

NINETEENTH-CENTURY PIONEER AND IMMIGRANT DIARIES are a commonplace in American, especially Mormon, history. Twentieth-century accounts of crossing an ocean and a continent to reach Zion are rare, perhaps because the journey seemed both less hazardous and less romantic than in the days of sailing ships and covered wagons. Yet the later convert-immigrants felt the same pains at parting from loved ones in the old country and the same anxieties on arrival as they dealt with the pots-and-pans realities of settling down in the new.

My mother's diary, kept from the day she and her young family left Haarlem, Holland, on May 20, 1920, to July 11, six weeks after arriving in Hoboken, New Jersey, provides a fresh glimpse of the convert-immigrant experience in this century, all the more interesting because my mother, though limited to a grammar school education, proved to be a sensitive, observant young woman. Her diary, written with pen and ink in a neat, meticulous hand in a ruled 6½-by-8-inch hardcover notebook of the kind she may have used as a school girl, runs to 49 manuscript pages without margins, a bit of Dutch thrift, perhaps, to use every sheet from edge to edge. At my mother's death in 1977 at the age of eighty-six it passed to my elder sister Anne (the An or Zus, for Sis, of the diary), who placed it in my custody (I am the Wim, for Willem, of the diary), in the hope I would find time to translate it as a piece of the family's legacy. That hope has finally materialized.

My mother was Foekje Visser, born on June 19, 1891, in Amsterdam of Friesian ancestry. At eighteen she met my father Albertus Mulder, a nineteen-year-old apprentice printer from Delft, in a small Latter-day Saint congregation in Haarlem. Both with Dutch Reformed Church upbringings, they had, unknown to each other, responded to the message of a restored gospel preached by Mormon missionaries from America and, captivated by the idea of "the gathering," looked forward to "going up to Zion" from the moment they were baptized. They were engaged in 1910, married in 1913, and had to wait out World War I while my father served on border patrol with the Dutch Army before they could take the fateful step of going to America. Two children were born to them in the meantime, the An and Wim of the diary.

A loan from Foekje's older brother John (the Koo—pronounced Ko—of the diary),¹ already in the States as a "steamfitter" in the Hoboken shipyards, made the move possible. Making the journey with them was Uldrik (known as Henry once in America), my mother's

¹ The second syllable of John's Dutch name *Jacobus* produced his nickname Ko.