

It wasn't all sunshine and roses, falling in love with Lorne. As a young English woman during WWII, my father forbade me to do anything with the Canadian soldiers stationed nearby. The same went for Lorne. His mom told him not to bring an English woman back to Canada.

I'm Vera Brown of Waskada. I was Vera Booker till 1945, before the end of the war. That was a scary time. We experienced nightly bombing raids in southern England and witnessed, or at least knew, family and friends who died. There were constant blackouts and the interminable rationing. For us young folks, life became about living; having a good time in the rarified moments we had. There was no assurance the sun would rise for us. And we weren't even the ones fighting! I can't imagine what the soldiers were thinking. They sure looked forward to letting their hair down at local dances, though. That's how Lorne and I met. New Year's Eve. 1944.

Lorne charmed me, and fortunately my family as well. There wasn't extra money around, so friends offered their treasured ration books, which helped us raise money for a wedding dress and for a simple reception, almost 6 months after New Years. Yes, it was quick, but in the circumstances, why wait? Most brides those days made paper silver horseshoes to carry in the wedding. We needed any hope we could muster.

Lorne got to go home February '46 and I met him in May. There were hundreds of us war brides. We took a steam ship across. Then Canada sent us on a dedicated train. That was fun. Chatting about our hopes and dreams as we went. It dropped us off along its way across this never-ending country. There were even a couple male war brides on the train, due to Canadian service women falling in love while stationed in England.

That train ride. I had never seen or even contemplated so many rocks and trees, trees and rocks. And water! The trees eventually opened to a vast prairie! And at last we pulled into Winnipeg. Such a long journey. Such built-up anticipation. As we slowed, I saw Lorne

running alongside. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. We spent a few days in the city and then boarded another train to Waskada. Wow. Even bigger spaces!



The happy couple.

There was a lot to get used to. Creamed corn. I'm still not sure about that one. Wedding shower with speeches. We didn't do that back home; made my knees shake. Outdoor toilet. Yow. Tough in winter. Bathing in a tin tub. Only on Saturday evening though. And heating water on a wood stove. Somehow we made it. Raised three girls t'boot.

This country has settled my nerves. We seem so very far from any hint of war out here. I'll put up with a lot for a place like that!

War Bride was adapted from a story in Vantage Points 5. Please contact Turtle Mountain

See ya' later!
David Neufeld