

Kaarina Brooks
Finnish Immigrant
Anna Salen
August 3, 1951



THE DIARY OF A LITTLE
FINNISH IMMIGRANT

The First Year in Canada

Wednesday, July 11, 1951

Dear Diary,

I'm starting this diary today, because we're leaving our home here in Kuopio, Finland, and going far away, to a country called Canada. My name is Kaarina and I'm nine years old. My sister, Raili, is eleven and Äiti is thirty-two. Isi is five years older.

This train just left the Kuopio railway station with a shrill whistle and is puffing on towards Helsinki. Raili said she doesn't want to go and she just whispered to me that we should have jumped off the train and run back home to our Mummi. I don't think that's a good idea because I want to be with Äiti and Isi. Raili is angry as a bee and is sulking in the corner by the train window.

Äiti won't stop crying and that makes me sad. She feels very bad about leaving Mummi, because she's Mummi's only child. Our relatives were at the station and there was a lot of hugging and crying. Also the people from Äiti's work came to stand beside the railroad tracks to wave goodbye. That made her cry some more. She keeps wiping her eyes and blowing her nose.

We left Mummi crying at home. She was hugging me and saying that we'll never meet again on this earth. But of course we'll be back. I'm sure we're not going to stay in Canada forever!

I'm not too happy, either, because Isi sold our cottage to pay for our tickets. We always had so much fun there in the summer. The last time we were there this spring, Raili and I went into the woods and tore up as many lily-of-the-valleys as we could. We didn't want the new owners to be able to enjoy our flowers.

We have three big, heavy suitcases and Isi said the next time he travels he'll only have his wallet and a toothbrush in his pocket. He's trying to be funny to cheer up Äiti and Raili, but I don't think it's working.

We had to leave a lot of stuff with Mummi because of course we couldn't fit all the stuff we own in these three suitcases. Äiti's violin and mandolin got left behind, as well as our big dolls that open and shut their eyes. At first Äiti wasn't going to let me bring Vurre, my lamb's wool dog, because it's so old that it's worn shiny in places. She said "I can get a new one in Canada. So I asked her if she'd leave Raili or me behind and she began to cry and said, "Go ahead, dear, and take your dog!"

So now the poor thing is squished somewhere at the bottom of a suitcase.

After Helsinki we're going to Stockholm, Sweden, on big ferryboat and then from there by train to Copenhagen, which is in Denmark. There we'll get on a big boat and cross the Atlantic Ocean to Canada. I don't really know where Canada is, because we only studied the lakes and rivers of Finland last year in school. The place where we're going to be living in is called Winnipeg. Isi showed us Canada on the map and it didn't look to be so very far away, but since we're going to be traveling a long time to get there, I guess it must be pretty far. Sometimes, when he's being funny, Isi calls the ocean a big puddle.

Monday, July 16, 1951

Dear Diary,

Here in Stockholm they said, at the Immigration Office, that Isi was supposed to go to Canada by himself and that his family was supposed to come later, after he had got himself established. But Isi and Äiti told them that we couldn't possibly go back because we had no home to return to, and all our worldly goods were in these suitcases. So after some discussion, they said we could all continue on to Canada.

Äiti said that she wasn't about to let Isi go and face who knows what hardships all by himself. She wants to be there with him to start a new life. I like that better, too, because I want us all to be together. Raili is mad. She thought that she was going to get back to Finland, but she's not.

Wednesday, July 18, 1951

Dear Diary,

Now we are in Copenhagen. Our boat is nine days late, so we're staying with a Danish family in one of their nice bedrooms. This house is really fancy with pretty furniture. They have a daughter, Susanne, who is our age and she has lots of dolls and other toys. We told her that we had to leave our big dolls back home because there wasn't room for them in the suitcases. We have to use our hands and point at everything when we talk, and sometimes we have to draw pictures to show what we mean. We understand each other quite well, though. Susanne took us to a park to play with some of her friends. The girls taught us some Danish words and we taught them some Finnish words. The Danish ones are much harder, I think.

