lived there and were willing to accept them. However, this didn't happen as one of the boats carrying children was sunk in the North Atlantic and the plan was discarded. So my younger brothers, Peter and John, were sent to the country in Hertfordshire, just north of London, and they remained there for the rest of the war.

Once in Manchester we stayed with my aunt. I got a job as a shorthand typist at A V Roe Company, an aircraft corporation which built Lancaster bombers. I worked in the subcontract office. We nicely got settled in Manchester when the Germans started bombing the major cities - of which Manchester was one. So every night when the sirens started wailing, indicating a bomber attack, we would take shelter. Most houses didn't have a basement, so we managed the best we could on the ground floor!"

Husband:

Kenneth Scott, born and educated in Toronto. He joined the Queens Own Rifles, an old Toronto regiment, with his brother at the beginning of the war. The QOR were housed in former cattle sheds at the Canadian National Exhibition at first. Barney Danson, later Minister of Defence in the Trudeau government, was in the top bunk and became a friend.

Ken started out as a rifleman but was a Sergeant by the time they were married. Prior to the D-Day invasion Ken moved around a lot to various bases in England and Scotland.

How did you meet your husband?

"We met at my cousin Joyce's wedding at Eastbourne in 1943. She married a Canadian in the same regiment as Ken so he was there as best man. I stood up with her. After spending quite a few hours together that weekend, I returned to Manchester.

We only met five times before our wedding. The rest of the time we got to know one another through letters. Our romance really flourished by correspondence.

He proposed in person but didn't want to get officially engaged as he knew there was a big offensive coming and said he wouldn't ask anyone to get married under those circumstances.

We were married on the south coast of England, from whence I'd hailed, but I had to make all of the arrangements from Manchester where I was

working. I bought a lovely white wedding dress that was just what I wanted. I left it at the store for alterations and the store burned. They had to return my money and coupons and I found another dress but it was not the one I really wanted."

Wedding date: May 12, 1945

What was your family's reaction to the news you were marrying a Canadian?

"My mother really liked Ken. She didn't say much at the time but years later she was visiting me in Ontario when my daughter was going off to University. When I complained about missing her my mother said "How do you think we felt when you left for Canada?". For the first time I understood."



Can you tell us about your wedding?

"There wasn't time for the Banns to be read so we had to pay a visit to the bishop of Chichester to obtain his permission to be married just four days after the War in Europe ended. The bells rang at the beautiful little Preston Park Church in Brighton, for our wedding. It was the first time they had been rung since they had been silenced during the war - the bells were only to be used to warn everyone of a gas attack.

Another cousin, who was in the RAF, was my brides maid and she wore her uniform. My husband had for his best man the husband of my cousin, at whose wedding we met two years earlier. I was the only one in the wedding party not in uniform.

My aunt had a small reception in her home after the service and then we had a bigger party at the Co-op Hall with lots of friends and relatives. Ken had a difficult time getting a room to start off our honeymoon but he

did get a small room. Another cousin also suggested places we could stay for a few days. Each morning we had to listen to the radio to see if Ken's regiment had to return to base."

How did you come to Canada and what are your memories of the trip?

"Ken came back in August of 1945 and I was pregnant when he left. My husband was home in Canada over a year before I came, and when I did arrive I had a baby with me - a son who had yet to meet his father! I stayed with my mother until it was time for me to come to Canada in August of 1946.

My mother came up to London on the train with me and then went back. I remember one girl crying her eyes out at the train station. We were housed in a hotel in London where troops had been staying

We sailed from Southampton on the Queen Mary and had a fairly uneventful trip over. The meals were wonderful. There were four of us in the cabin, all named 'Scott' and we got along very well. However, I was the only one with a baby so when the other three went to see movies or other entertainment I had to stay in the cabin. I had a bottom bunk and the baby slept in a hammock. My son Barry was four months old and brown as a berry from the sun so he was very cute and got lots of attention.

They turned the ball room of the ship into a laundry area. I had one embarrassing thing happen. They gave us disposable diapers and I wasn't sure what to do with the soiled one so I flushed it down the toilet and had to go for help as it plugged and overflowed."

What was the date and memories of your arrival?

"We were at sea five days when we landed at Halifax on August 13, 1946. At first we couldn't land because the water was a bit rough and we had to wait for a tug boat to bring us in. We just hurried through Pier 21 for the train that took the War Brides and their families to various destinations. It took quite a while because we had to 'side-track- for every other train that came along. And we stopped at all the little junctions along the way where, usually, the new husband would be eagerly waiting to take his bride home to meet the family. It became quite a pastime to witness the various reunions.

I was lucky because I had an extra seat for the carry cot that Barry used. I think we were two nights on the train.

I was heading for Toronto, as were many others, and what a crowd was there to greet us at Union Station when we came down the ramp. Many of those waiting were carrying flowers and teddy bears, etc. I soon spotted my Welcoming Committee - my husband, one of his brothers and his brother-in-law (who was the only one with a car in which to drive us to my in-laws home, where they were anxiously awaiting our arrival!). We enjoyed a most hospitable welcome."

Children?

"Barry was born in March of 1946 and after coming to Canada I had two daughters, Janet and Jill. Jill has lived in Truro for twenty-six years and we visited often. We moved to Truro in 2002. We have ten grandchildren and four great-grandchildren."

What were your first impressions of Canada?

"I didn't have much time to notice anything because I was so busy with the baby. The countryside seemed quite flat and boring in places."

Where did you live when you first arrived in Canada?

We stayed with Ken's parents for the first six years. He was one of seven children so they had a big house in North Toronto. His sister and her husband also lived there. Eventually Ken built a house for us under the Veteran's Land Act with the help of many friends who could do carpentry, plumbing and that kind of thing. We finally moved into our new home.

Did your family come to Canada to visit?

"My father never came but my mother came often. Once she started to visit she came every year until she was 91. Once she even went out to visit her two brothers in Saskatchewan.

My brothers have both been for visits. The elder lives in Seattle, Washington and the younger visited several times, including a surprise visit for our 40th anniversary."

Did you or your children have difficulties obtaining Canadian Citizenship?

"No problems. I recall I went to an office in downtown Toronto and it was straight forward."

Adjustment:

"This all happened a very long time ago and I have been very happy here. I still love England but feel that I have been blessed with the best of two worlds. I have become a real 'Canuck', even if people do still say "we can tell you're from the old country" when I speak!"