



BRITISH HOME CHILDREN ADVOCACY & RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

August 2015
Newsletter

This month

Columnist Andrew Simpson
and Guest Writer John Jeffkins

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Uniting the Past with the Present by John Jeffkins

Opening the Toronto Star on Fathers Day, the headline captured the essence of my journey - "A Century Old Secret... and a 30 minute unravelling". Magical is the word that comes to mind in meeting the family my father never knew. Albert Jeffkins, my dad, and his brother Reginald came to Canada from England in 1915 through the Barnardo program. As very young boys, they never saw their family again. Their mother/my grandmother, Minnie Jeffkins, kept it a secret so it was a complete surprise when I contacted the family in the UK. They had no knowledge of relations in Canada.

Minnie had three children out of wedlock, and in troubling economic times became too ill to properly provide and care for her family. A concerned neighbor placed my father and his brother in the Dr. Barnardo orphanage and Minnie kept their younger sister. This was the very last contact until I started my journey in March 2013, when I reached out to the Barnardo organization.

Six months later I was surprised to discover in my mailbox, a large package with my father's complete history, with photos. The timing was perfect, as it arrived on my birthday. Inspired one day to type into the search box on Facebook, "British Home Children", I joined the [BHCARA Facebook group](#) and read many posts on families seeking and finding family. So giving it a try, I posted some information and within 30 minutes through their volunteer research sleuths I was led to this connection with family in UK. The Toronto Star published a feature story on my journey to meet them, [The century-long family secret . . . and a 30-minute unravelling](#). The actual printed edition contained more information and included front page of the Insight Section plus two full pages.



Albert Jeffkins and his brother Reginald on the Bard farm by Orillia, 1919

Following several conversations on Skype, this past June my wife joined me on a trip to UK to meet the family. It was a pilgrimage to also learn about the life of my father before he came to Canada. We visited the picturesque village of Haddenham and found the actual house the boys lived in before entering the orphanage. My cousin kept a picture of the house with a photo of our great

[Continued on page 2](#)



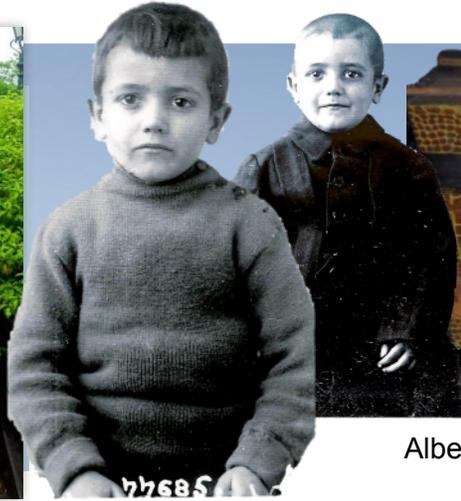
UPCOMING EVENTS

• August 13
Muskoka Parry Sound, Ontario Genealogy Presentation, speaking is Carol Black and Lori Oschefski

[British Home Child Day Celebration information](#)
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For more information on these events and more
Visit www.britishhomechildren.com

• August 22
One World - One Family Conference
Brampton, Ontario Stake Centre
BHCARA Display table hosted by
Beverly Schulz



Albert Jefkins, admission photo, after admission and his 1914 trunk



grandfather. As a bold Canadian I knocked on the door and we explained the history to the current owner and showed this photo. To our amazement, the owner ran inside and returned with the same photo framed and displayed in her home. It was a gift and she did not know the background or person in the photo and was thrilled with the information. We were invited to tour the home and although remodeled, some parts were the same. It was quite something to think I was standing where my father and his brother left 100 years ago in 1915.

The family was more than welcoming as we connected and built long-lasting relationships. We learned about my father's sister who was not placed in the orphanage and pleasantly surprised to learn of another younger brother. Although both have passed, we enjoyed meeting three family generations.

Returning to Canada, it is thrilling to know we have a new family of cousins. We also appreciated the situation on how my grandmother placed these two young boys in the orphanage to hopefully have a better life. These two young boys leaving their homeland at a young age, surviving and building a life in Canada is truly remarkable.

We often asked during our visit, how my grandmother and these children long passed would have reacted to this connection. Unlike the welcome we received from our family in England, they believed both their mother and sister would have been horrified at this discovery. The mother kept it a secret and although unsure if the sister, Elsie, remembered about these two boys, her brothers. Her daughters suspect Elsie also harbored this knowledge as when she was in her later years and not well, she spoke of things about the past. Taken as nonsense at the time, it was not until I reached out to them about the Canadian family that they realized Elsie was recalling her past.

