

Tales from the Archives

Sporadic accounts of research and progress in Williamson-Collins genealogy

This is an idea that we've had for a long time, but only recently found the necessary data to support it. Hope you enjoy it. With luck and time, we will gradually add similar stories for other families. Although this deals exclusively with one family line, any of our ancestors travelling after about 1880 would have had a similar experience. In particular, the Levine family may have followed the very same route.



Vår Sjøreise til Canada (Our Voyage to Canada)

fredag, 22 september, år 1905:

I visited the emigration agency today to make sure about the crossing to England. Herr Solem at the Allan Line office said that the "S/S Tasso" will arrive in Trondheim tomorrow five days and depart on torsdag as usual. We must register a day before.

We have much to do before then. Not a week to get the children settled and find a place for everything else that we cannot carry. I wish that the family would stay together, but we will not arrive until late oktober and with winter coming it will be not possible to keep so many fed and safe. Even if we had 800kr for passage for six more, we do not know what we will find, or if I will certainly get work in Canada.

onsdag, 27 september:

This will be my last entry from home. We are packed and the children are already at the gård (*farm*, I must practice my engelsk!) with Martha's family, except for little Harold. I do not know how she will be without them for so many months. It will also be difficult for the baby to come, but he is still nursing and needs his mother. Martha is afraid for him, but I tell her that the new steamships make the passage much easier, and I hope it is true.

I took my leave of the Brithanea Hothel on søndag. My last pay and a little more I gave to Gjurtrud for herself and the younger ones. Marie will have her own now she

is working. We presented ourselves at the emigration office today to make payment and then to complete the utvandring documents at the police station. All is in order.

I visited also little Emil and my mor this morning at the gravlund. Martha could not bear it, but I had to say goodbye. My heart breaks again to leave him, but I think it is good he has his bestemor here to take care of

him when we are gone.

It seems like we say goodbye everywhere we go, to people yes, but to save the sights and feelings of our home in our memory too. I would like to have had time to visit the shores of Bjugn and even go to Ervig again, but perhaps I will get a sight from the fjord if it is clear in the north.

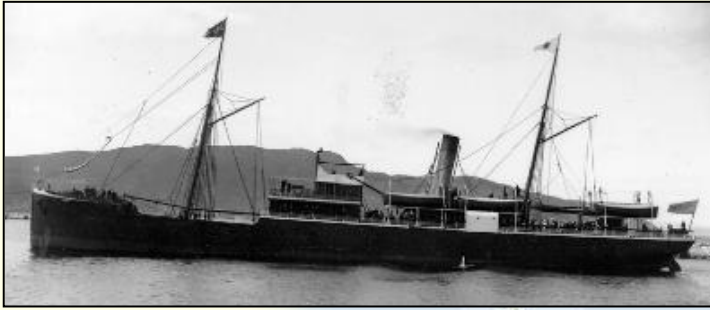
I feel at times almost outside of myself with excitement, but again a little afraid and uncertain too. It is not hard to leave, but I know it will be hard to be gone – I will never see my home again. They say Canada has a sense of Norge in places, but in Winnipeg it is flat. It must be like the ocean in a calm.

torsdag, 28 september:

We are underway! We boarded this morning, and the Tasso is not as bad as expected. It is a fairly large steel ship, fifteen years in service but lately refitted. She is above 250 feet stem to stern.



There are only 56 emigrants aboard so it is not crowded and the sleeping accommodations are tolerable. The steerage deck runs almost the length of the ship, with a



hallway on each side and two-story berths in the middle which are just shorter than a man needs. There is no privacy or smoking, but I can be on deck for a while.

It is a fair sea, but the rollers are making life difficult for all the farmers! Most are sjøsyke and did not avail themselves much of the offered meal – a decent meat. I think Martha is not well, but she is trying. Me it does not bother. Now that we are away from the smoke of the city, the air and sea birds among the islands remind me of fishing with uncle Johan, although the vibrations of the steam engines are strange. I did not love the sea, and still don't, but at least I can hold my head up. We will make a stop in Kristiansund today. Then again I think in Ålesund tomorrow. I fear we will be more crowded before crossing the North Sea to England.

fredag, 29 september:

Tjuende september – happy birthday Harold! What an auspicious beginning to celebrate your first birthday during our trip to the new world. You will be as much Canadian as Norsk, I think. I hope the children are well.

