

# British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association

Written by Lori Oschefski, Andrew Simpson  
and a special member submitted story by Mary Ferguson

October  
2016  
Newsletter



## Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> British Home Child Day at Black Creek Pioneer Village

9:30 am Door's open - Canada West Room  
9:30 to 9:45 - Opening - Lori Oschefski  
9:45 - 10 am - introducing Bob Huggins  
10:00 - 10:45 - Author Marjorie Kohli  
10:45 - 11:15 Folk Singer Marion Parsons  
11:15 to 11:30 BHC George Beardshaw  
11:30 to 12:30 Lunch & Visit park/exhibit  
12:30 to 2:00 Open Mic with John Jeffkins,  
2:00 to 2:45 - Film Producer Bob Huggins  
2:45 to 3:00 - Closing song by Marion Parsons

General admission at the gate. Please reserve  
your spot, if possible, at [www.BlackCreek.ca](http://www.BlackCreek.ca)  
Coffee, tea, snacks available in the Gift Shop

*Lunch is available to purchase  
at the Village Pavilion*

## Student Bursary Contest details on page 4!

It is Thanksgiving in Canada, a time to reflect and give thanks for our harvest and the blessings of the past year. It has been a very successful year for the BHCARA. Through our work, the story of our BHC has been in the spotlight constantly. We give thanks to all involved in this work, as we could not accomplish so much if not for our members. This is a time also to reflect on the good things our BHC contributed, not only to Canada, but also other countries where they settled. Their descendants have compounded these contributions around the world immeasurably.



## ■ A British Home Child's legacy in the fight against Cancer

### Florence Elizabeth Seymour 1891- 1983

By Lori Oschefski

Florence Seymour was born on the 4th of December, 1891 in Liverpool, England. She was the eldest of three sisters, Rose, born in 1899 and Catherine, born in 1901. Florence and Rose are found living in West Derby in the 1901 census, their mother Emily listed as a widow. Catherine was born very shortly after the 1901 census was taken. Emily's husband was thought to have been an officer in the British Army, but very little is known about him. It is assumed that he died sometime before Catherine's birth in 1901. Emily, like many other single mothers, found herself in a difficult position of trying to support and raise children on her own. The children were relinquished to the care of the Dr. Barnardo Homes. The exact circumstances and the date remains unknown, but it is thought to have been shortly after Catherine's birth in 1901.

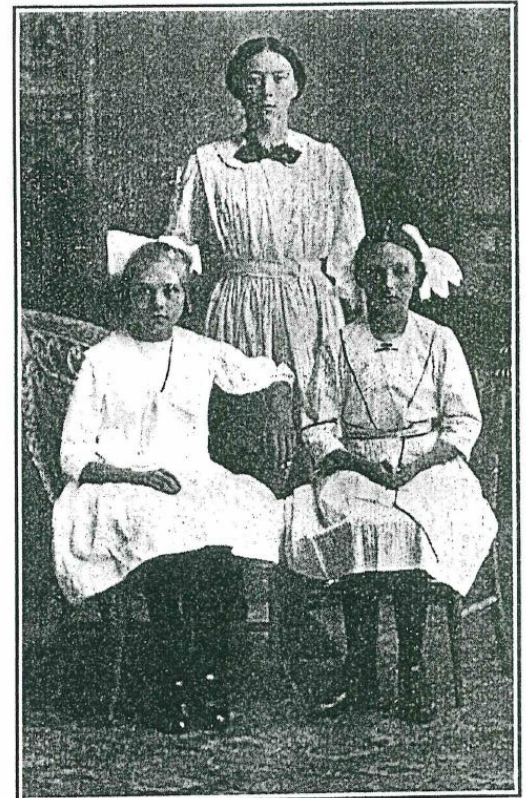
Florence was sent to Canada on the 19th of April, 1904 aboard the SS Kensington. Upon arrival she was taken to the Hazel Brae Home in Peterborough, then put out to work. According to the family story, Florence was placed with two spinster teachers. When she finished grade school, the teachers decided she'd had enough education and pulled her out of school to put her to work full time on the farm.

Rose and Catherine arrived in Canada together, also through the Dr. Barnardo Homes, on the 28th of May, 1909.

In about 1914, Florence was "adopted" by a physician's family from the USA. When vacationing in Canada, the family met Florence and decided to bring her back to New York as their nanny. The family was good to her and allowed Florence to finish her schooling. She trained as a nurse in the New York Hospitals.

