

Good morning! My name is Amalia Martini. I have been invited to talk about my arrival in Australia, and this is my story.

I arrived on the boat *Oceania* at the Port of Melbourne on the morning of June 29, 1958. I was only twenty years old.

But my first encounter with Australia was a few days before when the *Oceania* berthed at the port of Fremantle.

Having been at sea for so long I was looking forward to stepping onto solid ground. But as I went with my friends onto the top deck of the ship, I fainted and hit my head on a post. I recovered, and we got off the ship to visit Western Australia, but by ourselves we did not venture very far. We bought some fresh fruit, I bought a delicious pear to eat and to nourish myself as I had eaten very little throughout the voyage. Once back on board I went to my cabin and into bed; we still needed to cross the Great Australian Bight and this sea, too, was very rough.

My fidanzato, Giacomo, had been anxiously waiting for me in Melbourne, as our boat had been stranded at sea for 2 days, but we were not told why. We desperately desired to be together as we had not seen each other for three years and were dreaming and longing for this ecstatic moment.

From the moment we embraced. we did not see much of Melbourne as we only had eyes for each other. We spent a beautiful afternoon at my cousin's home whom I had not seen for two years. Later that same afternoon we boarded the train for Adelaide and although the seats were made of wood and felt very hard the journey overnight was good compared to the traumatic thirty days at sea. I was sea-sick for that entire voyage.

We arrived in South Australia early in the morning to see a beautiful view of Adelaide from the Adelaide hills and Mount Lofty. I immediately fell in love with what I saw and was impressed with the houses as they appeared to be all one level. From the station we took a Taxi to a friend's place where I lived for the next twelve days. I instantly felt at home surrounded by Giacomo and his friends. (I had no immediate friends or family in Adelaide).

We were married at the church of St Francis of Assisi on Newton Rd Newton. Giacomo had helped to build this church. Giacomo had organized everything: the church, the ceremony, the reception, and invited 70 young people. The guests were friends that my husband had met at work during the three years he had been in Adelaide. My husband had prepared for us two rooms in a house that we shared with some other people: the kitchen and the bedroom.

From this time our new life together began and continued. We were blessed with two beautiful daughters, and five grand-children.

Life was, and is, beautiful for me, and till this day, I thank my late husband, Giacomo, every day, for bringing me to this amazing country, Australia.

Thank you everyone and many thanks to Australia Donna and the Migration Museum.