We left sight of land today. The crossing to the engelsk port at Hull should take 2 more days and I pray that it is so short. We have taken on more passengers, and the air below deck is offensive. Meals are much more difficult, although the food is better than what I had expected. For breakfast we get black cafe, which is bad, a biscuit with butter and a slice of bread. For dinner we get a dish of meat and potater, which is very good. For supper we get a biscuit and a cup of tea, which is good, without cream.

søndag, 1 oktober:

The trip has turned for the worse. The sea is up, and it is very uncomfortable. Martha and I are lucky to be able to share a bunk with only one barn and not a whole trollpakk, but still it is difficult with so many people and such foul air. Harold is tired of being always held, and I will not make mention of his other needs, but Martha tries to keep him contented. It is not safe for



him above deck of course. It is not good for me either now, but I cannot be always below.

It was said earlier that we would reach England tomorrow; but due to the strong headwind it will probably not be before tomorrow night or tirsdag that we will arrive to Hull.

onsdag, 4 oktober:

We approached Hull in the early morning yesterday. We already started to get the sight of the lighthouse the night before. It was a splendid sight, when we came up on deck in the morning, in the calm of the river, and could see Hull for our eyes. But the town is not very beautiful after my opinion. The huge stone buildings are blackened by the smoke and dust from coal which is in the air. But huge and beautiful were all the ships we could see in the harbor, flying flags of Scandinavian, German, even Russian.

We disembarked at the "Island Wharf" of Wilson's and were met by an Allan Line agent. The train landing is adjacent, and it was a very convenient arrangement. We had time for a toilet and meal and little else. The town was closed to us – *transmigrants* the signs say. In the old days the men at least could walk freely, but no longer. Fear of disease I suppose, but no doubt also for our own protection. We have all heard terrible stories about emigrants losing everything to racketeers and thieves before almost beginning their journey. There were a great many people, and all tired besides, and I did not like leaving our baggage at the back of the train.

Still, the trip by train was a restful one. Only five hours from sea, to sea! And now we find ourselves at the port of Liverpool, amidst the giant new ocean-going ships of the Atlantic.

Our own "Tunisian" is the first of Allan's 20th century technological wonders – *four* of Wilson's little Tasso could rest on her deck alone, and she is already dwarfed by others half again as big. The largest of them rest along the outer pier like parts of the very earth that have been cut away and floated to serve us. A few more and

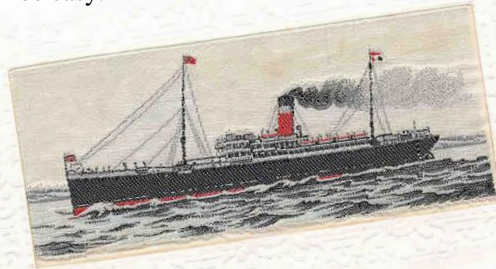
we could walk to Canada on a floating road of steel. Surely there is no sea that could but rock them gently.

The fog is in tonight, but I can still see the electric lights of the docks stretching north and south all along the river Mersey, serving the large liners and uncouthed ships of every description and cargo. Near our own ship on the Landing Stage is a strange hjulbåten – a paddle ship for the Isle of Man.

We will sleep again ashore tonight, after many hard days on the North Sea. But yet, the delay there has proven not all bad; we will not have to pay for a third night's lodging at the Allan Line accommodations here, saving a considerable expense. I must close the light. We sail in the morning and will arrive to Canada tomorrow eight days!

torsdag, 5 oktober:

We said farewell to England this morning. It is a great relief to be away from busy Liverpool. Sleep was not so easily found as I had hoped – too many strange things and strange folk. It is an angry place and we could not be easy.



*Jewell started school
March 21 1891
arrived Winnipeg
April 14 1891*

But we are safely aboard! They checked our papers and our bags at the landing, and when they heard of our origin, directed us to a Scandinavian host. He is a Swede, but we can speak with him in Norsk. Martha is happy not to rely only on my engelsk after all! He explained the papers we were given and showed us to where we could find our way.

Our cabin is not like the bunk-house between the Tasso's decks. It has only four beds, and spring mattresses! We share a washing room that has a water closet and hot and cold fresh water on tap according to our need. We took our dinner after noon at a table, and not out of a cup.

