

I was so young when I was sent to Quarriers, I grew up with a regimental way of doing things. The older girls looked after me, you had to obey them. There was what we called a "mother" in each cottage. I liked ours. She showed affection, but not what you'd call family affection. I could discuss a problem with her, but we tried to work things out on our own.

All my life I stayed in touch with my second brother, Alec, who died in 1988. We were very close. He didn't have good memories of the home. I think it was because Andy didn't stay. Alec immigrated to Canada a few years before I did.

We saw our brothers at school, and at the playground, which we called the park. We played cricket, and we had tennis courts. Every summer, we spent two weeks by the sea. Quarriers had a big home we went to. Half the girls would go for two weeks, then half the boys. We'd swim and play all day.

I never heard about any abuse at Quarriers until after I left. Whether they were false reports, I wouldn't know. During the 12 years I was there, I never saw anything out of place. It was a good home. Nobody ever kissed me, but I'm not any the worse for it.

When we were 16 they found work for us. Girls who emigrated became housekeepers or laundry maids. I was a laundry maid at an estate near Glasgow. I visited my mother before I went to my new position. Because I had never seen much of her, I drew back from showing feelings. I only started to appreciate her circumstances

once I got older and understood what she had done.

I had always wanted to come to Canada. We'd heard so much about it, and my brother had already come. At Quarriers, they showed us films of Canada in different seasons—autumn leaves, snow. Canada was a home we could go to.

In 1930, I was 21. I came over with 20 girls from different cottages. I had to pay my own way because I'd been working, but I was a good one for watching my pennies. The passage was fine; some were sick, but not me. It took six days. The last night on board ship, we had a big party before we split up and went our separate ways. They passed out paper hats. We were all very happy, setting out on a big adventure.

After landing in Halifax, we took the train to Brockville to the Receiving Home. Two weeks later I was on my way to Ottawa as a housemaid. They were good to me. But soon the man was transferred to Montreal. They asked me to go but I didn't want to. I didn't like the idea of leaving again and not knowing anyone. There were three or four Scottish girls in Ottawa and we would meet on our day off.

Alec was working on a farm in Battersea. I took the bus to Kingston, and he borrowed the old truck from the farm. We had a reunion and the farmer's family welcomed me. I hadn't seen him in eight years and I was very happy. I was so homesick the first year, very, very lonely. If they had given me my return fare, I'd have been back home. The customs were not too different but I missed the home.

I got my next job myself. I moved to Kingston to be closer to Alec and saw advertised in the paper a doctor and his wife needed a housekeeper.

A bank messenger who was English came to the doctor's house to deliver something once. He heard my accent and said: "You haven't been here long, have you?" He invited me home to meet his wife and children. I was surprised he showed me this kindness.

I met my husband at a church in Kingston and we married at the house of the bank messenger. He and his wife became like parents to me, and their daughter stood up for me at my wedding. I am still in touch with their grandson.

It was wonderful when the time came to make my own family. I didn't talk much about my past. I wasn't ashamed; I just put it behind me. Some have been ashamed. I remember seeing a Quarriers girl in Kingston. I called to her: "Lizzie?" She didn't answer. "Aren't you Lizzie from the Quarriers home?" She didn't acknowledge me. After that, I never approached any others.

I've gone back to Scotland and to Quarriers, a couple of times. My brother and I went together. It was nice to see the village. They have kept it as Mr. Quarrier built it.

I've often thought about what it would have been like if I had been brought up with a family first. I'm definitely a different person than I would have been if I'd not been raised there. It made me independent and strong. □

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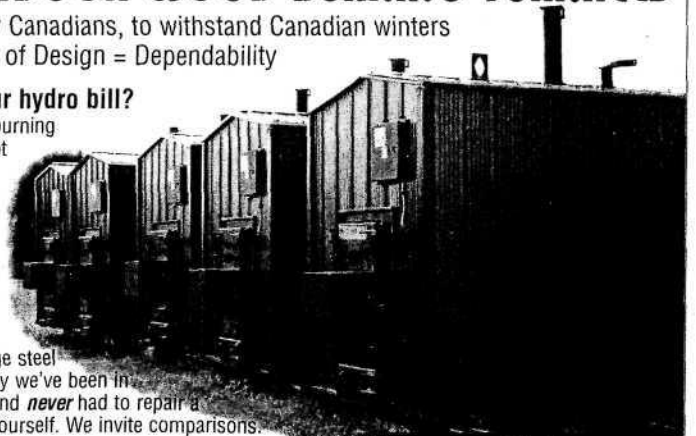
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