Before this discovery, where I have many relatives on my mother's side of the family, I had none on my father's side with the exception of my sister after the passing of him and his brother. It is exciting to now have relationships with this UK family that will continue for generations to come. Our only sadness is both Bert and Reginald never reunited with their family.

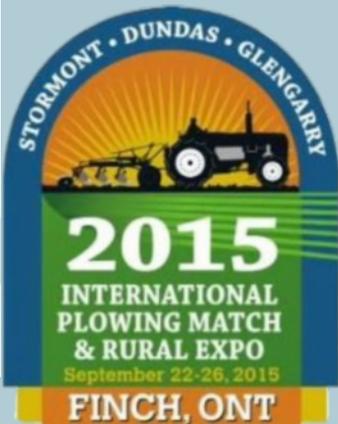
SPECIAL EVENT!!

International Plowing Match & Rural Expo

Finch, Ontario

Tuesday, September 22 - Saturday, September 26

8:30am - 5:00pm



Judy Neville and Walter Hambleton are coordinating a display about British Home Children for this event. Visit the display, and learn what over 100,000 children sent to Canada between 1869 - 1940's experienced. Most of them were sent to work on farms and in rural communities throughout Canada.

Descendants of British Home Children will be available to share your stories with and gather information from. If you are a descendant please share your story. We would love to hear about any and all British Home Children.

See the many walk-behind implements guided by these children and pulled by oxen, horse or mules. These, along with other farm tools the British Home Children would have used, will be on display

On Tuesday only you can see the sewing machine that Joan O'Malley, daughter of British Home Child Ken Donovan used to sew Canada's very first maple leaf flag. Joan O'Malley will be the Parade Marshal and will assist with the Opening Ceremonies on Tuesday.

Contact jneville0@gmail.com for further information.

Andrew Simpson

Author, historian, researcher

Reflections

Visit Andrew's blog
At
www.chorltonhistory.blogspot.ca

ENROLLED MEMBERS OF
"THE COW CROSS CANADIAN EMIGRATION SOCIETY,"
WHO HAVE GONE FORTH WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
"THE BRITISH AND COLONIAL EMIGRATION FUND,"
76 Families, 48 Single Men, 1 Single Woman.
IN OTHER WORDS,
196 ADULTS—262 PERSONS,
SENT AS FOLLOWS:—

State	Adults.	Ships.	Persons.
108½	-	-	196
26	-	"Medway"	39
14½	-	(Two Voyagers)	-
14½	-	"Moravian"	18
14½	-	"Nestorian"	18
18½	-	"Avon"	18
10½	-	"Prussian"	15
8½	-	"Tweed"	17
5	-	"Scandinavian"	11
1	-	"Austrian"	7
1	-	"Lake Erie"	1
197	-	-	262

OCCUPATIONS OF THE MEN.
5 Farm Labourers, 28 Ordinary Labourers, 8 Boot and Shoe Makers,
1 Shopman, 1 Saddler, 1 Tin-plate Worker, 1 Watch-case Maker,
1 Platelayer, 7 Carpenters, 1 Builder, 4 Carmen, 3 Plumbers,
1 Blacksmith, 2 Stonemasons, 1 Jeweller, 2 Matting Weavers,
1 Painter, 1 Plasterer.

Thinking about why they sent my great uncle to Canada, and lots more on a lazy August day.

Now it's an odd thing about spending your time writing about the past, because you strive always to remain dispassionate about the people and the events that flow across the page, even when they can evoke powerful emotions.

And of course British Home Children is one of those.

Like many, I had no idea that I had a family member who migrated to Canada and only stumbled on him when researching my mum's past.

His story and that of his siblings, and my great grandmother, and their involvement with the Poor Law Guardians and the workhouse is harrowing enough and in its way, typical of many.

The temptation quite rightly is to rage against the injustice. More so when you imagine one of your own children travelling across the Atlantic to an unknown future, cut off from family and all they knew.

By extension it becomes anger at the bigger picture which offers up thousands of stories of lives blighted by poverty, disease and hard unremitting labour, denied a decent education, living out lives in unimaginable squalor with only the workhouse at the end.