There is a great excitement shared among all we meet, and I laughed like a boy when I felt the wind in my face and saw the water of the Irish Sea rushing beneath us. My own sons will taste their freedom here! For the first time in an eight-day I can think of our destination and wonder at what we will find in Canada.

søndag, 8 oktober:

We are in the open ocean following the sun to the west. We made no stop in Ireland, and with only 400 other emigrants we have some fair space to ourselves. Most are engelsk, but the Scandinavian passengers are arranged in proximity, and we have been meeting even some fellow Manitobans.

All of the Norsk seem to be for the United States, but we have a Swedish girl, Ingeborg Lund with us. Her young man is along, but settled separately with the bachelors. They are going to her father in Rat Portage, almost to Winnipeg, so we share a cabin and have a sense of our family with her. She is relieved to have companions aboard, and for the train in Canada too. And she has a young woman's interest in little Harold, which Martha is happy to oblige.

Almost all are in good spirits, which have improved in proportion to our distance from England. We enjoy ourselves at supper listening to the fiddlers play and watching the younger ones dance - but not on the sabbat of course. Harold has been too quiet, but the doctor agrees with Martha that her milk is probably a little down and he will improve with her. It was a hard trip for her from Trondheim. They are both able to take some air now, and he will enjoy a little freedom too.

fredag, 13 oktober:

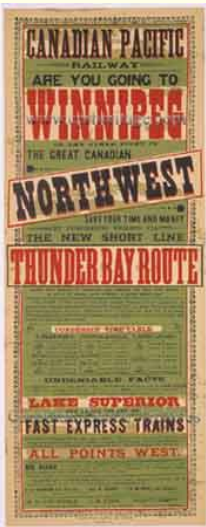
This morning we are at anchor off Quebec awaiting the health inspectors. I am told that they will take several hours. We are in good health, and there has been little sickness on board, so I am sure we will not be delayed.

The crossing was not difficult, with all things very satisfactory. The first sight of Canada caused a great stir. At first the cliffs at the entrance to the Straight of Belle Isle were thought to be icebergs, but I knew it would be open in this season.

We have been fortunate in our choice of service, and in our new friends. I confess that our young companions and hopes for a new land waiting at its end have shortened the journey and improved our temper, even in the rougher seas.

The little French city is very beautiful, even as we can see only a few colourful buildings on the port below the high Citadel and walls. We will see little more of it – a train of Canadian Pacific is engaged to take us to Montreal this afternoon. From there, we have tickets for Winnipeg on the "transcontinental". I must ask about the connection. I think it is short.





søndag, 15 oktober:

We have just returned to our carriage after a stop and breakfast in Fort William. After the rush from ship to train in Quebec to the Imperial Limited at Montreal, our trip has been easy, and perhaps too much so. This is a vast land with most of the many station stops each smaller than the last, and most of the country wild but unvarying.

We had some fine views of Superior and the "Sleeping Giant" in the first light today. At Norge he would have been called the Fallen Troll. I think he would be very much at home there. They were right that Canada feels familiar in nature, especially at the lakes. I had expected it to be more strange than just in speech.

We will shortly be continuing to where Ingeborg and Hilo will leave us for Rat Portage. She had thought it a poor name for her new home, but I told her that "rat" can be "wheel" in Danish. She is alive with tales of the land around the Lake of the Woods from her parents, and with the sight of her family too. With the change in clock here we will see it by 16.00. We wish them well, and will miss their company.

The sunset will show us finally the prairie and Winnipeg. We are tired but eager to be at the end of our journey.

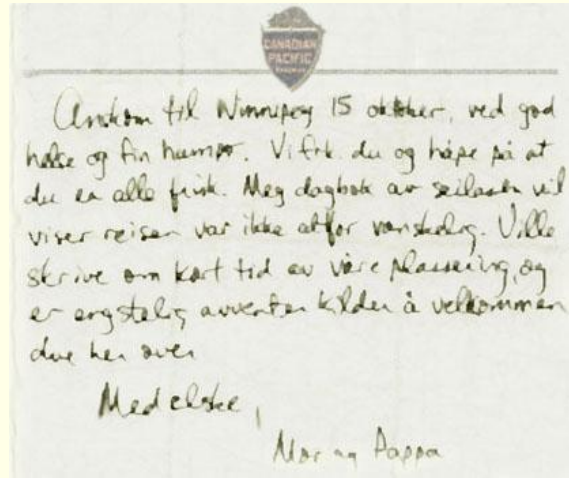


Arrived in Winnipeg October 15, in good health and fine spirits. We miss you and hope that you are all well. My diary of the voyage will show you that the journey was not too arduous. Will write soon of our situation, and are anxiously awaiting the spring to welcome you here.

