



150 Stories and Images of Arrival

in Northumberland County

Northumberland County is proud to present

150 Stories and Images of Arrival

in celebration of Canada 150

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This book was produced by Northumberland County. The publication was made possible by the Community Fund for Canada's 150th, a collaboration between Durham Community Foundation, the Government of Canada, and extraordinary leaders from coast to coast to coast.



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DU CANADA
ensemble pour tous



CANADA 150

Canada

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Produced October 2017

Message from the Warden



In celebration of Canada's 150th anniversary, it is with great pleasure that Northumberland County presents this publication '150 Stories and Images of Arrival'.

Herein you will find a collection of accounts from local residents about their own immigration experience, or that of their parents or grandparents. Each narrative is accompanied by a photo of a memento brought to Canada from the immigrant's place of birth, representing the intersection between a former way of life and a new beginning as each individual has integrated into a new community.

This project was conceived and produced as part of Northumberland County's ongoing work through our Immigration Portal, growing and sustaining newcomer business investment and settlement. For this reason, the publication focuses on the stories of Northumberland's more recent newcomer population, which is actively contributing to the vitality of our municipalities.

The broad premise of this initiative, however, is that every person has a story, and every one of these stories makes up the collective history of our community; a history that has deep roots.

Northumberland County is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinabeg. We are honoured to recognize the traditions and outstanding achievements of First Nations that continue to enrich this region. In particular, we recognize the proud heritage of our neighbours of the Alderville First Nation, which has been home to the Mississauga Anishinabeg of the Ojibway Nation since the mid-1830s.

In the late 18th century, the federal government of the day made plots of land available to Empire Loyalists fleeing the British American colonies, who settled in droves to this area, forming the County of Northumberland.

From 1802 to 1849, Northumberland—together with Durham County—formed the Newcastle District. County naturalization registers from this time period show masons, merchants, clothiers and carpenters, all making an oath or affirmation of allegiance to the Crown, as they confirm their intent to reside in and build this community. Many people in Northumberland

today are descendants of these settlers, proudly sustaining the heritage of the region, and contributing their skills and expertise to our prosperous future.

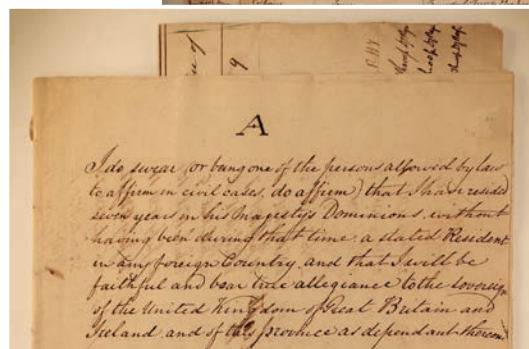
From 1850 to 1973, this area became the United Counties of Northumberland and Durham, until 1974 when the two regions separated, returning Northumberland to the status of standalone county.

Northumberland has evolved in tandem with the nation; our story is complex and nuanced, and is still being written. As we mark a century and a half since Canada's confederation, let us continue to build on our understanding of the many ties that bind this community together. We can do this by sharing stories—like those in this publication—and by sharing in the customs and traditions of our neighbours, appreciating the many facets of what it means to be Canadian.

In this way, together, we will commemorate the proud and varied history of Northumberland County, and 150 years of the true north, strong and free.

Mark Walas

Warden of
Northumberland County



In Memory of Dindin Villarino



Dindin Villarino was Northumberland County's first Immigration Portal Coordinator, responsible for driving immigration investment and settlement to our community.

In this role, she was an absolute force of nature. She formed networks of established local immigrant entrepreneurs to help newcomers get on their feet. She coordinated services to support the settlement of Syrian refugees fleeing war. She created advisory groups to research the needs of immigrant populations to support better informed policy. And she encouraged the celebration of local multiculturalism, bridging gaps in custom and tradition through the launch of universally

understood festivals and events.

It was Dindin's idea to contribute to local Canada 150 celebrations by creating this book; 150 local stories and images of immigration. Dindin believed that recognizing the journey to settlement here, as experienced by some of our residents and their families, was an opportunity to create greater understanding about who we are as a community, and how Northumberland contributes to the national Canadian identity.

In July 2017, Dindin lost a courageous battle with cancer. This project was extremely important to her; she would be honoured that so many people came forward to share their stories, to make this publication possible.

Dindin was, quite simply, an inspiration. She believed in the power of human connection and kindness to create a thriving and inclusive community. With her magnetic personality, her tireless determination, and her huge heart, she made it her mission—both professionally and personally—to ensure this was the welcome newcomers could expect here in Northumberland County. We will honour her memory by striving to fulfill this expectation.

It is with everlasting appreciation for Dindin's immeasurable contribution to our community that Northumberland County dedicates this book in her memory.

Dan Borowec

Director, Economic Development & Tourism



**“The happiest moment
of my life was when
my husband and my
three children arrived
together at the airport.”**

A Worthwhile Struggle

Dolores - Philippines

When my firstborn was one year old, I left the Philippines to become a nanny so I could send money home to my family.

The plan was that I would save money and get established, and then relocate my family to be with me, wherever I put down roots. When I proposed this plan to my husband he understood and agreed—we wanted to create better opportunities for our children than they would have in the Philippines.

Initially, I worked for families in the Middle East. I met interesting people and traveled to new places, but when the first Gulf War broke out I moved back to the Philippines. I had two more children during this time, and then, when my youngest was two years old, I left again. My husband stayed behind and took care of our three small children while I worked internationally to build a future for us. I would go back home every two years for a short visit.

The separation was a real struggle—it was very hard. But we knew we were creating a better future for our kids, so I always kept praying, and I had faith that the plan would work.

After years of working in the Middle East and Asia, I had the opportunity to move to Canada to work for a family in southern Ontario. I knew Canada as a land of immigrants! I knew it would be a good fit.

After four years of living and working in Canada, my application went through to bring my family here to be with me. The happiest moment of my life was when every one of them—my husband and my three children—arrived together at the airport.

All told, we spent 17 years apart. And now, our family is together once again, and we are thriving. The children have either completed or are completing their post-secondary education, my husband is working on his certification to continue his trade as an electrician, I obtained my own certification and employment as a food services worker, and we have a beautiful new grandchild.

Ours is a story of sacrifice but also of fulfillment. We overcame many struggles to fulfill our plan; we did this for our children, and it was incredibly worthwhile in the end.



Made With Love

Kamil & Anna - Syria

“We were born in Damascus, Syria, but had to leave because of the war. We were sponsored to come to here, and arrived in September 2016. We brought items that are very significant to us. This hammered brass cup was designed by my sister, Hanan, and made by craftsmen during the war.” ~ Kamil



“This coffee pot is also a memento from my sister-in-law, designed by her and handcrafted. We use it to make our traditional coffee, which has lots of cardamom. I think our way of making coffee in this pot is special because it allows the coffee smell to spread throughout the place, and it gives our coffee a tasty flavor.” ~ Anna



The Key to Happiness

Ae - South Korea

My husband and I moved to Cobourg in 1991, to be closer to his sister. When we lived in South Korea, I did not have a job. Like many women there, I stayed home to tend to the house. When we first arrived in Canada, I had not thought about getting a job, but I found that more women here worked rather than stayed at home. So, in 1991, I decided to open my own business. I have been running my store for 24 years now.

Since opening my store, I have been able to send small amounts of money home to my brother. He is unfortunately disabled and requires a lot of help. By sending home some money I have tried to watch out for him, as siblings do.

I am now in the process of retiring. Closing my store has been very sad. I love having the little five and 10 cent candies that kids can buy. A few kids who often come in for the candies were upset and even cried when I told them that I was closing the store. It broke my heart and made me cry too, but I am over 60 years old now, and it is time that I retire.

Sometimes, while first living here, I was lonely. Despite not having the best English, I decided to get involved in the community. I volunteered with the YMCA a lot, for many years. I also love to teach Zumba with Thelma Dillon; it brings a big smile to my face. Thelma keeps me busy—she gets me to participate in the Canada Day parade in my Korean dress, and gets me to dance during Multicultural Day. I have not been home to South Korea for 10 years but I hope to visit next year, and bring back a new traditional dress!

I have a few antique items and belongings from home, including two figures of traditional women called haenyo, meaning 'sea women,' who catch food by hand in the ocean. The one in typical dress carries the food home in a basket on her back. The one in the diving clothes holds a jar on her hip that would be used to clean the catch from her net. These women come from an island called Jeju in South Korea, where this is very common. Whenever I see Cobourg beach, I am reminded of the beautiful beaches in Jeju.

After all of my experiences in Northumberland, there is one bit of wisdom I would pass on. It is that anyone who wants to stay young and healthy should be happy, smile, and volunteer; helping people and doing things that make you happy are the keys to a long life.





I have a friend of 46 years living in Cobourg, whom I first met at the airport the day I arrived. We did not know each other, but she took me home with her from the airport, as I had nowhere to stay. I came to Canada for a holiday, and stayed forever.

A Friendly Welcome *Irene - Ireland*

Happy Holiday Memories

Madeline - Sweden

I came to Canada from Sweden with my parents when I was three years old. When we first arrived, we lived in Toronto, joining the local Swedish Lutheran church. All Swedes celebrate the Lucia Festival of Lights as it initiates longer days of sunlight to come after December. Sweden has long days of winter and so celebrates the coming of light.

I was one of the attendants to the woman picked as the “Lucia”. The Lucia wears a crown of candles and a long



white gown and walks into the winter homes with all her attendants. I wore a circle of silver sparkles in my hair and a long white gown with a red ribbon belt. We held a procession in the Ontario legislature and met with the Premier of the Province. This is one of my fondest memories.

Throughout my journey—the move to Canada in 1951, and then my move to Northumberland in 1974—I have kept with me a straw reindeer. This is a traditional Swedish Christmas decoration. It has been in my home since the day I was born, and is still prominently on display during the Christmas season.



Humble Beginnings

Nelia - Portugal

We lived in a remote mountain village in Portugal, where my father was a mason.

Just after I was born in 1971, my father immigrated to Canada by himself with a plan to get settled and bring the rest of us over later. My mother was left to care for myself and my four siblings while my father worked for three years to bring us to Toronto. I was three years old when we joined him again in 1974.

After 36 years of living in Canada, my sister purchased a resort on Rice Lake in 2010. I was quick to follow in 2011 with my six-month-old son, and our



parents moved here in 2017.

Today, I treasure the handmade picks and spades that my father used when a mason in Portugal, as well as my mother's handmade crochet doilies, and antique lanterns. Our family continues to grow and thrive in Canada—in addition to five children, my parents now have 10 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and another one on the way. The mementos from Portugal represent where it all began.



Carving Out a Home

Scott - Scotland

I arrived in Canada in 1957 with little education and no trade, and I joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). My wife, Mary, later joined me and we started a family, moving to various locations for my work. I eventually left the RCAF to start work in furniture restoration.

Disaster struck in 1962 when we lost nearly everything we had in a rental house fire. This picture was one of the only items that survived the blaze: a photo of Mary with her mother and elder sister, taken after the funeral for her father Albert, who was a casualty of WWII.

With nowhere to call home, we moved to Toronto. There, I managed to take on a trade, and I learned a great deal from the skilled tradesmen around me. Over time, I turned this into living. We eventually bought a small house with a workshop on an adjoining lot, and launched a successful restoration business. After working 12-hour days, seven days a week, our business flourished.

In 2000, we were able to retire, selling the house and business. We carved out a piece of the wilderness to build our dream home on a 22-acre piece of woodland property overlooking Presqu'ile Bay in Brighton.


Today, we have six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. We came to Canada with 200 dollars and two suitcases and, with a lot of effort, we have lived the Canadian Dream.






Cooking Through the Generations

Lisa - Netherlands



My grandmother brought this bright orange cast iron pot with her from the Netherlands when she moved to Canada in 1956. It used to be the 'oliebollen' pot—a pot for making the traditional Dutch pastry

similar to a doughnut. Now, I use it to make things like chili. Every time I use it for something like this, I think of my grandmother, and how the use of this pot has changed across three generations.