At which point I pause only to reflect that this is still the lot of many in the undeveloped countries of the world and even here in the west.

And we should never lose that personal connection with these injustices which wasted generations, but I am also reminded of that old saying "don't get angry get even". In this context that means exploring, in an objective way, the history of the 19th century on both sides of the Atlantic and being careful to look at the economic, political and social backdrop, while not ignoring the conflicting motives that led to policies like the migration of British Home Children.

So just the most superficial search of British social care will reveal that for centuries when faced with poverty, unrest and in some cases criminality, the response of the authorities was to ship the problem abroad, whether it was the transportation of convicted felons, or the resettlement of children and families to pretty much any bit of the former empire. In the 1830s in response to growing rural unemployment the authorities sought to send agricultural families from the depressed south to the industrial north and when this failed looked to Canada.

This policy was actively pursued by the Poor Law Commissioners with parochial aid or assistance from local landlords. The Commissioners reported that over 2,000 had gone to Canada in 1841 which was an increase on the year before, and that assistance was also being given for people to move to Australia and New Zealand.

All of which helps provide a context to the migration of our children from the 1870s and sits beside that voluntary migration of thousands of families west to North America and south to Australia, New Zealand and Africa.

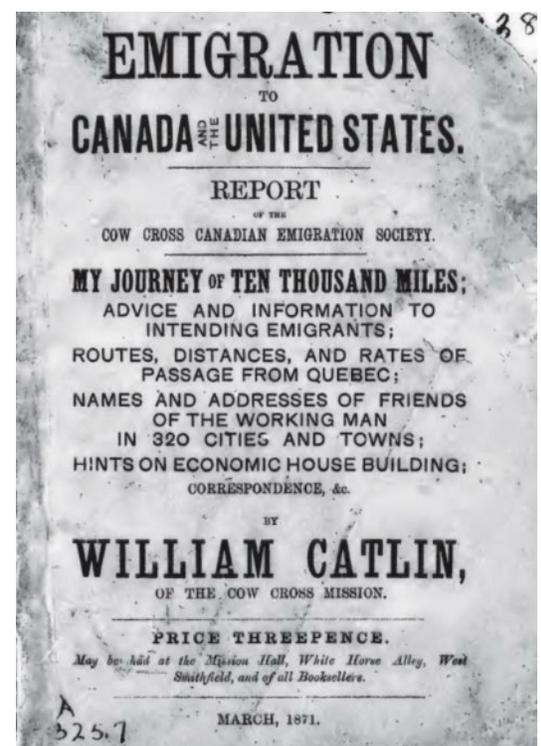
That bigger picture is partly about the ever restless drive of individuals to better themselves, the ruthless way one group can exploit the land of another and about an economic system which benefited from an underclass but feared them and regularly sought to export them.

And that I think is enough on this summer's day in August.

Other than to repeat that in trying to make sense of what happened to one of our own family members there is a whole history to go out.

Now that is the challenge.

Pictures; from the report of Cow Cross Mission, 1871, Emigration to Canada and the United States, Cow Cross Mission, 1871, http://archive.org/stream/cihm_05871/cihm_05871_djvu.txt





BHCARA News!

British Home Child Registry update!

Our work on the BHCARA British Home Child online Registry continues. Soon to be released on line, the BHC entries from both the Perry Snow / BHCARA database and the former Norah Dennis database (formally found at www.britishhomechildren.org site) are now tidied up, reformatted and merged into one for the first time! Currently, pending identification of duplicates, we have information of over 77,000 BHC. Mrs. LeeAnn Beer and her husband Don have taken on the task of building this registry and also the enormous task of merging these two different databases into one. Based on the many years of work by Perry Snow, we are endeavouring to create an extensive, researched, confirmed and historically accurate registry.

We have chosen a structured database where people have to select from information known to be correct. There will be a "memo" section for individual stories or additional information the contributor feels is relevant. For ease of searching and accuracy the structured database is the best. We will actively take steps to verify that the information entered into our registry is correct. The danger of a free form database where anybody can enter any information they wish is that the data may be inaccurate and therefore historically incorrect. As one of the main uses of the registry is to provide people with information required to research their family history, we feel that it would be irresponsible to potentially lead those people down the wrong path by taking the easy route of a free form database which may as well be called a "free for all" database. Our aim is to maintain the careful collection and the integrity of the Registry's originator Perry Snow.