*With love,
Mom and Dad*

I hope that we will find a good life. I am not so young as most who start again here. And I hope our children will understand and find for themselves a future beyond what they would have in Trondheim.

Journey's End: Winnipeg



About The Story

This fictional diary was an attempt to capture a plausible account of the voyage of our Ervig ancestors from Trondheim to Winnipeg from the imagined perspective of Helmer Ervig. We have done quite a bit of research into each leg of the voyage, and the result has been pieced together from various first-person accounts and historical references. Specifics concerning dates, names and places are quite accurate based on our information (see the trip synopsis that follows).

This is really the first time that we have focused on one narrow piece of our story to such a fine level of detail. We have been extremely fortunate in finding closely related and fairly complete records of the various legs of the trip. Norway in particular has been a treasure-trove of on-line (and free!) information.

We have tried to add to that some personal details and speculative "colour". Although it could never compete with a real first-person account, we think the fictional result is nevertheless quite rich without being a complete figment of our imaginations.

Some of the speculation captures the prevailing views of the day. However, the language and expressions we've chosen to give the story a foreign flavour are no doubt very flawed by thinking in 21st century *engelsk*. As for what Helmer was really thinking, including his motivation for leaving (which is the biggest missing piece), that will forever remain *ukjent*.

What we do know is described in the following sections.

The Voyage: 18 Days in 1905

- Wednesday*
September 27 – Check-in was required 24 hours before sailing, including payment at the Allan Line office and emigration paperwork at the local police station. Date from Trondheim emigration records.
- Thursday*
September 28 – Depart Trondheim. Day of week from regular Wilson Line schedule (every Thursday) matches perfectly with emigration record.
- Friday*
September 29 – Harold's 1st birthday.
- Tuesday*
October 3 – Arrive Hull very early, Liverpool by afternoon. Timing speculative for the sake of interest, drawn from an unrelated account of the same trip several years earlier. May have been a day or two sooner in Hull, but we know that it was a two-week round trip for the Tasso, so probably pretty close.
- Thursday*
October 5 – Depart Liverpool. Date from passenger list and Quebec port documents. Other information indicates that Allan had a departure every Thursday to Quebec.
- Friday*
October 13 – Arrive Quebec, 10:45 am. Date and time from passenger list. Heath inspection was completed by 1 pm. A CPR train departed for Montreal at 4:00 pm.
- Sunday*
October 15 – Arrive Winnipeg. Date based on the CP schedule from August, 1905, and assuming that their 4 pm departure from Quebec City would have given time to catch the 9:40 pm *Imperial Limited* from Montreal. Another 48 hours to Winnipeg, with a time change at Ft. William (Thunder Bay), and they arrived at 20:40 (central time appears to have been on a 24-hour clock in 1905).

The Pictures

1. The Allan Line emigration agency office, at *Søndre gate 25* (“25 South Street”), near the railway station and the Trondheim harbor, c. 1903. It was here that Helmer probably purchased passage. A package deal included the trip to England (via a feeder service operated by the Wilson Line), the rail transit across England from Hull to Liverpool, then on one of the Allan Line's transatlantic steamers to Quebec, and finally an immigrant fare on CP to Winnipeg.
2. The S/S “Tasso” in the Trondheim harbour c. 1900.
3. (background page 2) An illustration of the route for the Wilson Line's service on the Tasso (among others) from Trondheim, Kristiansund, and Ålesund, to Hull on the east coast of England, then

by train to Liverpool, and then out across the Atlantic on the Allan ocean liner to Quebec.

4. The “Landing Stage” at Liverpool in the 1890s.
5. The “Tunisian” as embroidered on an early post card. The destination written is an incredible coincidence, but this expensive post card is not something that Helmer would have ever purchased.
6. The port at Quebec City in the early 1900s as seen from the Citadel.
7. Canadian Pacific poster advertising the “Thunder Bay Route.” This actually predated the completion of the all-rail route through Ontario (1883).
8. Our best Norwegian impression. This is not a grammatical translation, only a collection of translated vocabulary that is approximately correct.
9. The Canadian Pacific station in Winnipeg, 1900.