Monday, July 23, 1951

Dear Diary,

We are staying at a refugee camp near Copenhagen. Isi said that the bedroom in Susanne's house was too expensive for us to stay there for nine days. He heard about this place from some Finns and so we came here. There are lots of other people here who are also waiting for the boat, and some of them are from Finland.

Raili and I like it here. We live in a tiny room with bunk beds along the two walls and a wooden table, and not much else. The walls are made from some kind of thick, crumbly cardboard and someone has poked holes through them so we can see into the next room.

Äiti doesn't like this place at all. We have to line up for food in a big building with long tables. They have tin plates and tiny tin spoons that bend easily. When they break we can use them to draw pictures on the ground outside, or scrape new little holes in the wall, as long as Äiti doesn't catch us. She lets us sleep in every morning while she and Isi go for breakfast, and they bring us our food on a tray.

There's a Finnish man here who plays the guitar and sings. His family is still in Finland and he's going to Canada by himself. I know what Äiti thinks of that! And Äiti doesn't like his songs, either. She doesn't want us to listen to them, but I think they're pretty funny even if I don't really understand them. One is about a wet flag, which is black as an oven broom and has fleas jumping all over it. Weird!

We go swimming almost every day in the ocean. The water is really salty and I got a mouthful of it the other day. Yuck! Some days the water's edge is very far away and some days it's high up the shore. I asked Isi about that and he gave a long explanation about something called "tides". But I didn't really understand any of it. He always likes to

explain things and I don't want to hurt his feelings by saying that I don't know what he's talking about.

Yesterday morning, as we were on our way to the beach, we met that singing Finnish man and he was just getting home from being out all night. (I wasn't supposed to hear that!) Äiti pointed out to Isi that the man had red marks on his neck, and she seemed really annoyed about that and didn't even say good morning to him. I thought that was pretty unfriendly and impolite.

Friday, July 27, 1951

Dear Diary,

The boat we are on is called Anna Salén. Someone is always shouting "Achtung! Achtung!" on the loudspeaker and saying something that I don't understand. I wish he'd speak Finnish, so everybody would understand.

We haven't seen any other kids on this boat except two little boys. They are also from Finland. The older one is five and the other one is just a baby. On most days they aren't anywhere to be seen because their mother is seasick and stays in their cabin with them.

Today we had a lifeboat drill. It was terrible because the big smokestack kept blaring so loudly that I started to cry. We had to wear awful bulky, hard life jackets, and with all those people crowding on the deck and that horrible, deafening noise from the smokestack, I couldn't stop crying. Isi was mad at me and said,

"I told you, this isn't for real and there is no danger! So stop your crying, you big, silly girl!"

I knew it wasn't for real, but for some reason I just couldn't stop.

Sunday, July 29, 1951

Dear Diary,

Raili and I have red sailor coats with gold anchor buttons. Äiti had them made for us just before we left Finland. They look really nice, especially when we wear our new white long pants. Äiti doesn't let us wear the pants too often, though, because they'd just get dirty on the boat.

Every day we sit in a cozy little nook protected by a lifeboat and we make up stories about the ocean. The biggest foamy white wave is the Prince of Day and he rides off to rescue the Princess of Day. She has been captured by the Prince of Night, who is the biggest wave with no foam on it. All the smaller waves are the armies and they fight and smash against each other. On days when it's calmer and there are no big foamy waves it's no fun, but then we're not so seasick, either.

When we're feeling really awful, we try to make up stories to keep our mind off our stomachs. Sometimes it helps and sometimes we just have to run to the side of the boat and throw up. Once when I was hanging over the railing, a man told me that I should go to the other side of the boat where the wind isn't blowing towards me, so I won't get the goop all blown back on me. That's fine, except I don't have time to think about the wind direction as I run for it. Sometimes I don't even make it to the railing and that's pretty embarrassing!