Florence also worked for other families, one taking her to the Jersey Shore to care for their children while on vacation. While working there, she met George Robert Pettit who worked in the area delivering ice for his father's business. Love flourished and couple were married in Manhattan, New York on the 14th of April, 1928. Shortly after, they relocated to West Long Branch.

George Robert Pettit, known as Robert, their first born son, arrived on the 8th of June, 1929. Life was not easy for this new couple and their new born son.



FLORENCE, ROSE AND CATHERINE SEYMOUR.

With the crash of the stock market, George, then working with the New York Central Railroad, lost his job. With Florence, haven given up her work while pregnant, they found themselves "thrown to the wolves." There were no social systems in place to help families in need. The family managed to survive a few years by George working odd jobs and Florence taking in laundry at 25¢ an hour. Some relief came when in about 1933, West Long Branch, initiated a welfare program. Still the family struggled, on the brink of starvation at times, surviving on an endless supply of potatoes, eating them for breakfast, lunch and dinner!

Two more children were born during this time, Stanley in 1932 and Kenneth in 1936. With a hungry and growing family of five, her husband working odd jobs, Florence was forced to look for more work. Things took another turn for the worse in 1937, when Stanley, only five years old, became seriously ill. By the



## Florence Seymour continued...

time the destitute family were able to get medical help, it was too late. Stanley died of a burst appendix.

Florence herself became seriously ill with scarlet fever. Anxious that she would die, her son Robert stayed by her side. With sheer tenacity and a strong will to survive, Florence rallied and continued to fight for her family. She stood up to foreclosure efforts made on their home and thwarted attempts to repossess their family car. However, they lost the battle to keep their home. Things improved when George was hired back by the New York Central Railway and Florence found work making clothing for the troops during the Second World War. The family was never very well off, but Florence and George loved their sons and cared for them the very best they could.

Robert suffered from bullying while in school. At its worst, his nose was broken by other kids beating him up. It was clear to him that there were certainly some bad people in this world. It also was clear to him, that he had to be tenacious and tough to survive.

When Robert was young, his neighbour, Albert, invited him over one night to play with a new chemistry set he'd received. A new passion was born in Robert. At ten years of age he earned enough money by mowing lawns to purchase his own chemistry set. Robert never looked back, becoming one of the world's top organic chemists. He specialized in anti-cancer treatments, holding sixty-five anti-cancer patents at the Arizona State University. Robert founded the Cancer Research Institute on the campus

and pioneered the development of anti-cancer drugs from marine compounds.

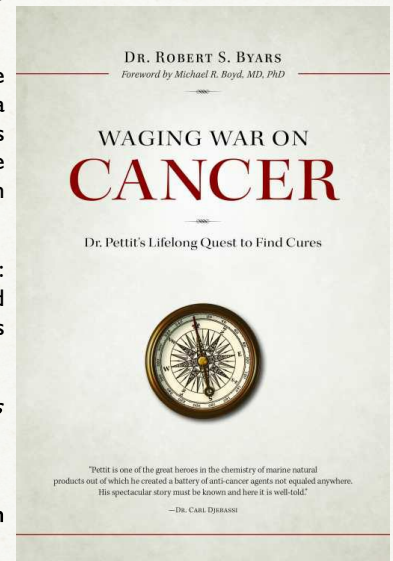
Over the years, Florence's sisters were able to keep in touch with her, often visiting her in the United States. In 1983, Robert was speaking at an international symposium in Paris, when he received a telegram telling him that his mother had died of a stroke, in her sleep.

Dr. Robert Pettit's story is told in the book "Waging War on Cancer", a true story of a how society has greatly benefited from the humble beginnings and struggles of a British Home Child.

Sources: Waging War on Cancer: Dr. Pettit's Lifelong Quest to Find Cures, by Dr. Robert S. Byars (Friesen Press, 2015).