Stay Focused on Your Goals

Thelma - Philippines



My journey started in 1991, when I came from the Philippines to attend school in Ottawa. When I was leaving the Philippines, my mother gave me a thumb Bible that fits in my wallet. She said, “Keep it with you at all times and it will keep you safe”. 26 years later it is still in my wallet, so it must be working.

During high school, despite my poor English, I worked on schoolwork seven days a week, with a tutor on the weekends, determined to get my diploma. In the end, I felt like I wasn’t ready to graduate, but they handed me my diploma and pushed me out into the world.

I followed in my sister’s footsteps and enrolled in the three-year Business Administration college program. At the beginning of my third year of college in 1994, I met my future husband, and soon after I graduated in 1995, we were married. We opened the very first internet café in Ottawa, and later opened the Filipino Karaoke Bar. Eventually we closed the doors of our karaoke bar, and moved to Northumberland County, where my husband grew up. When we arrived, we started SoundsXtreme.com mobile DJ & Karaoke.

After a while I realized I wasn’t interested in business administration. But it wasn’t until 2005 that I first realized what it was that I did want to do—help take care of people. That was the year my father was diagnosed with dementia. I visited him often at the nursing home, and I could see myself doing what the staff were doing—helping people. My first step was becoming a NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) instructor, and later a trainer of NAMI Instructors. But still with a drive to do more, I decided to take the next big step and enter the nursing program with Loyalist College.

At first, all of my classes were local, but in my final year I had to commute from Bancroft to Loyalist College's Belleville campus. It was a challenge because we had two little boys, and my husband was working seven days a week. Halfway through the program, I became pregnant again and I finished my nursing diploma with three little boys at home.

My husband's grandmother had previously been in the Golden Plough Lodge and it seemed like a great place, so after completing my preceptor requirements at the Northumberland Hills Hospital, I applied at the Golden Plough Lodge. I am very happy to have accomplished my goal of becoming a nurse, and to have found my place at the Golden Plough Lodge.

With three boys at this time, we decided to try one more time, thinking we were bound to have a girl. We ended up being blessed with our fourth boy. It made sense to try one more time, as surely the odds were in favour of a having a girl. We had our fifth boy. Sadly, he passed away upon birth and is now in Heaven. Today, we still live here in Northumberland County where we are raising our four boys.

My favourite part of living in Canada is the opportunity that exists for everyone. You just have to remember 'don't give up'. If you have a goal, stay focused on it and keep moving forward because the only way to fail is to stop trying. This has gotten me to where I want to be in life.

Northumberland County is our home—a really great place to be. It is the most inclusive place I have ever been in, in my life. I am very proud to work alongside my husband, promoting multiculturalism in Northumberland County. I love working with our international friends and cultural groups on Multicultural Day, Canada Day and many other events throughout the year. I am very proud to be a part of Northumberland County.



A Painting Worth a Thousand Words

Keith - Jamaica



My single mom moved us from Jamaica to Montreal in 1977, in search of a better life. It was a huge challenge to adapt, arriving in Montreal in the dead of winter, and with hardly anyone around who looked like us. However, we just put our best foot forward and learned to trust and believe.

All these years later, Montreal is still home, and I keep this painting of Old Montreal to remind me of the things I love.



As the adventurous one in my family, I moved to Cobourg with my wife in 2014, never having heard of this place before. Nevertheless, I LOVE it here. It is a very welcoming community.



The Rewards of Childhood Travels

Pat - Burma

My mother and I fled Burma in 1942 during the Japanese invasion. All we had was a small suitcase. My mom left her family and was never to see any of them again. My father stayed in Burma to fight and had to flee across the Himalayas to safety.

A photo album, a cigarette box and a flag are all we have left of our life there. We stayed in India until 1946 and then moved to England, my father's homeland. I remember, as a little girl, the sights and sounds of India, and recall how kind and friendly people were to us.

England was a huge change for my mother, my sisters and me. For my mother, it was getting used to war-time rationing, and learning how to sew and knit since clothing was difficult to come by. For us, it was getting accustomed to going to school. Sadly, I lost my ability to speak the other languages I once could, but I loved going to school, and later became a teacher myself!

Because life in England was so hard after the war, Dad decided to make a new life in Canada, and we all moved to Montreal in 1956. When we moved to Montreal, we had a chance to learn a second language and to learn about our new country's history. It has been very exciting to have lived in four different countries and to have had such varied experiences.



Power of Perseverance

Glenn - Netherlands

My grandparents owned a convalescent home in Holland, the Netherlands, caring mostly for the elderly. It was there that my father spent the early part of his life.

When the Second World War broke out, the home afforded the family some protection, with the military allowing them to continue operations. Because of this, they were able to hide, throughout the war, a few local Jewish people who were seeking shelter from the Nazis.

Shortly after Holland was liberated, my grandfather, fearing another war in Europe, decided to move the family to Toronto. This was a huge adjustment for them all. They had been very successful in Holland, and had to leave everything behind to start anew.

It was a struggle, initially. They knew very little English, and so they were instantly met with the stigma of being immigrants. My father, around nine years





old at the time, had a difficult transition into the school system; my grandparents, into the workforce. They rented an apartment on Bloor Street—a significant change in lifestyle—and my grandparents eventually got jobs at Eaton's. It took them all years to adjust.

Nevertheless, the family was determined to integrate—to learn the language, fit in, and become contributing members of the community. While continuing to work at Eaton's, my grandfather went back to school. I am particularly proud of this. He was in his mid-40's, had limited knowledge of the language, but over time he completed a degree in physiotherapy. Together, he and my grandmother established a physio practice that grew to be very successful. Eventually, they bought a home in Don Mills.

What has always struck me about my grandparents' story is that they left everything, arrived with nothing, put in a ton of hard work, and rebuilt their lives. It was this commitment to do better for themselves that inspired me to get through my finance designation. I was working and raising a family at the time, so it was incredibly challenging, but they reinvented themselves under very difficult conditions, and I was determined to do the same.

When my grandfather passed away, my grandmother gave me his signet ring. I wear it, always, as a reminder of the power of perseverance.



I brought Buddha with me from Thailand because I believe in him. I have three Buddhas. They are different colours that each mean something. I take them everywhere I live.

The Buddhas

Belle - Thailand

Passing On Passions

Tom - Netherlands



He's no longer with us, but my Dad had big dreams and an admirable work ethic. As one of fifteen children born to a school headmaster in the Netherlands, he was obliged to become self-sufficient at a time when men were expected to accomplish great things.

Being a man with a passion for photography and electronics, my father built a radio transmitter that served him well during his time with the Dutch Resistance. His training and skill as a stationary engineer subsequently enabled him to travel the world aboard a ship, which was how he was able to purchase a Kodak 35mm camera during a stop in Beaumont, Texas in 1948. I inherited both my father's camera and his love of photography.

My parents decided to immigrate to Canada—seen as the home to those who liberated Holland—in 1953, and



they brought the camera and a shoe anvil along with their belongings. The shoe anvil was well used, as people in the 1950s were expected to repair their own shoes rather than replace them. While I never acquired the knack for shoe repair, I still prominently display both the camera and anvil in my home; proud mementos of my family's history. Photography however, still continues to play a big role in my life and the lives of my father's grandchildren.

Everyone in the family is grateful for the many sacrifices my parents made so many years ago. We—including my now 91 year-old mother—are all exceptionally happy to call Canada home.



A Dream Come True

Emilio - Venezuela



My husband and I moved to Canada in 2007 after a long battle with American immigration laws.

Originally from Venezuela, I brought with me a piece of pottery that reminds me of the life and the beautiful country I left behind, today tarnished with a very erosive dictatorial government.

Living in Toronto for seven years, we were happy to discover that Canada is a country full of diversity and acceptance, and our lives quickly became filled with friends.

While looking for a place to suit a family lifestyle and raise children in 2012, we discovered the beauty of Trent Hills. Here, we have been able to create the life that we dreamed of when we started dating fifteen years ago.



Adventuring Overseas

Wendy - Great Britain



My father served with the British Navy. After sailing up the Saint Lawrence, he convinced my mother that we should emigrate to Canada. He felt Canada had so much more to offer his wife and children than the UK did at that time.

My mother is a romantic and wanted our family to arrive by ship, just as many immigrants had prior to air transportation. This photo is of us on-deck, on The Empress of England; the ship was making her first crossing of the season. The crossing was very rough and apparently we narrowly missed icebergs off the coast of Newfoundland, before landing in Halifax in 1966. Upon arrival, we took a train to Cambridge, Ontario where we settled for a few years.

My family traveled the world after this, but always considered Canada home.



Intergenerational Journey

Martha - Peru



Getting to Canada was not as simple as my husband, Michael, and I thought it would be. We left Peru in June 1978. We were not married, as we thought it would be better that I meet his family and spend some time in Canada first, to be sure that I would be able to live in such a different climate and society.

Our plan to fly through the United States and on to Canada did not work. The U.S. Immigration denied me the transit visa I needed to be able to change planes and travel on to Canada. So we changed our route, travelling through Venezuela and the Bahamas.

When I arrived in Canada, Canadian Immigration denied my entry—in part, because the U.S. Immigration had previously denied my transit visa through their country. An adjudicator here finally found that I should be granted a tourist visa. It then took four



years before I finally received my Landed Immigrant status.

When I came to Canada in 1978, I brought a hand crocheted ‘cubre-cama’, or bedspread. This fancy cover was hand-crocheted by my grandmother, Christina, who was born a slave in Peru and died at the age of over 100 years old. She made it using a ‘pita’, or string. Over the years, the bedspread has bleached out and softened from repeated washings. It resembles a quilt, in that many star-shaped figures have been joined together to form the cover. I still have this ‘cubre-cama’—it has weathered its own long journey. I will pass it on to my children one day.





“The night of the attacks, we believed we heard fireworks and thought there must have been celebrations happening nearby—unfortunately our first thoughts were wrong.”

The Love & Strength of Family

Sossan - Afghanistan

I spent the first 20 years of my life in Kabul, Afghanistan. I enjoyed spending time with my family and friends, and going to school. I had just started going to university in the spring of 1992, when the Government of Afghanistan collapsed and the Mujaheddin began to take power.

The night of the attacks, we believed we heard fireworks and thought there must have been celebrations happening nearby—unfortunately our first thoughts were wrong. They shot rockets and machine guns; happiness and peace no longer touched the ground of Kabul.

The next morning my younger sister was shot. She was lucky and only her left arm was injured. At first, we saw her start to yell and cry, and then my father and mother noticed that she had been shot.

They rushed her to the hospital but unfortunately, due to the war, there were only a few nurses and doctors in the hospital. My father paid a doctor extra money in order to perform surgery on my sister's arm because she had lost so much blood. On top of that, the hospital was running out of anesthesia, and my father had to make a trip to the drugstore through the war-torn streets, putting his life in danger among the rockets, bombs and armed people in order to save my sister.



The clocks seemed to stop moving during the nine hours my family and I waited, while my poor sister was in surgery. She survived. My sister stayed in the hospital for 10 days before being discharged. After that, my father left everything and took us to Pakistan.

When we reached the border, it was closed. There were a thousand Afghan people waiting there. In the past, my father had crossed this border with dignity, as a diplomat, but his time he lay down on the ground with a blanket and mattress without a second thought in order to save us.

When we were finally admitted to Pakistan, we lived there for seven years. We lost our freedom, and my mother, sister and I had to wear black hijabs, which was very difficult for us.

After the first four or five years, I got a job in an Afghan school that was established with support from an organization in an Arabic country. They were very strict about the hijab. I accepted this inside the school, but I could not accept it outside, and refused to wear it at family functions and wedding parties. For this, I was written up three times, and our lives were once again in danger. For the second time, my parents had to think about moving.

Luckily, two of my sisters were already living in Canada by this time, and they saved us. After a long journey, I arrived in Canada in 1999 at 26 years old. This rug made the entire journey with me.

All Aboard the Ivernia

Brian & Jacqueline - England



We moved from England to Canada in 1959 when we were in our early twenties. We journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean aboard the ship Cunard Ivernia. Being November, it was a very rough trip indeed.

Our introduction to this new country was quintessentially Canadian. Our ship landed first in Quebec City, where passengers were allowed to disembark for a few hours. We passed the time enjoying snowball fights with the other passengers!

To commemorate our journey, we framed the log from our trip, an image of the Ivernia, a piece of our suitcase, and our luggage tags. While the trip may have been rough, the special memories are ones we still treasure.





