

We immigrated from Finland to Canada 60 years ago

It was bitterly cold in Vilppula Finland during the winter of 1957, when our family of eight left by train for Helsinki. Our neighbours and the villagers wondered about the purpose of our trip, and of all things why in the middle of winter. It was a private matter and our parents did not blow their horn about it. We children followed confidently where we were led. It was exciting to travel by train. The destination wasn't important.

After our arrival in Helsinki, on the top floor of a stone building, the bubble burst. Father announced solemnly, "We are here for a medical check-up before moving to Canada." For me, the 12 year old, first-born of our family, the news was catastrophic, surely a disappointment. I turned towards the window and gazed down at the Old Church park. Bitter tears streamed down my cheeks. At that moment I realized I was leaving all my friends and my native land forever.

I can't breath

In Reykjavik, Iceland the propeller airplane was fuelled. Our next stop was Gander, Newfoundland, Canada. It was bitterly cold in Gander as it had been in Vilppula. A freezing wind chilled our bones. We had to walk a long way to the airport restaurant for breakfast. During the walk, my four year old brother, Asko, tugged at mother's skirt and shouted, " help ! I can't breathe!"

Asko has written a poem expressing his feelings about our immigrant life of 60 years in Canada.

Eero Sorila



The Sorila family arrived in Sudbury Canada from Finland on April 4, 1957. From left: Father, Uuno Heikki (born in Tuuri 1908) Lauri, Mirjam, Eero, Pirkko, mother Alice (Born in Ilmajoki 1919) Inkeri and Asko. Photo: Family album.

New Arrivals

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| Tears: | mixed thoughts with fears family in tow
Eight huddled, where do we go? |
| Fears: | a new country language and culture waiting
The hand of our Lord leading |
| Welcomed: | no relatives yet among a family of believers we stand
Fed and housed by helping hands |
| Family: | new sights style words and phases
From tears and fears grow a family of fifty
By the grace of God the years now sixty |
| Thankful: | our experiences won't ring hollow
In turn we welcome all who follow |

Asko Sorila