The Ervig Family

Helmer Hanssen was born in Bjugn *kommune* (township), in the *filke* (district) of Sør Trøndelag, Norway on a farm called Ervig in 1862. He probably took the name Ervig as a fixed last name when he moved to nearby Trondheim (more on naming later). His mother, Ane Mortensdatter (b. 1825) did the same. His father was apparently named Hans, but family memory tells us that Helmer was an illegitimate child who did not know his father. We believe that his mother died before Helmer's emigration – she appears as a seventy-five year-old *vaskerkone* (literally translated as “washer wife”) in the 1900 census of Norway.

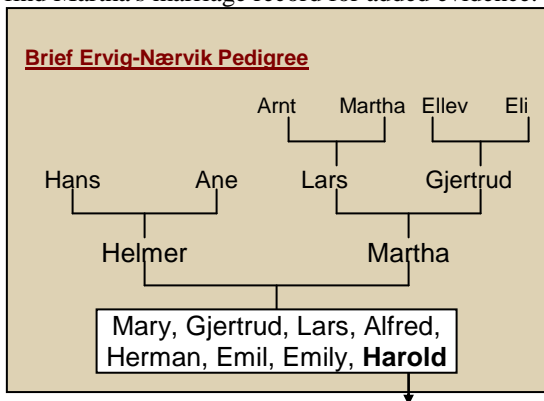


Helmer married Martha (probably Larsdatter) in about 1888, and by 1900 they had six children. The youngest in the 1900 census, Emil (b. 1899), died some time before 1902. A daughter Emily followed, named in honour of her brother – a common practice in Norway. Their last child that we know of was Harold (our line)

who was born on September 29, 1904, just a year before their departure.

Martha was born in the *kommune* of Ørkedal (also in Sør Trøndelag, but southwest of Trondheim) in 1867 according to the 1900 census. We have found an entry for a Marta Larsdatter which matches this place and year in 1875 on a farm called Nærviksøren (“south Nærvik”). This matches perfectly with family memory that her “last name” was Narvik. Not only that, but we have also made contact with distant cousins in Norway who have traced some lines back nine generations!

If we’re right about the family, her parents were Lars Arntsen and Gjertrud Ellefsdatter. Lars' family was connected with the Nærvik farm for at least three more generations. Gjertrud's family was associated with a farm called Kusæter, also in Ørkedal. Using the work of our Kusæter cousins we have identified ancestors in Ørkedal in the 1801 and 1701 census. The Norwegian census craze and patronymic naming has allowed us to span centuries where we had always assumed there would be an insurmountable brick wall. We would like to find Martha's marriage record for added evidence.



Helmer and Martha left Trondheim for Winnipeg on September 28, 1905 without their six oldest children. We believe that the children stayed in Norway with family of Martha. Five of them (Gjertrud, Lars, Alfred, Herman, and Emily) followed in the spring of 1906 with tickets purchased in Canada on the Dominion line, accompanied by a sixteen year-old maid. Their oldest child, Mary traveled the same way later that year. We have not been able to determine if she traveled alone or with a family she was working for. The second daughter, Gjertrud died of TB in Canada a few years after their arrival.

When they stepped off the ship in Quebec, Helmer had train tickets to Winnipeg, and \$10 in his pocket. He may have had a job offer in hand as a condition of immigration (which was growing more restrictive at the turn of the century). He worked at the Britannia Hotel in Trondheim as a *maskinist* (“engineer” – probably an electrical/mechanical technician). That hotel is still standing, and refers to itself as the first luxury hotel in Trondheim, est. 1897. In Canada Helmer worked for Winnipeg Electric until he was nearly blinded in a

work-related accident. We don’t know exactly when he started. The rest of their story (the little we know) was documented in the Pages 1997 book.

Patronymic Naming in Norway

Before about 1870, Norwegian surnames were quite literal – based directly on the name of the child’s father. This is a useful clue for genealogists because it automatically provides something to go on for the previous generation. The practice gradually faded, first in the urban centres for practical reasons (too many Hans Larssens!) and later all over Norway when the practice was legislated out of existence and everyone was required to chose a fixed *etternavn*.