A Shining Memory

Farida - Afghanistan

“In April 2017, I came to Canada and I am happy because women’s rights are respected here.”

“This ring is very
valuable to me because
it is a gift from my mother
and it reminds me of her.”



With Only Books In Hand

Dan - Austria-Hungary/Ukraine



I am the only child of Eastern European parents.

My mother's parents came to Canada from the Austro-Hungarian Empire—the eastern reaches—just before the First World War. They settled in Northern Ontario in a place called Garcon, outside of Sudbury. Her father worked in the mines and her mother ran a boarding house, with my mother Catherine coming along in 1923.

My father Peter came from the Ukraine in an area of Eastern Europe where the border between Poland and Ukraine was always moving, depending upon the politics of the day. When the Second World War began, his village marked the dividing line between German and Russian forces, and ultimately became the staging area for the German advance into Russia.

My father, along with the other young men in his village, was forced into labour. After a partisan raid on the German camp resulted in German military deaths, all of those young men fled and went into hiding. The German response was to gather all the women and children of that village, march them into the village square, and demand they give up their sons, or else.

All the young men, including my father, came out of hiding and were packed into box cars and moved to western Germany. He remained there for the duration of the war as forced farm labour. He benefited from being with a devout Lutheran family who treated him with compassion.

At the War's end, my father was free but displaced. Going home was not a possibility. Now under Soviet rule, a common practice was to relocate entire villages/communities in exchange with other villages in order to diminish cultural identities. My father's family members went from the western Ukraine to the Baltic coast.

My father ended up in a displaced person's camp in Bremen, West Germany. It was home to 35,000 men and women from all of Eastern Europe. It was home for him from 1945–1947.

In 1947, there was an opportunity to come to Canada through a work program. He set sail for Halifax, arriving in September at Pier 21. He had with him two suitcases; they were both filled with books. He traded shirts for bread

and all that remained were the books, including this treasured Ukrainian bible. He then went on by rail to a lumber camp outside of Fort William. That was the beginning of his immigration journey—a new country, a winter and cold that he had never seen or felt before, another new language to learn, and a family he would not see again for another twenty-five years.

Once the work program ended, he journeyed to Oshawa where there was a considerable Ukrainian settlement, and friends who had survived the war from his own town or nearby villages.

In the early fifties, during a summer shut-down of the manufacturing plant where he worked, my father went to work the tobacco fields of southern Ontario. By this time, my mother's parents had made their way south and were running their own tobacco farm.

That is where my parents' paths crossed. They eventually became tobacco farmers themselves. They stayed in Norfolk County until 2008, when I moved them to Northumberland to be with me. My mother will soon turn 94. My father died in 2013, at the age of 91.



A Wedding to Remember

Janice & Joe - England/Scotland

In 1951, my fiancé Joe immigrated to Canada, and I joined him from England nine months later at the age of 20.

We got married in Toronto only three days after I arrived in Montreal. With the wedding being in Canada, my parents were unable to attend. Instead, my maternal uncle from

Niagara Falls gave me away—only one hour after I met him for the first time!

I knew nobody at the wedding; Joe arranged the ceremony and paid for the fourteen guests to attend. With only forty dollars in the bank after our honeymoon in Muskoka, we started our life in Canada.

In the 1960s, we lived in Northumberland County for a few years before leaving and later returning again in 1988. During our time in Northumberland in the sixties, I imported some antiques from my stepbrother in order to sell them in Cobourg. One of the items was a

copper vase, which I decided to keep. Although I did not bring it with me from England, it reminds me of my country and the warmth of home.

Today, Joe and I have just celebrated our 65th anniversary and have five married children, twelve grandchildren, and four great grandchildren, with two more on the way.



Mosaic of Memories

Mahmoud - Syria



We were sponsored to come to Canada from Syria in 2016.

We brought with us an antique tray with mosaics, crafted in Damascus, Syria by skilled workers. It is made of strong wood and features an image depicting the columns of the ancient city of Palmyra, from the Kingdom of Palmyra.



On Destiny, Resilience and Taking Chances

Randy - South America/Holland



There was always a lot of optimism in our house. Because of his journey, my dad always had an approach to life that everything would work out. This infused my own life with a sense of destiny. When you grow up in an environment where your parents have taken such a big step to make a place for themselves, it impacts how you are raised.

My dad grew up in a Dutch colony in South America called Suriname; my mom in Amsterdam, Holland. My dad joined the Dutch navy and moved to Holland for training as an engineer for submarines, which is how my parents met.

One of my favourite mementos is a portrait of my parents from this time period. They would have been around 19 years old. When I look at this portrait, I think of my parents in their youth, and how at that point in their lives, they were just trying to make their way in the world, having no idea of the journey that was ahead of them.

In 1963, my parents immigrated to Canada with my two siblings. Family members of theirs, who already lived in Peace River, Alberta, sponsored them to come.

My parents were—are still—very resilient. Dad didn't have a job lined up, so he became a house painter, did other odd jobs—did what he had to do for years until he could get a job that lined up with his actual training. Shortly after I was born, my dad secured an engineering job in Montreal that was suited to his training, so we left Alberta

and headed to Quebec, off on yet another journey.

My parents firmly believed in the dream that was pervasive throughout Europe after the war—North America was seen as a land of opportunity. There was freedom in being able to come here and redefine yourself; you could work hard and make something of yourself no matter your background. My parents are constantly reaffirming that this opportunity marks the biggest difference between their native countries and Canada. There is no way they could have achieved the success they did, had they stayed behind.

Part of the reason my dad wanted to come to Canada was to escape the religious, economic and racial divisions of his homeland. He didn't feel those limitations here—on who he was or who he could be. And this shaped how he viewed people. One thing my dad always told me: Don't ever be intimidated by anyone. People are just 'people'.

This was the philosophy he pushed forward for all of us, and I've really carried this with me into my adult life and my career as an OPP detective. I always try to look at people for who they are, and not as representative of someone or something else.

My parents' journey had a tremendous influence on how I made my own way in this world; the lessons they shared propelled me to take chances. My hope is that, in sharing these lessons with my own children, they in turn become reflective about their opportunities, and find a way to go out into the world and communicate with people from all walks of life.



Pride for the Past

Lynda - England

I moved to Canada with my family when I was only one year old.

During the Second World War, my father was in the British army and was captured by the Germans. My mother, who lived in London at the time, was billeted out to the country.

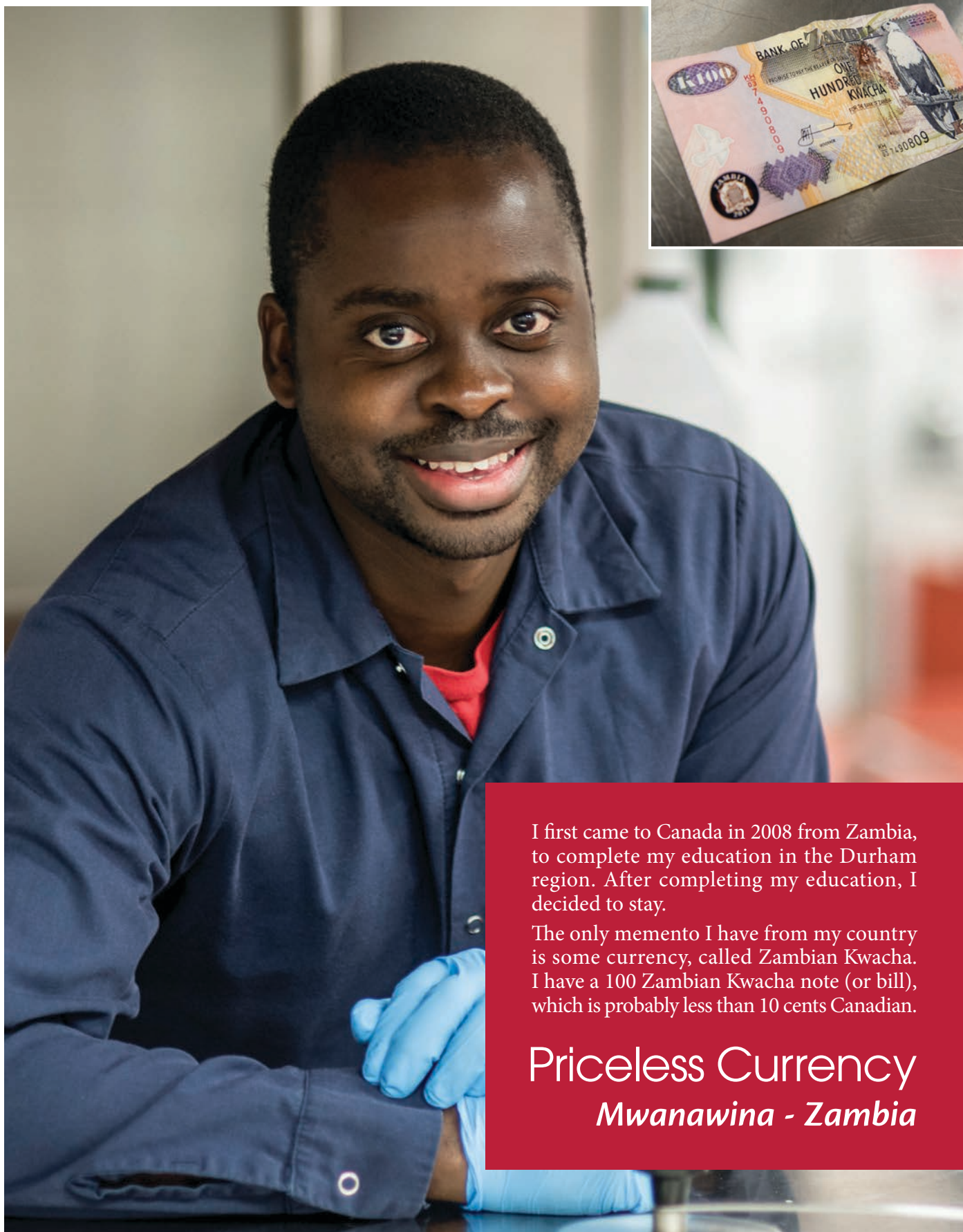
After surviving the war, they bravely abandoned the life they had built in England in order to come to Canada in 1955 and start anew. They believed that this would create opportunities for a better life for our family. I have always admired the strength and courage that it must have taken them to leave their own families and embark on this journey.



My parents preserved many items from our crossing that capture the significance of this step—our British Birth Certificates, Landed Immigrant Cards, and even a dinner menu from the Queen Elizabeth, the ship that brought us to Canada. Most interesting, for me, is a telegram that my paternal grandmother, aunt and uncle sent to my mother at the Southhampton Docks in England the day we sailed. It reads “Good luck and best wishes for your future”; so much meaning in so little space!

My parents always instilled in us pride in our British heritage. Nevertheless, they firmly believed they had made the right decision, immigrating to Canada to seek a new life.





I first came to Canada in 2008 from Zambia, to complete my education in the Durham region. After completing my education, I decided to stay.

The only memento I have from my country is some currency, called Zambian Kwacha. I have a 100 Zambian Kwacha note (or bill), which is probably less than 10 cents Canadian.

Priceless Currency

Mwanawina - Zambia



The 'Settlers Effects' Connection

Marie & Ed - USA



We arrived in Sarnia, Ontario in 1971 with a U-Haul trailer full of our belongings and a 'Settlers Effects' document that outlined each item in our possession.

This document has become an important memory of our journey from the United States. I have even begun writing a memoir piece about it, after recently rediscovering it in an old filing cabinet.

In writing our immigration story, I have connected it to the stories of others, particularly about the possessions listed in the Settlers' Effects documents, their significance, and what happened to some of them.

In particular, I am exploring the connection between our journey, and that of the family who built our historic, octagonal house, back in 1853. Both families emigrated from the United States, but in different centuries.



Molding the Future

Melanie - England



I have been making pottery nearly all my life; I started throwing on the wheel at school when I was twelve. For my 40th birthday, my husband bought me a new wheel, which is my pride and joy. I couldn't possibly leave it behind when we immigrated to Canada in 2011.

I had been a nurse in England, but found it was difficult to get registered as a nurse here in Canada. Instead, I decided to turn my pottery hobby into a business. This September will be my fifth anniversary and I haven't looked back!