Äiti, Raili and I are seasick a lot, but Isi never is. He sleeps down below the decks with all the other men in a huge room that used to be the cargo hold. It's filled with rows and rows of cots and is situated right over the propeller. When it's stormy (like it seems to be most of the time) and the propeller is out of the water, Isi says the noise is deafening. Äiti and we sleep in a cabin with bunk beds and five other women.

Wednesday, Aug.1, 1951

Dear Diary,

It's taking longer to cross this ocean than it was supposed to, because we were in a really huge storm. The boat had to stop and just ride out the storm for two days. It was so quiet in the cabin, but very difficult to stand because of the weird movement of the boat. No one was allowed outside and Isi said that hardly anyone was in the dining room. Even the sailors were sick, but not our Isi! He didn't have to put up with the noise of the propeller for a couple of days, which was good.

In the dining room we have to line up for the meals. There's a cook with a beard who dishes out the food on trays with little compartments. The food is good, but too bad we often can't eat because we're too sick even to look at it.

Some huge whales are following this ship. We saw their enormous gray backs and they were blowing spray way up into the air. I was a bit nervous and I asked Isi if they could upset the boat if they went under it. Isi said,

"Oh yes, and then they like to eat the boat for breakfast."

Of course I know he was just kidding again! But still, I'm glad that the whales are staying far off in the distance.

Friday, Aug. 3, 1951

Dear Diary,

We're finally in Canada now, after nine days on the ocean. The boat docked at Pier 21 in Halifax at 9:30 this evening. Everybody was so excited to see what Canada looks like, but I'm just happy that this boat isn't rocking any more. All I could see were streetlights and big, black buildings.

We got off the boat and now we are all sitting in a huge hall at Pier 21. It's filled with rows and rows of benches like a church, only it's much bigger and not at all pretty. The windows are dirty and there are flies buzzing on them. It's all crowded with people and everyone is just sitting and sitting, waiting to be called up to talk to one of the men who are at the front of the room, behind a long desk. They sure are slow!

I'm sick. Isi says I have a fever and he keeps feeling my forehead and my pulse. Äiti tried to give me some powder for the fever, but since there was no water to drink it down with, I couldn't take it. There is a big ugly sore on my upper left arm where the doctor on the boat vaccinated me for smallpox. We already got vaccinated in Helsinki, but for some reason my vaccination didn't take, so they did it again. That's probably why I'm so sick now, because I got a double dose!

We were told that there's a train for Winnipeg leaving near midnight tonight, but it's going through the United States and since we don't have visas, we can't go. We're allowed to go back on the boat for one more night instead of finding a hotel and having to pay.

Saturday, Aug. 4, 1951

Dear Diary:

I really didn't like sleeping on the boat. It seemed so dead and quiet because the engines were off. But Isi did sleep with us, which was nice. Last night Äiti and Isi went ashore for a walk while Raili and I stayed in the cabin. Isi said he wants to see if the ground in Canada is solid, or is it soft and squishy like a swamp, so that we'll all sink down to our knees. Of course he was just joking. They found a store that was open and brought back milk in a nice little glass bottle with a round cardboard

cap. In Finland we had to bring our own milk container to the store and they ladled the milk into it. I drank nearly all the milk because I hadn't had real milk since we left Denmark. They only had powdered milk on this boat and I didn't like it.

This morning we're going on a train that leaves for Winnipeg at 11 o'clock. I'll be glad to get going, finally!

Sunday, Aug. 5, 1951

Dear Diary,

Something terrible happened yesterday! Raili and I forgot all our ice cream wrappers on the boat, under the mattress. We had been collecting them in Stockholm and Copenhagen and we had a big pile of lovely silver and gold foil papers which we had smoothed flat with our thumbnail. They have Swedish and Danish words on them and lovely pictures with different shiny colours. We begged Isi to go back and get them, but he just laughed! All those beautiful silver and gold wrappers gone! I cried but it didn't help.

In Kuopio we used to collect tiny bits of coloured plastic sheets which we traded with the girls at school. They were pretty, but Äiti didn't let us take them along because we had so much other stuff to put into the suitcases. She said there'll be lots of nice plastic bits in Canada for us to collect. I wonder if girls in Canada really do collect plastic bits? But these foil wrappers were ten times nicer than any bits of plastic!