This is how the Ervigs came to be named for their former address. Helmer Hanssen, known locally as just that, would have been known outside the *kommune* as Helmer Hanssen [of the farm] Ervig. When the time came to choose a fixed name, he became Helmer Hanssen Ervig. Our guess is that because he lived in urban Trondheim, the decision of a fixed name was probably already established by necessity – he had been using it since he left the farm. Not only that, but he apparently did not know his father, so perhaps did not feel any obligation to honour him by taking the name Hanssen by itself. Those still in rural areas may have had a harder decision.

The early Norwegian naming tradition goes beyond the surname too. First names were also essentially “prescribed” in the following way: The first son was named after the paternal grandfather, the second son after the maternal grandfather. Similarly the first and second daughter were named after the paternal and maternal *bestemor* respectively. Subsequent children were named for great-grandparents in no particular order. Or sometimes not. From the pedigree of Martha we might assume that she was their first daughter. Since she isn't, either her parents must have had another, short-lived Martha earlier, or they ignored the rules!

Like the patronymic surname, this practice also faded, so that there is no such regimented association with grandparents among Helmer and Martha’s children.

The Wilson Line’s “Tasso” – Trondheim to Hull

The Wilson Line operated an aggressive monopolistic business serving feeder routes from Scandinavia and northern Europe to transatlantic connection ports in the UK from the early 1850s. Although some of the major ocean liner companies served Trondheim and other ports directly for brief periods in the late 1800s, it was far more economical for their large ships to collect passengers at one or two common ports. Threats from Wilson to withdraw services completely also played a role in the eventual exit of the ocean liners from even the most convenient feeder routes for many years.

So although it was transatlantic shipping lines like Allan, White Star, Dominion, and Cunard who sold tickets throughout rural and urban Scandinavia to

would-be migrants for travel to America, it was Wilson ships which brought almost all the migrants to the UK. By 1905, the Wilson Line was the largest privately owned shipping company in the world.

Wilson's monopoly was decidedly bad for North Sea passengers, particularly emigrants in steerage. While competition on other routes forced improvements in accommodations, and the valuable tourist trade in first and second class encouraged good service, the treatment of steerage passengers was notoriously bad in the early years. Eventually, health authorities in Hull forced some improvements in meals and sanitation after several particularly disastrous trips.

The "Tasso" (II) was built in 1890 by Earle's Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. in Hull for the Wilson Line. Her dimensions were 270' long, 32' beam and holds 14.8' deep, poop 158' long and forecastle 37' long. The ship was refitted to take more passengers, probably before 1900, and lengthened in 1901. Tonnage was 1,467 tons gross, 949 under deck and 936 net. She was a steel construction, single screw Schooner with water ballast. Propulsion: triple expansion engine with 3 cylinders of 21, 37 & 61 inches diameter respectively; stroke 42 inches; 241 nominal horsepower; new boilers in 1899; engine built by Amos & Smith in Hull. In July 1911 she was sold to W. Morphy in Hull.

The Tasso was on a regular route between Trondheim and Hull for many years, with sister ships that together allowed a weekly service departing every Thursday.

Transmigration via Hull to Liverpool

The town of Kingston upon Hull lies at the point where the River Hull and River Humber meet on the east coast of England. Throughout its history the port has enjoyed successful trade links with most of the ports of Northern Europe, from Antwerp in the west, to St. Petersburg in the east, Le Havre in the south and to Trondheim in the north.

Though migrants have been travelling to or via the port for most of her history, it was during the period between 1836 and 1914 that Hull developed a pivotal role in the movement of European emigrants via the UK. During this period over 2.5 million transmigrants passed through Hull en route to a new life in the US, Canada, South Africa and Australia. Originating from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Russia and Sweden, the transmigrants passed through the port, from where they could take a train to Glasgow, Liverpool, London or Southampton - the UK ports which offered steamship services around the globe.

In 1904 the number of emigrants travelling through the UK via Hull had become so great that the Wilson Line leased a separate landing station called Island Wharf. Island Wharf was located just outside the Humber Dock in Hull and was one of 4 separate landing stations used by emigrants to enter Hull. Disembarking passengers would be grouped and met by agents according to the

transatlantic line and connecting route they were dealing with, and transferred to trains accordingly.

Trains were sized based on demand at the time, with baggage cars behind as many as nine or ten passenger carriages. The crossing took between four and seven hours depending on the time period and conditions. The Wilson line eventually partnered in a private rail company that allowed a very responsive and virtually seamless schedule and priority travel from the time of their arrival across to Liverpool.

