

Jeanne Wendy Perry
Welsh War Bride
Letitia
April 3, 1946

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
PIER 21



My name is Jeanne Perry and I have lived happily in Estevan, Saskatchewan, Canada for fifty-three years. I am a proud



Canadian. I love my adopted country and I love my native country, that green and pleasant land of Wales.

In the year 1942, I had planned to stay in Birmingham for Xmas. My friends and I had been asked to help at the "Men's Service Club" and we volunteered to work around midnight. A group of Canadian Air Force

men came in, one being Lanc Corporal Allan Perry. Allan asked me for coffee and eventually I agreed to go to a dance with him. Allan was on a training course near Birmingham and we met frequently. We were engaged at Caswell Bay, on the Gower Coast in 1943.

By this time, I had now joined the W.A.A.F., The Women's Auxiliary Air Force and sweep the floors of the hangers. A job that never ended.

Allan and I were married on January 1, 1944 in St. Cynog's Church at Ystradgynlais, South Wales. Our honeymoon was spent at Stratford on Avon. We returned to our stations and continued to meet as often as possible. Eventually, being pregnant, I was discharged from the W.A.A.F. and joined Allan at his station in Bath, England, and again at Winkle, a small place in Devon. When he was sent to Margate I returned to my home at Ystradgynlais.

Our daughter Sheila was born on March 12, 1945. Allan came to see us at the hospital and once at Ystradgynlais before he returned to Canada in 1945.

My notification that I was to go to Canada came in 1946. I had 12 days in which to see everybody and take one last look at all of my favorite places and to say goodbye. My parents traveled to Liverpool with us and we said our good-byes. We boarded a train that took us to the Port of Liverpool and then we boarded the S.S. Letitia on March 25, 1946. Dinner that evening was a sumptuous meal, such rich food. During the night the Letitia moved into the Irish Sea and I became very seasick which lasted the entire journey to Halifax. Finally we had reached dry land: what a relief!

It was in April 03, 1946 when I went through PIER 21. A military personnel who checked my papers informed me of the importance of my "Canadian Travel Certificate". He explained that it was the proof of being a Canadian Citizen. I have kept it safe ever since. For the first time my family have seen and found it to be most interesting.

I was informed that I would board a C.N. Train that took a Northern route. Prior to boarding the train, some Canadian volunteer ladies met us. The lady whom I talked to was a lovely person. She told me that Sheila looked cold in her short coat and she gave me a blue snowsuit which white fur around the hood and bag of toiletries for Sheila and me. Sheila was ill at that time so the lady also got some medicine for her.

The Northern route was "bush" country and where the snow melted I saw black dirt roads. Winnipeg was the largest city we came to and Allan's brother Jim attended University there and came to see us when we stopped at the station. He was very nice to both of us. The arrival in Regina indicated that the end of our journey was in site.

Allan was there, his arms around us both, it felt so good. It was wonderful to be together again. We got to the hotel, left our luggage and took Sheila to see Dr. Brown. He told us not to move here for three days. Allan stayed with Sheila whilst a family friend took me to Robert Simpsons Department Store. What an awe-inspiring store it was to someone from the war-torn British Isles. Gorgeous dresses and the make-up, Wow! There were no crowded line-ups waiting to be served.

Allan had to return to Estevan for a couple of days. His Uncle Truman came to see me. As I could not leave my room, he ordered a lovely dinner to be brought up to my room. He stayed the entire evening and we enjoyed each other. Allan, Sheila and I then traveled to Estevan. We reached Weyburn and had dinner with Allan's Aunt Lil and Uncle Mac

and their daughter Marie. All were delighted to meet us. Finally we arrived at Estevan. It was so good to be at the end of the journey. Although the Perry Family were great to me, that first year was difficult. I was homesick and felt that I did not belong to the community. I followed the advice of a friend who told me that to belong to a community one has to become a volunteer within the community. This I did and still do.

Following the war years, the economy and travel changed. When Sheila was 7 years old and Rick, 3 and ½ years, the three of us spent a summer with my family at Ystradgynlais. My mother came to Estevan in 1957 when Tim was born and Susan, 2 years old, was very ill. My sister Mary, her husband Lyn and Marilyn and David immigrated to Estevan in 1966. My parents came for a Year's Holiday and the following year they also immigrated to Estevan. This was a bonus for me.

I have been fortunate and returned home many times. Allan and I have four children and their spouses, twelve grandchildren and one great grandchild. All have done excellently well and we both love them all. We have always enjoyed great times together.