We're on a train, going to Winnipeg. This train doesn't whistle prettily like the trains in Finland did. It makes a loud, growling noise.

Monday, Aug. 6, 1951

Dear Diary,

This trip on the train is taking three days. Isi and Äiti sit in their seats, even at night, but Raili and I share a bunk in a sleeping car. The parents of those two little boys, whom we saw on the boat, offered us one top bunk because they don't need it.

Isi has a book called Tou- Wow which tells about the Finnish people who live in Canada. There are pictures of Indians, too! I keep looking for the Indians but I haven't seen any. It would be great to see some on horseback with their bows and arrows!

Isi also has a tiny dictionary that tells how to say things in English. I told Isi that I don't want to learn English and I'll keep on talking Finnish always, no matter what! English looks too difficult and I can't see how anyone can ever learn to understand it. Äiti said,

"Dear child, you just keep on talking Finnish!"

But Isi said that I'd just better start learning English because everyone speaks it here in Canada.

Actually I already know a few words. When a man comes around selling food I just say, "Ham sandvits!" and he gives me a little packet with two pieces of white bread with meat in between. It's very tasty. Then I say, "Tank you."

Tuesday, Aug.7, 1951

Dear Diary,

When we got here to Winnipeg today, we put our suitcases into a taxi at the railway station. Isi showed the driver a piece of paper with the address of the Immigrant House on it. The man waved his arms to show that it was just around the corner, so we took all our luggage out of the taxi and walked to save money. Äiti and Isi carried the heavy suitcases plus other stuff that somehow appeared during the train trip, and Raili and I had some bags to carry, too. Raili said she was so embarrassed by all this hassle. Everyone was tired and in a bad mood. Isi was trying to tell jokes, like he always does to make everyone feel more cheerful, but it didn't work. So then he just said, "Stop the whining and get moving! It's not that far!"

But it was, for me anyway!

Sunday, Aug. 11, 1951

Dear Diary,

At this Immigrant House we are staying in a little room with bunk beds. We sure have been sleeping in a lot of bunk beds since we left Finland! I always get put in the lower bed because I'm younger and move around more, Äiti says.

I'm kind of spooked by this house because there are bars in front of our window. The other rooms don't have bars on the windows! Isi said it's because they think that our family is a wild bunch. That's funny, but I still don't like the bars. I heard a man say that this building probably used to be a prison.

People are allowed to stay here for two weeks and by then they have to find work and a house to live. All that was explained at a meeting. Isi and Äiti didn't understand what the man was saying, but some of the Finns understood a little and were able to tell them. Someone asked what happens if they can't find a job by then, and the person showed them by tightening his belt. Everyone seemed to understand what that means, and they all laughed.

Isi said there are people from 27 different countries in this building. No wonder it's difficult to understand anyone except the Finns, of course.

Every morning a lady opens up a storage room and people point to what food they want for the day. Each family prepares its own meals in a huge kitchen with big gas stoves.

When Äiti is away at work, I eat white bread and strawberry jam and I also fry eggs when I get hungry. Äiti washes dishes at the railway station restaurant, and Isi goes with some other Finnish men to pave a parking lot for a Safeway store.

Raili and I like to go exploring in the yard around the Immigrant House. We still feel sad about our ice cream wrapper collection and have started a to collect bits of coloured glass. There's lots of smashed glass against the walls and we're trying to find as many different colours as we can. There is black soot everywhere from the trains because the railway yard is right besidee the Immigrant House. Our hands always get really dirty. We're not telling Äiti about our glass bits because she would probably make us throw them away. Then we'd have nothing again.

Monday, Aug. 20, 1951

Dear Diary,

We live upstairs in a house that belongs to two old people. They are from Poland, but they can speak English, because they've been in Canada a long time. We sleep in the living room and Äiti and Isi sleep in the bedroom. There is also a kitchen and a bathroom.