This September I will also be participating in the Northumberland Hills Studio tour for the second time this year. I regularly host workshops within the community and participate in the Downtown Cobourg events too. I have been very lucky and had many opportunities to integrate into this very artsy and culturally rich community.

A Bright Future

Maria - Colombia



My immigration story is a love story. I met the love of my life thanks to my cousin. We first knew each other via email, then chat, then he came to visit Colombia, stayed a week, left and came back two months later with a marriage proposal.

Canada was the first foreign country I visited in my life. After I got married, I was granted a single-entry visa before getting the residency visa a few months later.

When I arrived the first time, in March, Canada looked grey and cold. I met most of my husband's family on this trip to Montreal and Quebec city. We



visited a sugar-shack, which was very heart-warming, but also very culturally different (food, music, customs, dog-sleighs)!

On my second trip, in August, Canada had become very green and hot. This showed me how things can dramatically change here!

That was 13 years ago. Today, this wooden hand-made lamp—made by a friend of mine—reminds me of home. It represents hard work and the spirit of enterprise that moves Colombians, while of course serving as a reminder of my friend, and helping me read in the evenings like I did back home.


We moved to Northumberland in 2012, and now have two children born here! I look forward to a bright future.





A Universal Language

Sergio - Costa Rica




I was born in the hot, humid, rural area of Golfito, Costa Rica, in a banana company enclave near the Panamanian border. There were not many distractions in the area. When my father taught me the game of chess at seven years old, it became an instant hobby.

When I immigrated to Canada in 1991, I brought my chess library with me, along

with a chess table made in Costa Rica. Chess became a universal language through which I could communicate.

Now, as a volunteer with Horizons of Friendship, I organize chess games in the community—at schools, at the mall—in order to engage others to learn this great game. Language is never an obstacle to play!



Entering a New World

Judita - Romania

This photo of my Jewish great-grandparents has followed me from country to country throughout my immigration journey, and has been tangible proof of hope and endurance.

It was taken in 1885 on the day of their engagement. Of their six children, three would experience the hell of Auschwitz; one of them being my grandfather and his two daughters, Eva and Judit. Eva, my mother, lived to bring me into this world. Her sister, Judit, whose name I bear, never did come back.

The photograph lies for me at the crossing between the old world—the trekking from the Middle East to the Transylvania of my birth—and the New World, the Canadian land and



culture that welcomed and adopted me. I also keep a letter I cherish, written by the famous 'homme de lettres' Robertson Davies, that attests to the fact that the transition between the familiar culture and the 'foreign one' was often onerous. Davies responded with wisdom and empathy to my distressed call: that of the misunderstood, invisible immigrant.

This letter became the turning point in my Canadian journey. It helped me shed the 'victim' skin and grow into a more complex, confident person, focused on gifting my skills rather than expecting to be understood unconditionally and completely.



The March of the Frogs

Gwynn - Zimbabwe

One of the oddities that made it into my purse the day I left Zimbabwe for Canada in 1982 was a small green and yellow clay frog. Thirty five years on, I still have it. My artist mother sculpted that frog, although it is not always her it reminds me of. More often it returns me to the landscape that shaped me. Like a movie in my mind, I see again the annual march of frogs.

The rainy season burst in November, first huge splats crashing into the dust. Then a solid curtain of water drawn across the sky. Brown torrents cut down every gully. Dry river beds churned, water rising foot by foot, tossing the debris of winter. As the storm moved on, an uneasy calm descended.

Then a groaning: a deep muffled rumble at first until a mighty choir of voices sang from every corner of the garden. The dank earth erupted like bubbling oatmeal, and emerging from hibernation to greet the rain came—the frogs! Brilliant green tree frogs, speckled toads, common garden frogs. With one mind, they hopped, ran, jumped and waddled to the water.

But greatest of all were the giant yellow-bellied bullfrogs: twelve inches across, round and squat, with stretched grins and wide-set eyes, like green and yellow Citroen cars rising on hydraulics on fat angular legs. Some ballooned their yellow throats and sent smaller frogs scurrying. Others wrestled, gripping with toothless gums, bulging and sagging, twisting in bounding arcs, and hurling their opponents over their shoulders.

In Canada, now, I listen for spring peepers, discover frozen toads beneath the last of autumn leaves, admire leopard frogs and listen to a new set of tree frogs and bull frogs. Wherever I am on this earth, nature gives me peace.



Picturing History

Mary - Estonia

At 8 years-old, I joined my family in crossing the Atlantic Ocean, on our way to a new place and new experiences. It was a complex journey.

In the middle of the night in December of 1943, my mother and I left Estonia and boarded a small open boat, crossing the Gulf of Finland to be near my father, who was fighting for the Finnish Underground. All we took with us was a loaf of bread that my grandmother had baked, and some photographs and postcards.

A year and a half later, my parents and I—along with our photographs—boarded another boat;





this time a three-masted schooner with over 600 people on board, heading for Sweden. The journey was not a smooth one; we got caught in a terrific storm. The mast broke and the engines failed. Nevertheless, thanks to the skill of the sailors aboard, we landed in northern Sweden three days later.

In 1951, our family—including my new brother and sister—boarded an ocean liner for Canada, our photographs still safely tucked into an album.

It was not a pleasant voyage; I was dreadfully seasick crossing the Atlantic. The first day I started to feel better was the day that we entered the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. It was a bright sunny August day and I recall being amazed by the beautiful scenery. We landed in Quebec City and took a train to Hamilton, Ontario. I still remember my mom and dad wondering where all the people were as they traveled through miles and miles of pristine countryside.

Through it all, I had my photographs. They remain very important to me, today.

The Legacy of the Journey

Derrick - Lithuania/Czechoslovakia



My father was born in Prokols, Memel, Lithuania in 1926, and my mother in Lucky, Slovakia in 1924. Both considered themselves to be German, their respective towns having maintained the language and culture for many generations.

In fact, even as a child in Canada, my brother and I wore Lederhosen —leather shorts that are a staple in the wardrobes of German boys and men, even today.

German aggression during WWII caused my parents to flee to Germany as refugees, never to return to their homes again. My father joined the German Navy in 1943, and was severely wounded in 1945, becoming an American prisoner of war in France until he was released in 1947.

My parents met while working together in an American military depot in Germany, and married in Frankfurt in 1950. While residing in Germany, my mother taught home economics to high



school students and my father studied for—and received—certification as a tool and die maker.

These professions qualified my parents to immigrate to Canada as refugees, which they did in 1952. My father had been granted a job with the then-DeHavilland Aircraft in Downsview, Ontario, from which he retired 40 years later.

In 1959 my parents bought their first house in Weston, Ontario and in 1971 they bought a woodland property in Campbellville, Ontario on which they built their second home. They resided there until their deaths in the mid-2000's.

Today, my partner Paul and I live in Warkworth. Our two children and their families—including three grandchildren—have homes here as well; the legacy of my parents' journey.



A Startling Change of Scenery

Margarete - Brazil

The first time I came to Canada, I was travelling from my home in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to visit my sister in Moncton, New Brunswick.

I will never forget the sight of the white ground upon landing, in February; all of those colourful houses resting on what I thought was a salt flat! Of course it was snow, but having never seen this before, I could not understand what I was looking at. My only context was the seashore salt flats.

I fell in love with Canada during that trip. After all the immigration papers were in order, I arrived my second time in Canada, again in February but this time clear that it was snow and not salt covering everything!

One of the things I brought with me when I immigrated was jewelry made by my uncle; a reminder of the home and life that I left. I have made a new life here though, over the last 44 years. For 38 of these years, I have been married to my Finnish-born husband, and have two children and three stepchildren.

Of course, I am still very fond of my birth country, but I love Canada, and I love Canadians for their peacefulness. And all these years later, I still love the snow.



Building a Path to Success

Peter - Greece

My father faced a future in Greece with limited opportunity. After the Second World War, Europe was struggling, and although his family was fine, financially, he was the second-born son; the family's possessions would ultimately go to his older brother.

My father had heard that Canada was a land of opportunity—you could work hard and get ahead. He wanted to be his own person and build his own future, so he left with his friends for this new world, immigrating in 1953 at the age of 20.



Learning a new language and fitting in was difficult, but he was always most proud of how he overcame this struggle and went on to be successful. He had only 25 dollars in his pocket when he landed on the east coast, but somehow he made his way to Montreal.

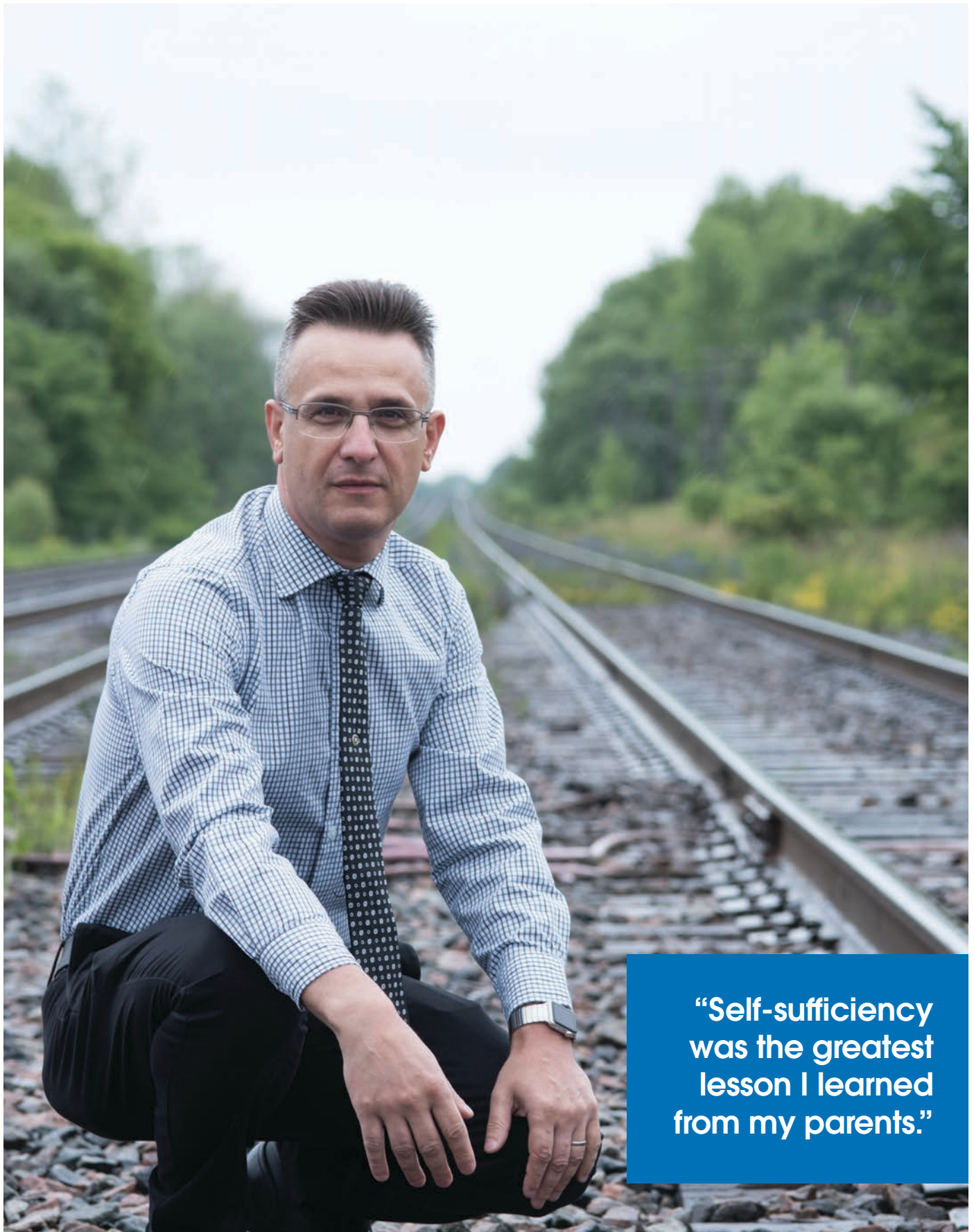
Over those first few years he worked on the railroad, he picked tobacco, he washed dishes in other people's restaurants, always saving his money. After he and my mother married in 1959, they bought their very first restaurant. They were so proud of mastering their own destiny.

