

The Immigration Story of Dimitrios Mimikopoulos (Greek immigrant)

[...]On March 30, 1958, my father, a Greek Orthodox Priest, my two uncles and two of my fellow police colleagues accompanied me to the port city of Piraeus to bid me farewell as I boarded the Queen Frederica which was destined for Canada.

I remember the Queen Frederica making a few stops at other Mediterranean ports where more immigrants boarded the ship. Unlike other passengers, I did not suffer from seasickness. I enjoyed the voyage and made new friends along the way. I can remember the staff hosting nightly events to entertain the hundreds of people on board. One of the events that I participated in along with 5 other young males was a drinking contest. The contest involved drinking a pint of beer with a straw. I was the fastest at drinking the beer and won a few small items among them a seahorse chain. The awards presentation was to be made the following night. However, due to the rough seas the presentation was cancelled.

One of my more vivid memories of my voyage was spending time on the decks of the ship. I remember my friend pointing to another group of people and telling me that the group was from the Peloponnesse, the same region of Greece that we were from. Years later, I met a young lady that had also made the journey on the Queen Frederica at the same time that I did. After discussing my voyage to Canada with her, I remembered that she was one of the people in the group that my friend had pointed out to me. I did not know this at the time, but she would become my future wife.

After several days at sea with nothing but sky and water, I started feeling anxious and excited to reach my destination. On April 10, 1958, the Queen Frederica arrived at Halifax and I recall the loud blow horn from the ship and the foggy weather. There were hundreds of passengers at Pier 21 waiting to be processed through Canadian Immigration. [...]

Dimitrios Mimikopoulos

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Canadian museum of Immigration at Pier 21