Whenever a letter comes from Finland, Äiti cries. Isi gets mad and swears that if she keeps on crying like that he'll tell everyone to stop writing. We don't think he will, he just hates to see Äiti crying. Raili told me that she prays every night that God would let her go back to Finland. I also miss our home up on the hill and our Mummi and our cousins.

The other day Äiti fried liver. We hardly ever got liver in Finland. It smelled so delicious that Raili and I pretended we were princesses and were having a royal meal of fried liver on golden plates.

Monday, Sep.10, 1951

Dear Diary,

Mrs. Wetton took us to school on the first day. She is a big Finnish lady who helps Finnish immigrants. She has a very small husband who speaks just a few words of Finnish. He's a Canadian.

The school is a big graystone building with a tall metal tower on the outside which has a spiral slide in it for a fire escape. Sometimes the teacher lets us slide down at home time. That's fun!

There are two other Finnish kids in this class, Eero, who is thirteen, and his sister, Liisa, who is sixteen. And there are two sisters from Italy - Angela and Isabella - who are about our age. We immigrants all sit in one row on the left side of the room. This is a grade four class, which is my correct grade, but all the other kids are older and should be in higher grades. Liisa looks like she really hates to be in school with all these younger kids. Her brother told us that she didn't want to come to Canada in the first place, but their parents wouldn't let her stay behind.

Thursday, Sep. 27, 1995

Dear Diary,

Every day at school we immigrants go downstairs to read from a book about Dick and Jane. I like the way little Sally is dressed with cute, shiny shoes with ankle straps. I've always wanted shoes like that! I think I'm the only one who doesn't understand what I'm reading. Raili got mad at me yesterday because I didn't understand when the teacher asked me a question. Raili said the teacher just wanted to know if I understand. Well, I don't understand! So there!

The math is easy, though, because numbers in Canada are the same as numbers in Finland. Thank goodness!

There's a girl called Vera in our class who has a skipping rope. At recess, if you want to skip, you have ask in a whiney sing-song voice, "Can I plaa -y, Vera?" Then she might let you join in. Once I really wanted to skip so whined like I heard others do and she said, "NO!" I was so embarrassed! I walked away quickly because I could feel how red my cheeks were. I'll never whine at her again! Not if I never, ever get to skip rope in my whole life!

Tuesday, Oct. 16, 1951

Dear Diary,

I found out that the book the teacher reads to us every day is Winnie the Pooh. I saw the pictures and I recognized Pooh Bear right away. Now I listen very hard and try to understand. I can always hear her saying "Pooh", but I can't make out anything else yet. We brought our Nalle Puh books with us from Finland and Raili and I know some of the stories by heart. We love them! He and Piglet are so funny.

I tried to tell the teacher that I know Pooh Bear and that we have the same book at home, but I don't think she understood what I was saying at all. I pointed to the book and to myself and said "Nalle Puh", but she looked at me with a kind of blank look on her face.

I think kids are better at understanding each other's pointing language, like Susanne in Denmark. And whenever we walk home from school with the Italian sisters, we talk about all kinds of things. We know what city they came from and how many brothers and sisters they have, and all kinds of stuff about them. We even know what they like to eat, like spaghetti and some round thing called pizza. We never ate spaghetti or pizza in Finland! We ate potatoes and rye bread.

Wednesday, Oct. 31, 1951

Dear Diary,

Tonight lots of weird kids are coming to the front door. They're all dressed up funny. Some are wearing sheets and some look like tramps. They all yell something that sounds like "Trikotreet!" and they carry bags into which the landlady puts candies. She called us down to look at the kids and tried to tell us what this was all about, but we didn't understand her. She kept saying, "Halovin" or some such thing. She gave us candies to take upstairs with us and every time the doorbell rings we run to the top of the stairs to see the different costumes. They seem to be having a lot of fun and I wonder how often they do this sort of thing and just what this is all about?