All members who are registered as having "claimed" a child in either database, and whose e-mails are still active, will be notified by e-mail when the final British Home Child Registry is released on-line.

British Home Child Day Celebration

We are pleased to be bringing you our second British Home Child Day Celebration at the Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto. Last year's event was a huge success!

Guest speakers this year include Kenneth Bagnell, Author of "The Little Immigrants"; John Sayers of the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa, Dianna Hanson Fulton, Chair of the Ontario Genealogical Society BHC SIG; and James Gilchrist, Author of "Marchmount".

The day will feature day long exhibits, free on site genealogical help provided by the OGS BHC SIG and John Sayers and our 450 square foot BHC exhibit will be opened all day too!

To view our poster please use your zoom key.

Afternoon tea on BHC Day September 27th!

We will be hosting a special afternoon tea and light lunch in the Canada West Room. Guests will be treated to a delicious light lunch, an exquisite tea experience and the opportunity to share their BHC stories. Guests are also invited to bring their artifacts to share with others! Tables will be provided for these items.

The afternoon tea is a ticketed event and seating is limited. For ticket prices and purchasing please visit www.blackcreek.ca. For those not wishing to attend the tea, regular admission prices apply.

The future of BHCARA

Last year the British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association was under increasing pressure from conflict of interests within its board members. This conflict came to a head in the fall of 2014 resulting in the loss of six of our Directors.

Eight months later, with lessons learned and after very careful consideration, the CEO of the BHCARA has decided to expand with a new board of Directors. Board members **must** be related to a British Home Child, and must be committed to our British Home Children first and foremost. In September we will be announcing our new board and plans for 2016. The support for BHCARA is strong and we will build on this moving forward.

BRITISH HOME CHILD DAY CELEBRATION 2015
AT THE
BLACK CREEK PIONEER VILLAGE IN TORONTO
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27
11:30 AM
An all day event in the Village
Special light afternoon luncheon offered
Canada's largest BHC exhibit opened all day

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

Kenneth Bagnell
Author of "The Little Immigrants"

John Sayers
of the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

Dianna Hanson Fulton
Chair person of the Ontario Genealogical Society BHC SIG

James Gilchrist
Author of "Marchmount: Distributing Home, Belleville, Ontario"

Lori Oschefski
BHC Advocacy & Research Association
Author of "Bleating of the Lambs"

Special appearance by Toronto's Bold Step Dancers

Light Lunch, Tea and Open Mic
Hosted by Cory-Lee Maddock-Stiles

Guests are invited to enjoy delicious light lunch & exquisite tea experience while sharing their BHC stories. Space is available for your artifacts!

This is a ticketed event - space is limited! 1 pm to 3 pm
Contact Black Creek to reserve your spot!
Tickets: \$34.95 include admission, parking and lunch

Special guest speaker: John Jenkins will tell us about his recent trip to England to meet his Father's family!

Our 2014 BHC Day event

BLACK CREEK Brought to you in partnership with the BCPV & BHCARA

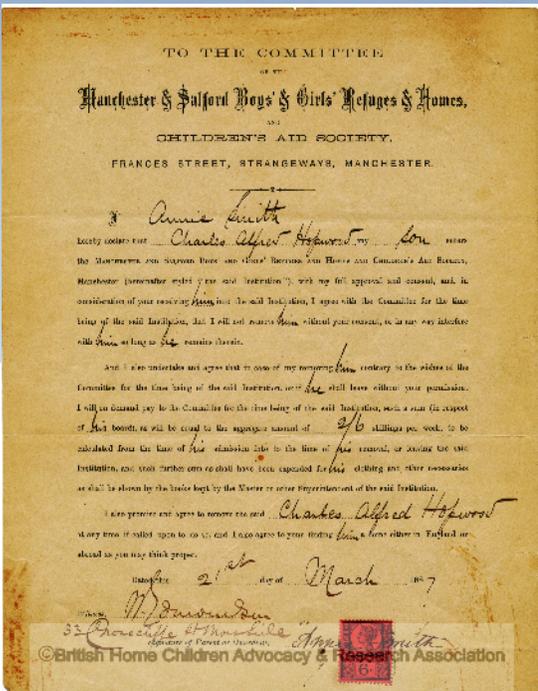
New to our collections

Over the past 3 years of operation, the BHCARA has amassed a large and growing collection of artifacts including trunks, magazines, books, penny boxes, documents, postcards and other related materials relevant to our British Home Children. We are currently structuring an "on line" museum to showcase our vast collections. Although far from complete, this museum can be viewed on our web site at www.britishhomechildren.com