The time spent in England was usually the least-favoured part of the journey for most emigrants. Not only was it expensive to wait in Liverpool for the transatlantic departure, but dangerous as well, particularly in the years before the turn of the century. In both Hull and Liverpool, organized gangs of thieves would frequent the docks in search of unwary, tired, and naïve travelers, who were often carrying an unusual amount of cash and goods.

The Allan Line's "Tunisian" – Liverpool to Quebec

The Allan Line was founded in 1854 as the "Montreal Ocean Steamship Company" (logo on the front page). The company was better known as the Allan Line after one of its founders, Hugh Allan. It was one of the first transatlantic steamship companies to establish a network of agents in Norway, and for many years it had a leading position in the transportation of emigrants from Norway to America. Most of the Norwegian emigrants crossing on the Allan Line ships went from Liverpool to Quebec, but they also sailed to Halifax in the winter (when the St. Lawrence, and the Strait of Belle Isle were closed) and operated a route from Glasgow to Boston and New York.

The "Tunisian" was a 10,576 gross ton ship built by A. Stephen & Sons, Glasgow in 1900 for the Allan Line. Her dimensions were 500.6' long, 59.2' beam, hull of steel, 4 decks, forecastle 54', bridge 177', and poop 40'. She had one funnel and two masts. Twin screw, triple expansion, 2 x 3 cylinders delivering 871 nominal horse power gave her a speed of 14 knots. At this speed, she could not challenge the 20-knot record holders for the western crossing of about five days at the turn of the century, but still made surprisingly good time. Thirty years earlier, before the days of the great ocean-going steamers, the trip was *averaging* 40 days from England and over 50 from Norway!

There was accommodation for 240-1st, 220-2nd, and 1,000-3rd class passengers (the latter being an emigrant class that had largely replaced actual "steerage", which was itself named for the low cattle decks that were minimally adapted for human cargo in the hold). Emigrant accommodation on such a ship was a far cry from earlier sailing vessels, offering 4-berth cabins with spring mattresses, excellent heating and ventilation, hot and cold fresh water on tap, and even dining and common areas for taking meals. All this for about \$35

(135 Kroner in 1905), Trondheim to Quebec.

Launched on January 17th 1900, the Tunisian sailed from Liverpool on her maiden voyage to Halifax on April 5th 1900. She sailed on her first voyage on the Liverpool – Quebec – Montreal run on May 10th 1900. She later served (on her homeward leg) the Canadian

Third class (steerage) passengers, almost exclusively emigrants, were at the end of their voyage at Quebec City. After health checks, mandatory inoculations, and immigration, they were fed and hustled off to one of two rail services, usually on the same day as their arrival. Some were forced to endure a lengthy quarantine, although this was less common.

427000

S. S. *Tunisian* Line *Allan Line*

Sailed from *Liverpool* on *5th Oct* 190*0*

Arrived at *Quebec* on *13th Oct* 190*0* at *10⁴⁵* o'clock a.m.

Landed at *10⁰⁰* o'clock a.m. Saloon *56* 2nd Cabin *365* Steerage *461* Total *782*

Bill of Health *leleau* No. held at Quarantine *None*

2ND CABIN INSPECTION

Medical Examiner *Hove & Potruis Hove* began at *10⁵⁰ am* completed at *11³⁰ am*

Civil Examiner *R Steier* began at *10⁵⁰ am* completed at *12²⁰ am*

No. detained for Canada *none* for United States *—* Total *—*

STEEERAGE INSPECTION

Medical Examiner *Potruis & Hove* began at *11³⁹* completed at *1⁵⁰ am*

Civil Examiner *S. Stafford* began at *11³⁹ am* completed at *1⁰⁵ am*

No. detained for Canada *2* for United States *3* Total *5*

C. P. R. passengers left by *Special* train at *4^{PM}*

G. T. R. passengers left by *Regular* train at *6³⁵ PM*

I. C. R. passengers left by *—* train at *—*

P. H. Gage
Port Agent.

Depending on the destination, they could take either the recently completed Canadian Pacific Railway through Ottawa, and above the lakes to Thunder Bay and the west, or the Grand Trunk through Toronto and on to Detroit and the US. The Allan Line emigration service would probably have included an immigrant travel discount on train tickets to the final destination, included in the total cost of the Allan Line fare.