Once I was 11 years old, I began washing dishes in the restaurant every day after school. This instilled in me,

very early, a strong work ethic. I learned that work equaled money, and that this equaled opportunity.

I made 25 dollars every week and, following my parents' example, I saved a lot of this. When I was 16 I decided I wanted to buy a car. My father helped...by taking me to the bank to sign a car loan. So I took out a loan for the car and I then learned about debt!

Self-sufficiency was the greatest lesson I learned from my parents. They charted a course, worked incredibly hard, and controlled their own destiny. That forever shaped who I am.



**“Self-sufficiency
was the greatest
lesson I learned
from my parents.”**

Photos of the Past

Luz Ofelia - Colombia

I was born in Colombia, South America, and came to Canada in 2001. I came with my husband and my 15-month old son, giving birth to my second son in Canada.

I became a Canadian on Canada Day. That moment was a very special event for our family. I love Canada as my new home and I am very thankful for the greatness of this country; its community, culture and diversity. I enjoy travelling with my family and in my free time I enjoy going on short trips, canoeing and kayaking in the beautiful places that Northumberland and surrounding areas offer. I am so proud to be Canadian.

My photo albums are special to me because they hold memories from my past and I am able to share these memories with my children and friends. Through the images, my children can see how big our family is and they can learn about our relatives, as well as the places I had the opportunity to visit.

Today, I work at the Cobourg office of the New Canadians Centre. I am the Office Administrator and Settlement Counselor, arranging settlement services and organizing a variety of programs and activities for newcomers.

I enjoy helping people from different backgrounds; I have empathy for the challenges newcomers face. I encourage newcomers to not give up and to be patient when starting a new life in Canada. Things will come with time, step-by-step.

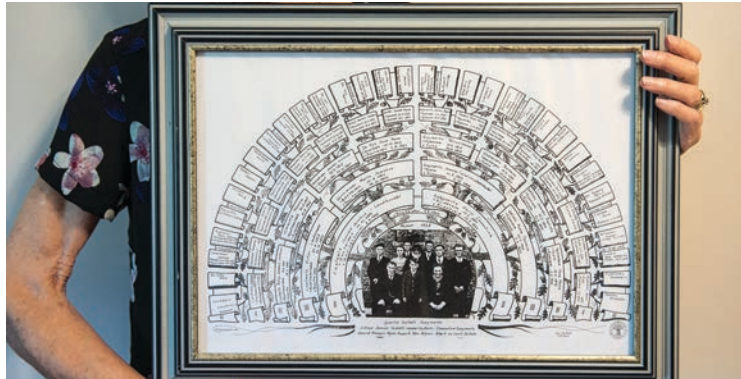


Familial Foundations

Suzanne - Belgium

This family tree connects me to my roots in Belgium. The picture, taken in 1938, is of my father's parents and siblings. In this ancestral tree, my father's generation is recognized as the first generation. The second generation is his parents, including their dates and locations of birth, death and marriage. The third to sixth generations flesh out the tree; the earliest date listed is 1730. Not one entry is missing and I am a descendent of each of the persons named in these generations! It follows that I am 'related' to all the offspring of these ancestors.

My parents, Albert and Emerentia Casteels, immigrated from Belgium to Canada in 1954 with seven children, the oldest 11 years old. Subsequently my four youngest siblings were born. For four years our family settled in the Stratford area before moving in 1958 to start a tobacco farm in the Centreton area.



The transition into Canadian culture was not easy for my family. Not only did we have to learn a new language, but we also experienced culture shock in aspects of our daily life, such as the difference in education and gender roles. Our family also no longer had a sense of financial security, no extended family nearby for support, and we had lost our sense of community. We struggled with feelings of isolation in this new place.

However, we did have the support of each other, and our new life became centered around family, farm work, and going to church on Sunday.

There are now four more generations of our family here in Canada: my parents' children, grandchildren, great- and great-great grandchildren. The family tree continues to grow.







I was sponsored to come to Canada from Syria in the fall of 2016. When I came, I brought with me a 51-year old watch from my father, which he gave to me when I was 10 years old.

I keep this watch in a safe place. I have had it for 30 years. It is like a piece of my heart.

Timeless Treasure

Ziad - Syria

Powerful Perseverance

Marta - Colombia

I met my husband in Bogota, Colombia, in 2001. After we married, I moved to Canada in January 2006 to be with him.

It was very clear, upon arriving, that learning English was a priority. In Colombia, I was a teacher for over 27 years and a choreographer of traditional Latin American dances at school. In Canada though, my teaching credentials were not recognized. I realized that I could not translate all my knowledge into English, so I attended classes at Sir Sandford Fleming College to complete my Academic and Career Entrance Certificate, and study a language instruction program. It took me over three years to complete the whole process.

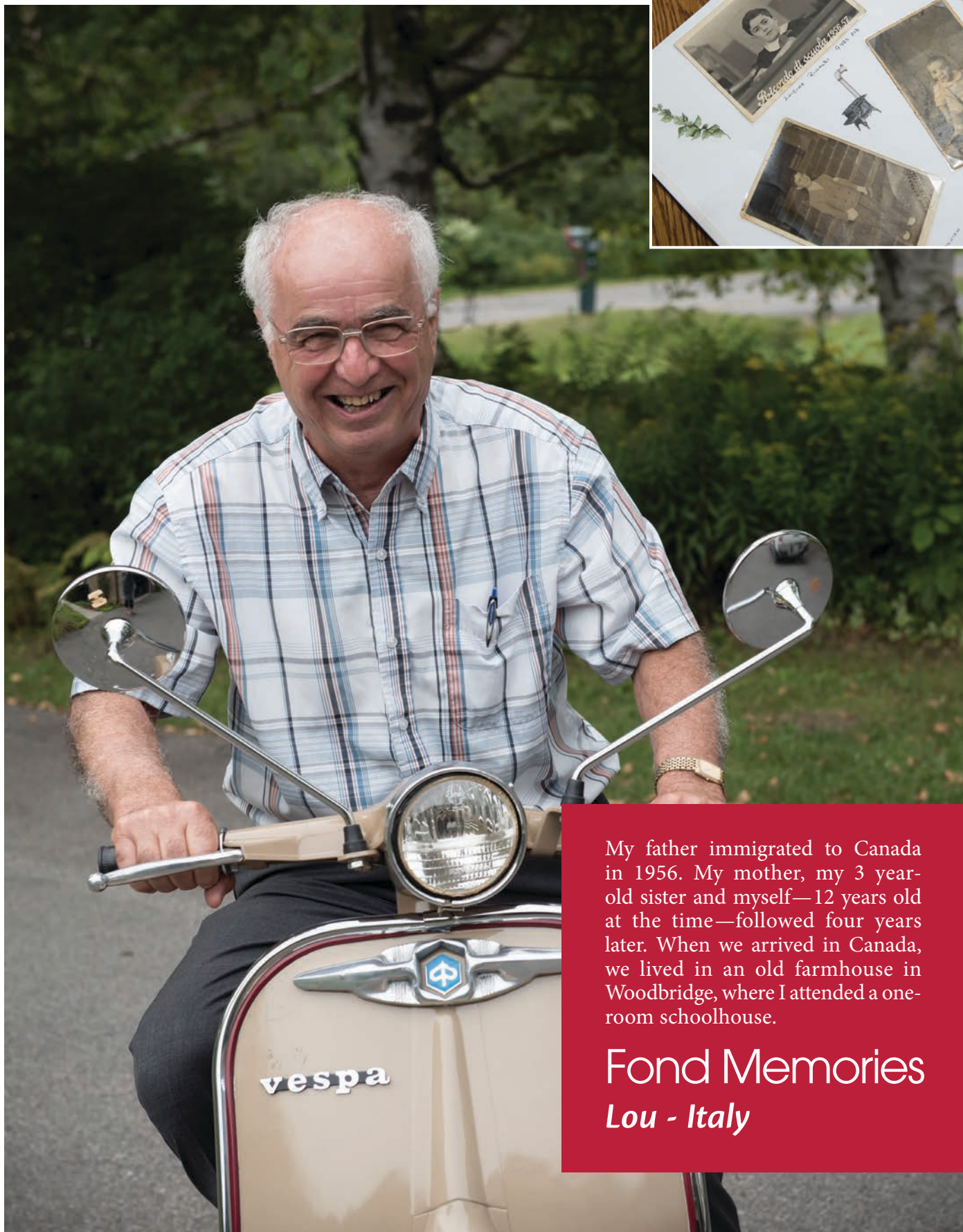
I began volunteering as a Spanish teacher at the college, and working at the Cobourg YMCA in its International Initiatives program. I also volunteered for a number of local organizations and community events. I needed to keep myself busy because I missed my family and my two daughters back in Colombia.

After I had been here for five years, both of my daughters immigrated. I was terrified for them, remembering the long journey toward professional accreditation. They both had professional experience in multinational companies, though, were fluent in English, and had the advantage of French proficiency; they adjusted well.

Throughout my 11 years here, I have often taken strength from the items I brought with me from Colombia that are a link to my Colombian identity: a traditional folkloric dance dress and two little figurines made by artisans, which are symbols of my people. These mementos connect me with events of the present day, such as National Patriotic days.

Today, I work with the International Students department at the college, supporting students from all different backgrounds. This work is important to me; I feel as though I am contributing to local diversity and multiculturalism. Throughout my journey I have learned the importance of remembering that we all have a past, and we can build a future with roots from this past.





My father immigrated to Canada in 1956. My mother, my 3 year-old sister and myself—12 years old at the time—followed four years later. When we arrived in Canada, we lived in an old farmhouse in Woodbridge, where I attended a one-room schoolhouse.

Fond Memories

Lou - Italy

Dreams and Determination

Eileen - Hong Kong



After the war, there were very few jobs for young people in the British Colony of Hong Kong. My newlywed parents, Jean and Louie, decided to immigrate to Canada.

Dad had previously travelled and worked in Toronto for a few years when he was 18 years old, doing odd jobs so he could send money back to his mother, who was a widow supporting a family of six in China. However, he cut his stay short to come back to Hong Kong to marry my mother, for fear she might find another suitor. In 1954, shortly after they were wed, they packed all their personal belongings into two cardboard suitcases and left their loved ones, in search of golden opportunities in Canada. Little did my mother know that she would not see her mother again until 1976—22 years later.

Their trek to Toronto took an entire month, traveling by ocean liner and multiple trains. Upon arriving, they rented and stayed in whatever small rooming houses they could afford.

Mom could not speak English; however,

Dad had some very basic English skills. During his early years in Toronto, he had enrolled in the only English learning option available for immigrants at the time—a public school Grade 1 class. It was a humiliating experience for Dad, who at 18, had sat at a small desk amongst first grade students, but he did learn a few conversational phrases.

Dad took on restaurant jobs; however, he was determined to establish himself. Not only was he supporting himself and my mother, but he was also trying to save and send money to his mother, his four sisters, and my mother's family who were all poor as a result of war. The Toronto banks would not offer my Dad a loan, so he decided to borrow money from the Toronto Chinese Association at an interest rate of 15%, in order to buy a restaurant business. For the next five years, my parents operated Eddie's Grill & Open Kitchen at Queen & Broadview. Although Dad had an entrepreneurial drive, he was not an experienced restaurateur and they just got by.

During their first year, they had a fire in their flat above the restaurant and sadly lost most of their personal belongings. On the up-side, Dad did have insurance. With most of the money they received from their insurance claim, my dad purchased a black and white television. To him, it was an investment because as he watched the TV, he learned more conversational English. When business was slow—which was often—Dad also studied his Chinese/English dictionary

to improve his reading skills.

Frustrated with paying high fees to service the restaurant fridges that kept breaking down, Dad decided it was time he repaired his own refrigerators to save some money. He enrolled in a Refrigeration and Electrical Services certificate course, where he met other New Canadians. Shortly after receiving his certification, Dad sold their restaurant business and paid off all their creditors. In 1959, he was able to find a part-time job servicing refurbished refrigerators.