All profits from our Fund Raising Book "[Bleating of the Lambs](#)", now in its second printing, goes towards the work of the organization - including the building of this collection. Our [2014 financial statement](#) was released recently. Click on "[Where does the money go](#)" to view the BHCARA activities

Manchester & Salford Boys & Girls Refuges & Homes admittance document

An 1887 admittance record from the Manchester & Salford Boys & Girls Refuges & Homes. Charles Alfred Hopwood appears to have been the child of single mother Annie Hopwood. We have identified their family through Ancestry.com and have contacted them. Charles was not a British Home Child, however this document is very interesting none the less, as many of our children were sent through this organization. This document is historically very important as it's outlines clearly the retrieval of your child once surrendered would be very difficult and repayment to the organization of monies spent would be expected. It also states that they organization could remove the child from England. Now called the "[Together Trust](#)", the 140 year old archives of the children who were brought here to Canada have been digitized with the help of ancestry.co.uk.



First World War era collection tin and paper tray

The address on the side of the tin dates these items to the First World War era. 18 26 Stepney Causeway London, which would date this tin pre 1922, Opened in 1870 at 15 Stepney Causeway, by 1876 they had expanded to #18 to #26. On the 19 April 1922, 260 boys marched out from Stepney to go to their new home The William Baker Memorial Technical School. Fund raising has historically been an important and critical part of Barnardo's work with children. We are delighted to have these impressive items to add to our collection of Penny Boxes.

For more history on Stepney Causeway, visit: [Children's Homes](#)

More on the history of Barnardo's from their web site "[Barnardo's Children](#)"



Vintage book collection additions

Also purchased this month were two new vintage books for our impressive collection of over twenty vintage books relating to our British Home Children!

In the 1875 book "[Children Reclaimed for Life](#)", author Godfrey Holden Pike honours the work done by Dr. Barnardo. Of particular interest is his take on the extensive photography done by Dr. Barnardo - "*The series of striking photographs published by Dr. Barnardo enable those who choose to procure them to understand the nature of the work in progress far better than mere verbal descriptions. The past and the present condition of the lads is forcibly portrayed by the photographer's art, and the result is a series of transformation scenes both unique and affecting. The same subjects are placed before us under different circumstances. In the one we see a boy 'sleeping out' on the stones; in the counterpart the same person appears as he is in the Home, 'tucked up for the night.' Here sits one in the street 'Please sir, I've got no work to do,' and there he is again in a comfortable uniform and happy face 'But I'm in work now, you know.' There is a group as they appeared when 'on the streets,' and there they are as they look at present. The series includes sixty of these instructive and entertaining scenes, which all persons who are interested in the good work should procure. Present hope contrasts with former despair, and present comfort with former indignance, in a very striking manner.*"

Added to our collected of Emma Stirling books is her very first book written in 1861. - [The History of a Pin](#). Told as a children's story, Emma clearly had messages for adults and this clearly laid out her plans for her life's work with children - the need for institutions to house children from the streets, to rescue them and to train them in domestic services in order to provide them with useful lives.

Emma Stirling's central character is a girl named Bat who is rescued from poverty, cared for in an institution and becomes a domestic servant.

An excerpt from the book Victorian Philanthropy and Child Rescue: [The Career of Emma Stirling in Scotland and Nova Scotia, 1860-95](#) by Professor Girard :

"Stirling's treatment of one of the central characters in her book, a beggar girl named Bat, shows that her ideas about the role of philanthropy were already well formed at this point in her life. Bat is in the care of her grandmother, a poor but disreputable woman who forces Bat to steal to help them survive. When Bat befriends a kindly man who feels sorry for her, Granny fears that she will confess her crimes to him. To forestall the exposure of her own guilt, the unnatural grandmother arranges for Bat to be killed by a shadowy male figure. He strikes Bat and leaves her for dead in a forest, but she is revived by a friendly dog. Now completely on her own at age nine, Bat is convicted of vagrancy and sent to a "Female Reformatory and Industrial School" for six years. Here she is well cared for: "good regular food, exercise, and sleep, soon told their own tale." At the end of the book, Bat turns up as a domestic in an aristocratic household, where she is well-behaved, useful and "a general favourite both with her ladies and fellow-servants ."