Sunday, Nov. 25, 1951

Dear Diary,

Sometimes, on the weekend, Raili and I go to the movies by ourselves. Yesterday we saw one about the French Foreign Legion. One man kept saying "My mother, my father, my sister, my brother." He said it many times and that's about all I understood. He got shot.

When Äiti is at work in the evening, Raili and I like to go for a walk down the big, busy streets and look at the neon lights. Our favourite one is above the door of a restaurant. It has an egg sitting on some grass. Next we see the egg with a crack on it. Then the egg is open with a chick standing there between the eggshells. In the last scene the eggshells have disappeared and the chick just stands there by itself on the grass. We watch it over and over again. It's almost like a movie!

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 1951

Dear Diary,

When we came home from school yesterday there were boxes and boxes of stuff waiting for us. Mrs. Wetton had collected all these donations from other Finnish families. It was mainly clothes but there were also some beautiful fragile balls and pointy shapes. We didn't know what they were, but Mrs. Wetton told us they are Christmas tree ornaments.

It was fun trying on the clothes. We pretended we were fashion models putting on a show. Many of the clothes were too big for us, but Äiti said that she knows a Finnish seamstress who'll make them smaller. There wasn't anything for Isi, but he didn't seem to mind. There were no toys, either. Too bad.

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 1951

Dear Diary,

I'm really scared, because I heard Mrs. Wetton tell Äiti that in Winnipeg it sometimes gets so cold that people freeze to death in the streets. The wind blows so hard that it just freezes them on the spot! I pray every night that we won't freeze this winter. I never heard of anyone freezing to death in Finland.

On the way home from school I make snow sculptures out of clumps of hard snow that the snowplough has pushed to the roadside. Yesterday I made a really cute, chubby snow baby that reminds me of my friend Anna's baby doll in Finland. I always dreamed about having a doll like that! I once told Isi how I yearned to have one, and the following Christmas I crossed my fingers and hoped that one of the packages would have that doll in it. I was so disappointed! When I asked Isi, he didn't even remember us talking about it.

Tuesday, Dec. 25, 1951

Dear Diary,

Merry Christmas!

Yesterday was Christmas Eve. Raili and I decorated the tree together because Äiti and Isi were at work. We hung those lovely, fragile ornaments that were in those donation boxes, on the branches. That's all the decorations we had, but the tree still looks beautiful. The people downstairs have coloured electric lights on their tree and they are very pretty. They're shaped like candles and have coloured water or something inside them. When they are lit, they bubble like boiling water. Lots of houses have coloured lights outside.

Mrs. Wetton said that in Canada the fire regulations don't allow you to have real candles on a Christmas tree. Our Christmas tree in Finland always looked so beautiful with straw decorations and candies in coloured wrappers hanging on the branches and strings of tiny Finnish flags draped around the tree. And there were the little, white candles with flickering flames, tied with string onto the branches and sparklers!

Isi came home from work after six o'clock but Äiti didn't come till seven. She made rice pudding for our Christmas dinner and after that we opened our presents. Of course Joulu Pukki⁴ didn't come, and although I know that Joulu Pukki doesn't really exist, still I was a bit disappointed. He always came after dinner to visit our house on Christmas Eve and brought the presents. I guess in Canada lots of things are different... even Christmas.

Raili and I each got a pencil and some candies and we opened a parcel that our aunt had sent from Finland. We were so glad to see books in it because we have read everything that we brought with us many times over. I got Heidi and my sister got Secret Garden. Since we can't read English yet, we haven't had anything new to read for a long time.

New Year's Day, 1952

Dear Diary,

Happy New Year!

Today we just got to Port Arthur, Ontario, after traveling all night on the train from Winnipeg with another Finnish couple. The first thing I noticed was a big hill.

"Look, everybody, a hill!" I cried, and everyone laughed.

I think we're all happy to see a landscape that looks more like Kuopio. Isi says there are lots of Finnish people living here. I think I'm going to like Port Arthur. I didn't want to stay in Winnipeg and get frozen on the street, so I'm glad we left! The man who came on the train with us has a sister here in Port Arthur and we're going to stay with her family for a while, until we find a place to live.