Landing a full-time job in the service trade industry as a visible minority with limited English was difficult; however, Dad received his big break when one of the refrigeration companies who hired him part-time acquired a new owner who asked him to work full-time. This launched his career in the refrigeration and cooling service. Working in this field for over 38 years, he was able to support his family of five and continue to send money to overseas relatives. My parents are now retired and they maintain that their success was attributed to my father's determination and my mother's ability to manage the household on a small budget.

In the 1960s and '70s, more Chinese immigrants were landing in Toronto. My family gradually established a social network of friends that, to this day, remains as our 'family'. In 1976, Mom finally saved enough money to visit her mother and brother in Hong Kong. It was a bittersweet reunion.

When we were young, Mom used to have a saying to make us behave. "If you don't behave, you will be shipped back to China," she would say, knowing that we were Canadians and that we loved it here. When we were teenagers, Dad wanted to instill the importance of good fortune, opportunity, and the personal sacrifices they made to give us a good life in Canada. Dad would say that if he were provided the same opportunities and education at our age that were available to us in Canada, he would be prime minister today! I guess it never hurts to dream big!





Peru has a rich tradition of silver craftsmanship. This precious metal has an historical and cultural significance. These jewels have a great value for me because they represent the cultural influences of the spiritual rituals of the Inca civilization and the religious traditions of Spain.

Significant Silver

Rosa- Peru

If the Shoe Fits

Renny - Netherlands

When my parents first arrived in Canada, they, like so many immigrants, were quite poor. Their sponsor gave them so much help in the way of goods and food. When my mother said that they would pay back every penny, he said 'You are my investment in humanity. Pass it on.' This was such a powerful lesson in what it was to be Canadian.

Growing up, my parents took us on annual camping trips to explore the splendour of their beloved adopted country, including Rice Lake, Presqu'île



Provincial Park and other beautiful spots in this area.

All five of us had our own pair of wooden shoes that we typically wore in the evenings while we were camping. The crunch-crunch-crunch of the wood on gravel as we made our last trip to the outhouse at night under silent, starry skies, is a sound I will remember always. The shoes were a bridge between the old country and the new; a linking of the heritage of my parents and the new, bright future of their children.



A Difficult Decision

Mario - Colombia

The most frequent question posed to my family is “Why did you leave Colombia?” The answer: it was not a sudden decision. Rather, it was a long mental journey to decide to immigrate, that was put into effect when the time was ripe.

The idea started taking hold when my wife Rosamelia and I had a chance to visit Canada during a school vacation, and afterwards, as professionals. Through these visits, we became familiar with the country and its way of life, which caught our attention. At that time, life in Colombia was very insecure due to generalized political and drug-related violence. It soon became obvious to us that there was no bright future for ourselves or our children, if we stayed.

We weighed all of our options, acknowledging the advantages that Canada offered—a stable, developed country where one could see how the tax payers’ money was translated into a hefty health care system, an





excellent transportation network of highways, and an education system that gave all children the possibility of obtaining a very good education.

All of these reasons piled up, bringing about the decision to immigrate to this promising country where there was no life-threatening violence, and there was an open land of opportunities.

Yet, the final decision to move was still not an easy one. At the time, we were already developed as professionals. I was a business administrator and Rosamelia was a Medical General Surgeon. Additionally, our family had grown to include three children.

The final decision to immigrate was based on our desire to provide our children the best opportunity to become fully developed graduate professionals—which they now all are; one is a civil engineer, one is a computer analyst and the third has just finished Business Administration education.

The final step in the journey was made when the Canadian Embassy approved our immigrant visas. We arrived in Canada in February 1990 to begin our new life.

One of the things I brought with me was my '21 round hat'—a traditional hat for residents of Colombia's north coast. It is made of special straw, and if you count, it has 21 circles. I used this hat for 12 years when I was coaching my kids' soccer teams. It became an icon.

Unexpected Journeys

Mark - Poland



My father was born in Poland in 1923 to migrant farm workers. Some of his earliest memories were of a farm in France where his family worked the land. When he was nine years old, his mother died suddenly, prompting his father to make arrangements for the family to return to Poland.

Even at such a young age, my father realized that—though they had nothing, in France—there was even less to go back

to in Poland. So, on the morning that they were due to depart, he ran away. When his father could not track him down in time, he left for Poland on the train with his other two children.

My father made his way back to the farm, where his older brother was still working, and he signed on to work there as a labourer for room and board. Things continued in this way until the Second World War broke out, at which time he was captured by the Germans and sent to a camp by Bordeaux.

At the camp, he was tasked with operating a crane as part of a crew building submarine bunkers. The crew worked around the clock, with people literally worked to death. Understanding that this was his likely fate if he remained, he managed to escape.

He made his way to the waterfront, and got onto a merchant ship, which was supposed to return within three months. He ended up sailing as a merchant marine for the next 15 years.

During this time, there were a few occasions where the ships brought cargo across to the United States and up through the Saint Lawrence. On one such occasion, they missed the opportunity to get back to the ocean before the Great Lakes were closed to transport for the winter, so he was stranded in Canada. Ostensibly, he was here for the season, however he never again sailed as a merchant marine.

Instead, he met and married my mother, and together they settled down in

Scarborough, where he became a pipe-fitter. Though my father had no formal education, he worked hard and was able to go out on his own in this industry. As a child, I remember him up at 4:00 in the morning, out the door by 5:30, and not home again until 10:30 at night. There was one time where he did this for 72-days straight—there was money to be made, and he was from stock that never knew if there would be more to come in the future, so he always worked when the work was available.

In 1972, my father moved our family to Brighton, having taken a shine to the community after many years of cottaging in Presqu'île. Here, he became a respected homebuilder, with a career spanning approximately 30 years. Ever a man of the sea, he sailed right up until the year before he passed away.

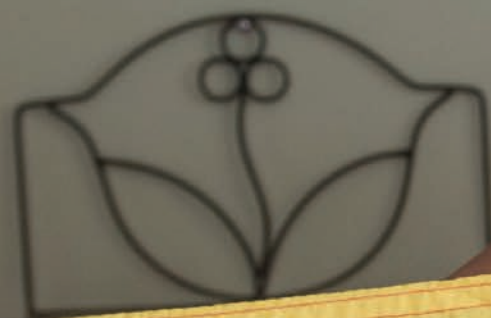
I often look at my father's documents—his old travel logs and passports—and reflect on the adversity that he and so many of his generation endured to get here. These memorabilia are constant reminders to me of the opportunities we are fortunate to have here in Canada, and of what can be accomplished if one is determined to do so.



I have been in Canada for two years and it has been a very exciting experience. I love the different seasons, as each one of them is very educational and exciting. I love Canada's history, nature and flowers; I love the snow and the chocolate. I especially love the people—they are very caring and helpful. I am very thankful to Canada for giving me the opportunity to live so many experiences. I learn every day so I can settle and live here. Thank you, Canada, for accepting me and allowing me to live happily in this beautiful country.

Seasonal Changes

Mayerling - Venezuela







This jade statuette was my sister's. She gave it to me when I came to Canada, as a memento from her.

The Gift of Family

Helen - Korea

The Power of Words

Patricia - Chile

Following a Military Coup in Chile in 1973, I was forced to destroy our home's entire library.

Pinochet's military regime persecuted people who defended the poorest of the poor in the country; my youngest brother was tortured by the regime. Homes were searched by the police, and citizens would face incarceration if they found any printed materials that showed any



affiliation with socialism or people's rights. So, I had to destroy almost every one of our books.

Almost. I managed to save a precious few, which I brought with me when I left for Costa Rica in 1975. There, my family lived in peace until I immigrated to Canada in 1990. When I moved here I brought books with me about the history of Costa Rica—a country that dissolved its army in 1948 and learned to resolve disputes peacefully.

To me, books represent freedom of expression and democracy.



A New Start

Herman - Holland



As a small boy, I used to wear my wooden shoes and skate on my wooden skates in Friesland, Holland.

When I was eleven years old, my parents decided to move to Canada. My mother, who was seven months pregnant at the time, decided that she wanted to have a truly Canadian-born child, so they boarded a nineteen hour flight on a KLM Constellation aircraft. After a stop in Iceland to gas up, they landed in Montreal in April of 1951. My sister was born shortly afterwards in June, being truly Canadian as my mother had wished.

I will never forget the experience of this journey. My family always felt thankful for the opportunity to make a new life in Canada and contribute to Canadian society.





Teaching Tales of Tradition

Montserrat - Mexico



My first recollection of learning about Canada is from when I was about 10 years old. My brother showed me a book with sequoia trees and later that same year a family friend showed me a real maple leaf!

At this point, I had no idea I would live in this beautiful country, but it turned out to be my destiny.

Fast forward 27 years and I am now a professional photographer, in a happy relationship with the love of my life and with 5 children; three Canadian, one Portuguese/Mexican and one Canadian/Mexican.



My husband and I also run an educational entertainment company that does school presentations based on medieval times, ancient civilizations and Canadian history.

This beautiful shield, that I love so much, was brought from Mexico and made by Mayan hands. This shield represents my ancestry and is one thing we share during our school presentations for Grade 4 students.

I am proud to now call this my country.



Being the New Neighbour

Leo & Ligia - Colombia

We emigrated from Colombia fairly young. Leo was 20 when he came to Canada in 1974 with his father and mother, under the family re-unification policy. I immigrated in 1975 at the age of 19, after Leo and I married in Colombia. Once here, we were determined that Canada was going to be our home—at no time did we consider going back.

When Leo arrived in Canada, he was fluent in English. By contrast, I arrived with only a couple of courses in high school English. I had been in university in Colombia, but had to go back to high school in Canada to get my matriculation, while learning English at the same time. I worked very hard to learn, and became fluent in less than two years—quite a feat!

After completing high school, I attended the University of Guelph and then transferred to Trent University when we moved to Port Hope for Leo's work. Since 1997, we have owned our own civil engineering company.

We learned that people in this area are very kind and helpful, but we also learned that we are seen as outsiders by those who have grown up in the area. Making friends with people who were born and raised in this area has been practically impossible, as locals generally keep us as acquaintances.

Nevertheless, Leo and I have been fortunate to find Latin American friends in the area—including Colombians—as well as Canadians from other provinces. We consider our cultural heritage very important, and we maintain this through our friends, as well as through our music, our food, and several precious possessions.

In particular, our silver china is dear to us. Given to us as wedding gifts, these pieces remind us of our wedding in Colombia, and also of the family and friends we left behind.





**“My goodness, we
thought, Canada must
be a wonderful country.”**

A Canadian Winter's Tale

Margaret - England

Decades ago, in a period of joblessness and austerity, we left London, England for Ontario. We rented a small apartment, which seemed pleasantly spacious as we waited, for several months, for our furniture to arrive. When the freighter carrying our household goods had finished exploring the world's oceans at its leisure, our modest collection of tables and chairs, and boxes of books and other paraphernalia were finally delivered, and suddenly our small apartment looked just that—small.

So, it seemed a good time to start looking at houses. We were city souls, used to a big metropolis, and of course, completely unused to Canadian winters. But we were seized with the thought that it might be fun to live in the country instead of the town—perhaps in one of those lovely farmhouses we had admired along the back roads, built by 19th century Scottish stone-masons, we were told.

By this time, it was winter and it was snowing a lot. One afternoon, we set out in our dark green Beaumont, which sashayed about the road at the best of times, and wandered scenic rural byways as a few fat snowflakes fell lazily from the low grey sky. A perfect stone farmhouse surrounded by a small grove of trees appeared to our right, up a long snow-covered driveway, a 'for sale' sign half-obscured in a roadside snowdrift. My husband swung the wheel a trifle abruptly towards the driveway, and my side of the car suddenly dropped at a very odd angle. 'Maggie, do hop out and see what's happened,' he said. Obediently, I opened the passenger door, and my shiny, white, knee-high Mary Quant boots made a perfect entry point, worthy of an Olympic diver, into the deep, snow-filled ditch.



I was very pregnant and alas, even heavier than I should have been, as my kindly obstetrician had noted with many a regretful sigh, so I plummeted down through the soft, fluffy snow effortlessly until my toes touched bottom and I stopped, with snow right up to my chin. With much huffing and puffing, I was extricated from my plight, but there we were, long before the time of cell phones, our car in a ditch on a lightly-travelled road, with no real warm clothes or survival gear, and it was getting dark.