The “special” CPR train (as referred to in the ship’s arrival documents at left) from Quebec City appears to have been scheduled to match the arrival of incoming ships, but connected to a regularly scheduled transcontinental service in Montreal, departing twice a day. Montreal was the eastern terminus of the CPR “main line” although they had several branch lines from Montreal serving the east coast and US. The *Pacific Express* departed every morning, and the *Imperial Limited* twelve hours later, at 9:40 pm. The Ervigs probably

Expeditionary Force in WWI, and spent some time as a holding ship for German prisoners-of-war.

By about 1910, after being leased ship by ship at first, the Allan Line was eventually taken over completely by Canadian Pacific. The “Tunisian” was later renamed “Marburn” and served various Atlantic routes for CP until she was sold for scrap in 1928.

The CPR – Quebec City to Winnipeg

The Allan Line ocean liner route from Liverpool made stops in both Quebec City and Montreal. First and second class passengers could choose their preferred port of arrival. For most of these wealthy tourists headed west it was Montreal, where they could continue in a first class train coach to Toronto, or by lake steamer as far as Thunder Bay.

made the connection on the evening train – there was little to be gained for any concerned to delay the process.

Although there were local railroads in Manitoba and farther west from the 1870s (where the terrain allowed much easier development), the CPR did not establish an all-rail passenger route through Ontario from Montreal to Winnipeg until November 1, 1885, just six days before the Last Spike was driven in Eagle Pass, BC, completing the first Canadian transcontinental railroad. This marked the beginning of CP’s global transportation empire, which was unique in the world. For five or six hundred dollars, you could buy a round-the-world ticket on CP.

There was a great deal of traffic on the railroad at the end of the 19th century, being one of only two practical

routes west, and the only one west of Thunder Bay until CN created a second line through, further north. Passenger service was at its peak. The steam engines required frequent stops for water, but travel times were seen as a marvel. The trip by river and trail from Fort York to Winnipeg took 96 days when the Red River Expedition had to do it the hard way to put down the first Métis uprising 1870. In 1885, the next time Louis Riel stirred things up, CP carried 5,000 troops there in *four* days. In the process, they secured government funding for the completion of the line later that year.

The arrival of the train at the many little stations and occasional larger town and watering stop was always a major local event, bringing news, supplies, new faces, and excitement with it. For passengers, it must have been an equally exciting time at first, during the daylight at least. Most stops were only a minute or two, or perhaps just a slow pass for mail. Watering stops were 10-20 minutes. After the first few hours of stations *every five or ten miles*, the rest of the 1,400 mile journey, through more than 200 stations, must have been spent wanting to throw the brakeman off a trestle.

In the early days, food on board was expensive and sometimes downright scarce, and most station stops were extremely isolated and poorly equipped, so passengers were encouraged to buy their own supplies in Quebec. However, competition with US rail lines and growth along the route resulted in gradual improvements, and by 1905 the Ervigs would probably have been able to buy what they needed as they went, either on the train or at station stops. No doubt this was done in a very frugal way, supplemented by staples like *hardtakk* from home.

Winnipeg at the turn of the century was a booming place with a large Scandinavian community. There were many rumours about it being the natural future capital of Canada. After all, Ottawa was a backwater chosen only because Montreal was too French and Toronto was too close to those grasping Americans. In retrospect, a central capital at the northern crossroads of the continent might have been a good idea after all.

The train made a longer stop in Winnipeg (almost an hour) to allow passengers to visit the local Land Office. CP at that time was selling millions of acres of not-quite-prime land in the northwestern prairies for six to ten dollars an acre. Even-numbered crown land surveys were also available to homesteaders for free after a ten dollar processing fee. It was in CP's interest to give prospective buyers time to shop.

Travellers were met by all sorts, from businessmen looking for workers to gawkers looking for gossip. It is fairly likely that the Ervigs found their way with the help of immigration officials to a Norwegian or Scandinavian association, if they did not already have acquaintances or family in Winnipeg. We don't really know. The name change to Ervick is still not clear – both Norwegian emigration and Canadian passenger list documents are in the name Ervig.

So 96 years after the original journey began, we find ourselves in a familiar place again after all. Just another ride on the regular genealogy train – from questions, all the way across the Atlantic, to more questions. Happy birthday Grandpa Ervick. All aboard! ❖

September 29, 2001

rev. 4, 2018



Typical CP passenger train, circa 1910. Inset: Schedule from August 1905. *Canadian Pacific Archives*