Tuesday, Feb. 12, 1952

Dear Diary,

Äiti and Isi both go to work at a logging camp and they only come home on the weekends. Äiti cooks and Isi cuts trees. Raili and I are still here with that Finnish family and the lady gives us our meals. The rest of the time we stay in our bedroom and read or draw or make up stories or do our homework. We lie sprawled out on the double bed because in this bedroom there's not even a table to work on.

I'm unhappy because I lost my toy dog, Vurre. It took a lot of convincing to get Äiti to let me bring it with me, and now I've lost it! I miss it so much. And I miss Äiti and Isi, too. My knee has a sharp pain in it sometimes and I have to limp. I don't want to tell that Finnish lady because I don't know what she'd do. I want Äiti to look at my knee.

The school is right across the street. They put me back into grade three although I should be in grade four. I guess I don't speak English well enough. They put Raili in grade five because she is much smarter than I, and is learning English faster.

Some days I come home at lunch time and I just sit by the window and eat cocoa and sugar and watch the kids in the schoolyard. Raili goes back to school after she has eaten, but the kids make fun of me because I'm fat, so I don't like to go and play with them. And my knee hurts when I walk.

Easter, 1952

Dear Diary,

Now we live upstairs in a house owned by a Finnish family. They have a boy who is our age, but never talks to us because he's shy and doesn't speak Finnish very well. We have a kitchen and a living room but the bathroom is downstairs.

We gave the boy some hardboiled eggs that we had painted with water colours, and his mom gave us big, decorated chocolate eggs. They are so

lovely that we don't even want to eat them! She also loaned us a big book of Arabian Nights in Finnish. The stories are scary, but the illustrations are beautiful and each one is protected by tissue paper. We are very, very careful with it, because she told us to make sure it doesn't get dirty.

I'm happy that Äiti doesn't go work at the logging camp any more. She now does house cleaning every day. That's much better, because now she makes our dinner and takes care of us. She looked at my knee and said that it's probably just growing pains. It feels better.

We go to a different school now. This is the third school we have been in during this school year. I'm still in grade three and I'm much bigger than the other kids. I'm at the back of the class and I mostly just sit and draw, because I don't like being here with all these little kids, doing baby work.

Sunday, June 15, 1952

Dear Diary,

At the end of our street there's a grassy field with a huge rock in the middle which we call "Sun Rock", because it's so nice and warm when the sun heats it up. We climb up and sit on it and make up funny stories. Sometimes we laugh so hard we fall off the rock! When we get home Raili writes the stories in a workbook and I draw the pictures. The stories aren't as funny when they are written down because we can't put our voices on paper the way they sounded up on the rock. We have our own publishing company called, "The Parviainen Girls' Publishing Co. Ltd." with our own logo and everything.

The stories we write are about a girl and her little brother who live alone with no parents. The boy gets into all kinds of trouble and the sister has to look after things. Two workbooks are full already and we're working on the third. We put cardboard covers on the books and they look really good.

Sunday, Aug. 3, 1952

Dear Diary,

One year ago today the boat landed at Pier 21 in Halifax and our family arrived in Canada!

We are now living in Longlac, a little village beside Long Lake, on the Trans-Canada Highway. We came here on a bus in July. To buy the bus tickets, Äiti borrowed all the nickels that Raili and I had been saving all

winter long in a little green cardboard box. She said they'll pay us back when they have more money. Isi works for Kimberly Clark as welder at the sawmill. Äiti does housecleaning for the company bosses in their fancy houses.

There are real Indians here who live at "Indian Point", just down the highway, but they don't have feathers or bows and arrows. They look just like normal people. Our best friends are two girls whose mother is Ojibwa, but their father comes from England, so they don't live on the reserve. We live in a very tiny motel right beside the railway tracks, but Isi and Äiti are going to build us a house and a sauna as soon as they have enough money. We already have the lot on a newly opened road by the edge of the woods. It sure will be nice to have our own house and sauna at last!