We hardly had time to feel as panic-stricken as we deserved. The next three cars coming along the road all stopped. The first driver jumped out and produced a tow rope, the second and third helped him to attach it to the Beaumont, and as we watched, totally amazed, these three complete strangers, without a word to each other or to us, hoisted our car out of the ditch, re-stowed tow ropes and hitches, and drove off as we tried to stammer out heartfelt thanks.

'My goodness,' we thought, 'Canada must be a wonderful country.' And of course, it is.

The Memory of Family

Arlene - Trinidad

My grandparents were indentured labourers who left India around 1907. My granny was sold to the slave ship captain by her grandmother at age fourteen, and crossed the ocean from India to Trinidad not knowing a single soul on the boat. It was a wretched journey from all accounts, but on the boat, she met the ship's cook and they were married once they hit land.



Together, they had 12 children, only half of whom survived.

One of their children eventually emigrated to Canada in 1973, bringing me along. I was seven years old. I had no real belongings to speak of when I arrived, except for one doll and some family photos. The doll is long since gone. The photos remain. In the end, memories and experiences are all we have.

The photos remind me of the sacrifices my grandparents made to give us all the life we have today. They make me grateful.



“Above the Pigsty”

Peter - Netherlands

During WWII, when living in Apeldoorn in the Netherlands, I became an “onderduiker”, one who was in hiding to escape being placed in a German camp. I went into hiding after receiving my third notice to report to work in that country. A farm became my hiding place, and I slept in the barn above the pigsty.

Using any material I could find when I did not have paper, I kept a daily journal of my life's day-to-day events. During that time, I met the girl who became my wife for over 66 years. Although I have few of the items that we brought to Canada when our young family immigrated in 1953, I have—with the help of my family—written a book, ‘Above The Pigsty’, which tells of my experiences, as I recorded them in the journal.

I originally intended this story to be a family record for my grandchildren and great grandchildren. What I did not expect was the interest that this story generated beyond the circle of family and friends. Many have told me that reading these words have given them a better understanding of both the suffering of the Dutch people in war time and also the overwhelming thankfulness of the Dutch to the Canadians who liberated them.

The original diary is now in a museum in Aalten in The Netherlands.



For the Love of Art

Carrie - Philippines

Moving to Northumberland revived my interest in art, crafts, weaving textile and needle arts. I was introduced to quilting, the local arts guild, Spinners & Weavers Guild, and the embroidery guild, and got involved in church events, the fall fair, local special shows and sales, fundraising events and presently, with the Multicultural Group.

“My school uniform brings back memories of my childhood and growing years; memories of life during the war years.”





Our culture is very religious. My mother received this picture of the Virgin Mary when she was a little girl and she passed it on to me. I carry this picture everywhere I go and it reminds me of my roots, my culture and my family.

Sharing Tradition

Patricia - El Salvador

The Beauty in Strength

Helen - England

I was only five years old when my family made the journey from England to Canada.

My mother's brooch, which depicts the ship that carried us to Canada, reminds me of my mother's tenacity. She lived until her 91st



year. She never regretted moving to this country, despite having two small children, a husband at work, and no family or friends here for support.

My parents traveled all over North America for two years after their retirement, and they always claimed that there was nowhere that compared to the beauty of Ontario.



Carving History

John - Guyana



My wife and I were born in British Guyana, where we were married in 1967. Two years later, we decided to start somewhere new and to try to make a better life for ourselves. In 1969, we made it to Canada; the land of milk and honey. We knew very few people initially, but we quickly integrated into the community and made some lasting connections.

When my wife and I moved from Guyana, we brought carvings made from local trees, carved by local artists. These carvings were made to represent the historical culture of Guyana. Nothing we brought from Guyana was carved on imported wood.

These carvings represent the land and the indigenous people who lived in our home—keeping in mind that these carvings were not carved by indigenous people in Guyana, but by local people who respected and cherished the history and roots of the culture that thrives there today.

The male carving illustrates an indigenous man spear fishing in the river. Though this is not how it is normally done in Guyana today, it is a part of the original culture in the area. The female carving shows a woman who was likely a farmer carrying her produce to or from the market. They are a reflection of our history, and very important to us.

While I love my cultural history and the ancestry of my family, I am also very proud of Canada and the country it is. I am proud to tell you that we were the only people in our cottage area for a very long time that flew a Canadian flag! Over the last 10 years, more people in the area have added flags.

I feel that Canadians who were born here sometimes don't realize what a beautiful, wonderful country we live in. The freedom of expression we have here!

While we originally came to Canada to make a better life for ourselves, we later realized that we were also here to make life better for our children and grandchildren, who have all been born here. It is a little unfortunate that our children and our grandchildren know so little of Guyana and our culture. Many of the things they do know come from us and these mementos we have around our home. Nevertheless, we are happy to see their success and to see their lives thriving in this country. We hope that they will continue to cherish their history and heritage in the future.

I am thankful that we are happily settled here, and that we are fortunate to have a wonderful family who has a better life and more opportunities for themselves. They are much more successful than we were at that age because of the privilege of being born in Canada, and they will always have the Guyana heritage to reflect on as well.





This heirloom teapot was handed down to me from my grandparents on my wedding day. It crossed the ocean with me when I made the journey to Canada in 1957. I was 26 years old.

Traveling Teapot

Lavinia - England

A Gem of a Country

Cheli - Mexico

I left Mexico in 1971 at the age of 15 years old, after my sister sponsored me to come to Canada.

When I arrived, I found the people here were very welcoming. I loved this country immediately. I found the scenery, the space, the green colour of nature here so fantastic. I was charmed that there were hardly any fences on the large rural properties.



I moved to Northumberland County in 1987 at 31 years old, as this is where I had a lot of friends and family. I thought Northumberland would be the perfect place to find work and education, and I have stayed in Port Hope ever since.

All through this journey, I have kept with me the ring that my mother gave to me at the airport when I was getting ready to leave the country. It has great significance to me. I actually did not even start to wear it until I turned 50 years old, when I finally felt like I was old enough.



Guardian Angel

Stanislava (Slavka) - Czechoslovakia



My father was a political prisoner in Czechoslovakia for seven years. Although he was released in 1955, his political profile forever limited any opportunity for the members of our family.

One evening, my new husband and I watched an hour-long promotion about Canada that was created for the 1967 World Expo in Montreal. It was then that we made the risky decision to try to get out of our communist country and make it overseas to start a new life. Months later, when we successfully crossed the border into Germany for the first leg of our journey, I wept for our newfound freedom.

In Germany, while we waited for our applications to be processed for immigration to Canada, we had the option of either waiting in a detainment camp for unprocessed immigrants, or being assigned work within the city. We chose the option that we felt gave us some control of our lives; we took jobs as keepers at the local zoo, feeding and cleaning up after the animals, and living there as well. It was unbelievably hard work, but we were free.

Throughout this time period, I kept with me a picture from my grandmother of a guardian angel with a little girl. When I was five years old, I went with her to Pribram, a place of pilgrimage dedicated to Our Lady, where she bought me this photo. It reminds me of my grandmother and of her love for me. I have kept it safe and intact all these years, and I found it gave me strength during those months of waiting in Germany.

After six months, our applications were processed and we were eligible to move to Canada. We landed in Toronto on Valentine's Day, 1970. I was 23 years old.

Our first impression of Canada was that we were in China. The settlement agent that greeted us at the airport did not speak Czech, and we did not speak English. He took us to a hotel for the evening, and this happened to be in Chinatown. Until the next morning, we were convinced that somewhere along the way we had boarded the wrong plane. We met up the next day with local members of the Czech community, who corrected our understanding.

I found so many things surprising about our new home. All of the space and greenery in and around Toronto were so different from the close quarters we were used to in European cities. I also noticed more profound things. I noticed so many people smiling. When you come from a communist country, you do not often see this; there is little to smile about. And when I started to understand English, and began watching the news, I was in awe of the way people criticized the Prime Minister and the government. Where we came from, people would be jailed for years, and sentenced to hard labour in uranium mines.

There were two main lessons my husband and I tried to pass on to our children, based on our experience. First, stand on your own two feet—never expect the government or anyone to give you bread for tomorrow's meal. And second, recognize the precious freedom that exists in Canada—political, religious, and otherwise—and do everything you can to maintain it. Do not ever let it slip away.



A Tribute to Heritage

Sounia & Waeel - Syria



“We were sponsored to come to Cobourg from Syria in February 2017. I brought with me my grandmother’s wooden rosary, made from the seeds of olives, which was passed down to my mother. This memento was always in my mother’s hands. She presented it to me and told me to always pray. Four months before our departure to Canada, my mother passed away. This rosary reminds me of both my mother and my grandmother.” ~ Sounia



“We also brought a wooden plaque engraved with our folk heritage. The plaque depicts a young Circassian woman doing a traditional dance. This plaque expresses our love for folklore. Most of these cultural images exist in every Circassian house, so we brought them with us here.” ~ Waeel



Remembering the Simple Times

Andrea - England

In 1951, my family arrived in Halifax at Pier 21, on a ship called the Ascania. Although I have no recollection of living in England, for my parents and older siblings, life in Northumberland County at that time must have seemed vastly different from living in Greater London.

The summer before school seemed to last forever, and the lazy days spent with my three older brothers swimming in the pond, building tree forts and floating rafts on the creek seemed like endless pleasures. Nevertheless, September did eventually creep upon us all too soon. But I didn't mind; it was soon to be my first day of school.

We lived in a century brick farmhouse situated on a hilltop overlooking the village of Garden Hill. Back then, many rural areas still had one-room school houses, and the closest one to us was in Perrytown. I measured the distance recently, and found it to be just over two kilometres. There was no bus service in the day, so our little party—consisting of me, my brothers and a spattering of village children—walked there and back regardless of the weather.

Our teacher, Miss Edith Carruthers, taught all eight grades, although there was the occasional year when a grade or two had no students enrolled. As my memory serves me, a wood stove stood in the corner, and the older male students were given the task of 'stoking it up' on cold mornings. Bigger kids assisted the little ones with their studies, while the teacher gave lessons to others.

Lunch time was an adventure! The class filed outside, summer and winter, to wash hands with Lifebouy soap under a wooden handled pump spouting freezing cold water. The classroom came alive with the rustling of brown paper bags and the smells of peanut butter sandwiches and orange peels.

The first, second and third grade students were excused at 2:30pm, but Grades 4 to 8 had classes until four o'clock. I had to make this journey back home alone and was rather nervous but also anxious to show Mom my new "Dick and Jane" reader, so I bravely hurried on. I was about three quarters of the way there, when suddenly a large hound dog came bounding down his farmhouse driveway, loudly barking at me. I stood paralyzed, too scared to scream. Thankfully, the farmer's wife came out and rescued me from what ended up being an over-friendly old fella called Nicodemus. She sent me on my way, cookie in-hand, and before long I was safely climbing onto our own front porch, knowing that my mother would be there on the other side of the screen door to greet me.

How drastically things have changed from those innocent yet simple times!



A Journey of Love

Claudia - Peru





“The reason I came to Canada was for love. I had travelled to other countries before and I never thought my destiny would be in Canada but after 10 years, I am so in love with my husband and the beautiful country that is now my home.”

The Reward of Hard Work and Dedication

Lambert - Jamaica



I was born and raised in Jamaica. There was not a lot happening for our family when I was growing up.

My mom passed away in 1972 and I had to stop going to school early in order to pick up work and help support the family. At one point, my brother signed us both up for a seasonal worker program in Canada. In 1982, we got the telegram (because there were no phones where we were living) that said we had been selected for that year.

22 of us made the journey to Canada in August, 1982. We got on a big yellow

school bus and drove from the Toronto airport right into Wicklow, near Grafton. It was night when we arrived so I did not see much that first time down the highway, but we were all very excited to be here. That first year we picked tomatoes and then we picked some apples. It was an interesting experience; a big adventure. I worked my tail off all summer, until we returned home again in October.

The next year I got the request to come back! I was so happy. I had heard that you had to work extra hard and do a great job to get called back; as I am not someone to be lazy when I am working, this was my goal. It pays off to work hard! I ended up enjoying myself so much working seasonally here in Northumberland County that I came back to the same place to work for nearly 35 years.

As always in life, there were obstacles. I had kids and I extended the contract terms so that I stayed to work in Canada from March to November. It was rough being away from home. As the kids grew up things got more expensive, as they do, especially when they wanted to go to school. I owned a convenience store in Jamaica, and when I lived there I worked on our farm and I drove a taxi. I was never idle and I was always doing something to keep food on the table, a roof over their heads and clothing on their backs. I have 4 children: two boys, both of whom are engineers, and two girls, one of whom is a doctor, and the other a customs

officer. I have four grandchildren, who all have great lives because their parents learned to work hard by my example. They are amazing and supportive, we are all very close.

I decided to move here permanently in 2008. The immigration process can be challenging, and it took until March 2017 to get my Permanent Resident (PR) card. I now need to wait three years to take the citizenship test.

In 2014, I found out that I had cancer. It was a tough time. Work was not very compromising and I had to struggle through the treatments to still provide for myself and my family. The cancer went into remission, but unfortunately, we learned recently that it is back.

I am doing chemo treatments now and I have a new place of employment. They are incredibly supportive and they are like a second family to me. My family is also very supportive and we are all keeping a positive outlook on the situation.

I want to leave the people who read this with a few words of wisdom. Be true to yourself. Work hard. Life is not a bed of roses; it is what you make of it. If you put your mind to anything and give it all you have, you can achieve anything in life. Remember to help your fellow man, never walk over others to get to where you want to go. With the help of the good Lord, you will get through everything.

I am proud to be where I am today, and I am happy to live in Canada. Never give up and never say no when going for your dreams. I will tell anyone the same thing I have always told my children: "Aim for the moon and if you miss at least you will land among the stars".



This Was Always Home

Marc - England



My mother's family members have been residents of Canada for generations, settling in Nova Scotia in the mid-1700s. As a young woman, my mother, fulfilling a childhood dream, sailed to England and while there she met my father. Back in the 1960s there were not many opportunities in the UK, so my parents decided to leave. Most émigrés were considering Australia, South Africa and Canada at the time, and because of my mother's background, my parents decided on Canada. They flew back when I was 18 months old and my younger brother was just about to be born, settling first in the Yorkville area of Toronto.

Probably because of my mother's heritage, and the short time I spent in England, I have never considered myself an immigrant. This is why it was quite a discovery, when I learned in elementary school that my birth certificate was unique from that of my friends. We needed to bring our certificates to school for some reason. I had a large—what seemed unwieldy—7 x 14 faded yellow paper, with a



signature from the registrar that looked like it was done using an old ink well pen. I was surprised and a bit jealous when all of my classmates came in with nice modern credit card-sized certificates, which looked a lot more convenient to carry around.

I became a Canadian citizen on May 10, 1972 along with my father. As I was nine years old at the time, it was a regular school day for me. I remember being told that day that I would officially become Canadian, and sure enough when my father came home that evening he had the paperwork for both of us to prove it.

Having arrived in the country at such a young age, I have never felt anything other than Canadian. That said, I am very proud of my English heritage.



A Transitional Journey

Rehab & Magdi - Sudan

After graduating university and starting a family, we immigrated to Canada from Sudan with our two eldest children in May of 1997 for better education and employment opportunities. One of the items we have kept with us all this time is our Jebena: a traditional pot for making and serving coffee, which is a very important part of our culture.

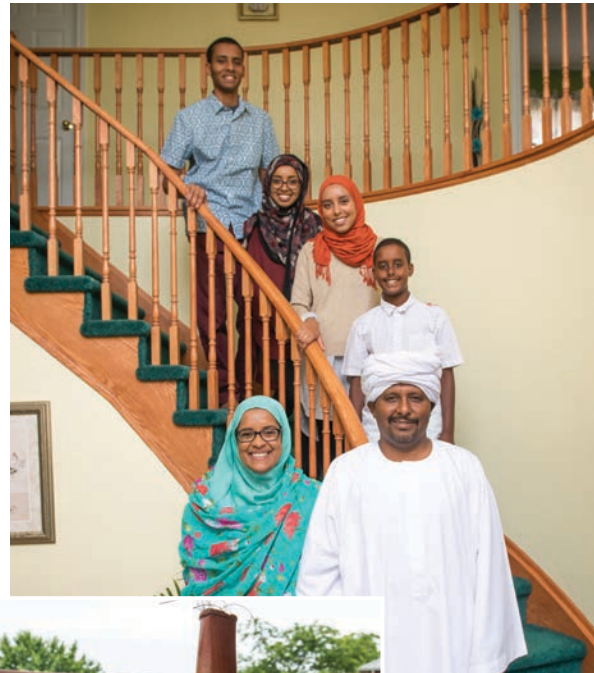
We spent our first few years in Canada in the Greater Toronto Area. While living in the GTA, we welcomed our third and fourth children. During this time, Magdi completed his Masters in Hydrogeology at the University of Toronto and ultimately began working for the Gananaska Region Conservation Authority in Port Hope in 2005. Long hours of commuting between Brampton and Port Hope sparked our move to Cobourg in the fall of 2005.

At first, we were concerned about moving to the area as it appeared to lack much of the diversity we were used to being around our entire lives. However, this concern quickly turned into a sense of hope, as the community showed us a great deal of friendliness and welcome.

Despite facing some challenges related to race and ethnicity, as well as in adjusting to the new area, our family quickly became involved in the Cobourg community. Much of this involvement was with the YMCA Northumberland, where where the children played sports and volunteered, and I worked with the International Committee and Women Para Mujeres group.

Our children have thrived in Canada. Currently, two are studying at university, while another has recently graduated as a Pharmacist. Our youngest will be entering Grade 8 at Terry Fox Public School this fall.

We plan to continue living in Cobourg for a long time, and we are hopeful that the community will continue to welcome people with stories like ours in the years to come.





“Solidarnosc”

Peter - Poland

I arrived in Canada in early September 1981 to start graduate studies at McMaster University in Hamilton. Apart from books and clothing, the only item symbolic of my native country that I brought with me was the hand painted flag of a powerful grassroots movement led by the Polish Trade Unions, known as ‘Solidarity’, or ‘Solidarnosc’. This flag was made and used during the labour strikes in the summer of 1980, which culminated in the signing of an historical agreement between the Polish government and the new free trade unions in August 1980. This is often known as ‘Polish August’.

This flag means a lot more to me than a piece of white cloth with red ink on it. It symbolizes the end of Communism in my country, and later in the entire Eastern Europe.

Political changes in Poland and the sheer will of the Polish nation at that time resulted in a very brave form of uprising against the communist rule, in place since the Second World War. Polish people were saying “enough is enough” and “let Poland be Poland”. Poland’s democratic nature was encouraged to come forth, allowing Poles to arise to their true destiny.



The explicit symbol of this solidarity movement was a sign that read ‘Solidarnosc’, with a flag coming out of the leg of the ‘n’. The letters forming the word were meant to represent the people standing shoulder to shoulder in non-violent opposition to a communist regime.

During the summer of 1980, new agreements were signed by Polish workers and the government to institute new rules of engagement between the two sides. These were soon after violated by the introduction of martial law in December of 1981. It took another eight-or-so years for the communist government in Poland to fall, arguably bringing down with it the Berlin Wall as well as the breakdown of the Soviet Union. The flag of Solidarnosc remains part of this legacy forever!

So, what did I bring with me as a new immigrant to Canada? No doubt: a spirit of freedom, a taste of my own participation in the formation of a new democracy in Poland, and a desire to side with non-violent conflict resolution, so apparent throughout the events of Polish August.

To a Far Horizon

Martha - Netherlands

I was born in Kampen, the Netherlands, in 1927. As the eldest of three sisters, I was in charge of the household by the age of 14, when my grandmother became bedridden.

My plan was always to take over my father's interior design/decorating business one day, and in 1950 I travelled to Amsterdam for further studies in this area.

However, there I met Dik, the love of my life, who had almost finished his studies for becoming a minister. My plans changed. We married in 1953 and served our first congregation in the town of Wormer, where our daughter Johanna was born at home.

Then, in 1959, a call came from Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Newmarket, Ontario, and we decided to board an ocean liner to Canada.

Over the years, we ministered in various communities across Canada, including Oshawa, at the new Zion Church built



there in 1965, and in Winnipeg, where the Community Hope Centre, built in 1977, remains the crown of Dik's ministry.

During these years, we became truly 'grounded' in Canada. We welcomed our daughters Marion and Patricia, and even purchased a peaceful cabin property in Lake St. Peter, Ontario, where we spent many happy days as a family.

Beautiful Cobourg is now my hometown, though I have always maintained a few precious objects that remind me of the Netherlands. 58 years after immigrating to Canada, an antique clock that my father gave to me still hangs on the wall of my home. My journey has been completely different from the one I envisioned for myself as that 14-year old girl, managing a household. This clock reminds me of the home I left so long ago, and of just how far I have come.



Musical Memories Echoing From the Past

Teresa - Portugal

I arrived in Canada as a child in 1963. When I was nine years old, one of the teachers at my school began offering Portuguese instruction after hours to teach children to read and write their native language. I remember being so proud to learn!



I am still very proud of my heritage. I treasure this drum/tambourine, which is used in traditional Portuguese music to entertain labourers in the country fields as they work. It provides inspiration, as they sing and work together.



The Travelling Trunk

Richard - England



I recently acquired an old shipping trunk in which my father carried all his worldly possessions when he left England in 1953, travelling by sea to Canada to seek a better life.

England was still in a state of rebuilding after the war and opportunities seemed to be better in Canada. My father had made his decision to leave and had booked his passage by sea, when he met my mother at a local dance.

She had spotted him across the room and shyly admired his tailored suit and handsome looks. Dad had noticed mom

and was attracted to her pretty dress, flowing, fiery red hair and bright green eyes. He boldly crossed the floor to ask for a dance with the confidence only afforded of a man who had recently taken dance lessons. Dad had wisely done his homework. The night ended with them parting ways with the hope they would see each other at another dance.

Two weeks later at a dance, they picked up where they had left off. Dad had not told mom of his plans to leave England and was thinking to himself at the time, "She'll do until I leave for Canada". It was not until after dating for a number of weeks that a friend of dad's let it slip, when he asked if Mom was going to Canada as well.

Her shocked response told him that he had revealed dad's deception and some fast-talking was needed to smooth things over. After only dating for three months Dad decided that Mom "would do" for a while longer and he got up the nerve to propose. Mom coyly said she would have to think on it and would give him an answer by New Year's. When New Year's Eve came, Mom courageously decided to leave her family, friends and life in Alvechurch, England behind. She accepted Dad's proposal to marry and move to Canada as soon as Dad could land a job, find a place to live and save enough money to pay Mom's fare over.

It was almost six months before they were re-united as husband and wife in Canada. Life was not easy in the beginning, work was hard and pay was

low, but the people in Canada were kind.

Mom and dad had both survived hardship before. Mom was the youngest of three girls and had lost her mother to tuberculosis when she was nine, only to have the war break out three months later. Left largely in the care of her older sister Barb, who was all of eleven, life must have seemed very uncertain. At the same time Dad, who was also nine and living in a suburb of Birmingham, was placed on a train with his 10-year old sister Olive, as an evacuee, along with thousands of children who were sent by train into the countryside of Wales to live with total strangers throughout the war.

The beat-up trunk that sits in my living room is inscribed with my father's initials—R. P—which my grandfather painted on before my Dad left England. Perhaps in the process of doing this, he was hoping for the safe-keeping of all that was precious and essential to supporting Dad in his new life.

Almost 65 years later, the woman that would “do for now” and my Dad have had a successful life, retiring to Brighton, where they lived for 27 years before moving to Picton last summer. They raised four children, and have 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. They have traveled the world and just celebrated their 87th birthdays, exactly one month apart.

The trunk serves as a reminder of Roy Perkins and Doreen Wilkinson's journey, and all they did to make it work.



The Significance of Storytime

Elena - Peru



While I was born and raised in Canada, my Peruvian heritage and culture was—and continues to be—a part of my everyday life, from the food I eat and the way that I cook, to the music I enjoy and even the books that I read.

One memento particularly important to me is a book from my grandmother. This was a book that my mother read to me when I was a child. It introduced me to the Spanish language.

I am very proud of the way that my parents raised me, making sure I was always aware that I was a part of two different cultures, both equally important.



Produced by Northumberland County
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