*Published with the kind permissions of Dr. Robert Byars and Dr. Robert Pettit*

For information on "Waging War on Cancer" please visit:  
[www.robertsbyars.com](http://www.robertsbyars.com)



**STUDY THIS CAREFULLY**  
from time to time.

**DONT'S - AND - DO'S.**

(1) <b>DON'T</b> leave your place without our permission, this only brings further trouble to you. No boy is permitted to stay at any place he goes to himself. If you have any difficulty, write to the "Home" immediately.	(6) <b>DO</b> write home to your friends regularly, say on the first day of each month. If short of stationery or stamps, ask your people to obtain some for you and charge same to your wage account. Write <b>CHEERFULLY</b> , not <b>COMPLAININGLY</b> .
(2) <b>DON'T</b> listen to other folks' "yarns" about the people you live with, and do not gossip with others about the family affairs of your employer. Remember what you see and hear is <b>PRIVATE</b> and should not be repeated elsewhere.	(7) <b>DO</b> always speak the truth, <b>whenever the occasion and whatever the cost</b> . If you have made a mistake, or forgotten, or even broken anything, own up like a man and frankly admit it. <b>IT PAYS BEST</b> .
(3) <b>DON'T</b> grumble or complain unnecessarily, or imagine troubles. Be quite straightforward and frank with everybody, so that your word can always be trusted.	(8) <b>DO</b> make a confidant of Mr. Fegan's <b>VISITOR</b> when he calls. Remember that he is your friend and comes purposely to see <b>YOU</b> , and to help you in any way he possibly can. Take his advice and you will not make many mistakes.
(4) <b>DON'T</b> be cruel to cattle or horses, etc. Remember that dumb animals have feelings just like you. Neglect the feeding or watering them is <b>Cruelty</b> . Be kind to them and they will generally become obedient to you. This is very <b>IMPORTANT</b> .	(9) <b>DO</b> take care of your <b>HEALTH!</b> <b>DO</b> take care of your <b>CHARACTER!</b> <b>DO</b> take care of your <b>CLOTHES!</b> Keep sweet all the time and cultivate a "regular smile" which nothing can wipe off.
(5) <b>DON'T</b> neglect <b>CHURCH</b> and Sunday School. No person commands respect who is negligent in this matter. We expect you to attend regularly, and will remove a boy immediately from any place where this is not made possible.	(10) <b>DO</b> be kind and courteous to everybody—particularly to Women and Children. Keep on good terms with the "MISSUS," and do any chore for her that you are able to. <b>BE</b> especially <b>gentle</b> where there are young girls, and <b>never</b> show any rudeness whatever to them. <b>THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT.</b>

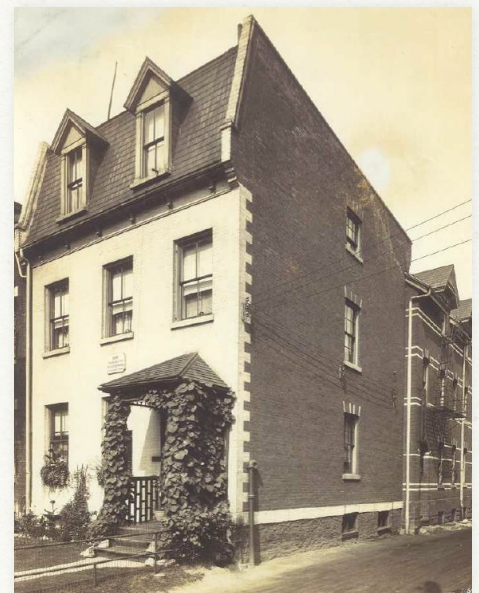
**DO NOT USE OTHER PEOPLE'S SWEAR WORDS—BE a Boy—not a Parrot!!**

**TEXTS—**"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men." *Prov. 4, 14.* "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." *Isaiah 26, 4.*

## "Dont's and Do's" for Fegan children in Canada

Each organization had its code of conduct for the children to follow. These are the rules set out by the Fegan Homes for their children in Canada.

Visit our website for Fegan information



Fegan receiving Home  
295 George Street, Toronto



# The debt we owe to all British Home Children

By Author and Historian Andrew Simpson

"I'm the man that built the bridges.  
I'm the man that laid the track.  
I'm the man that built this country.  
With my shoulders and my back."

If you want a simple four line chorus which sums up the contribution of British Home Children to the history of Canada, Australia, and other bits of the old Empire I don't think you can better Tom Paxton's "I'm the man that built the bridges."

It was written in 1962 influenced by the songs of Woody Guthrie and fitted perfectly my view of history when I first heard in 1966.

At the time I knew nothing of the story of British Home Children and it would four more decades before I uncovered the story of our own BHC.

That discovery brought forth a mix of emotions, from surprise that he existed, and more over that no one in the family had told me about him, to anger as I unpicked the general history of the that policy of migration and indignation at the way some of the young people were treated.

But history is messy and open to interpretations which do not always sit easily with our prejudices and so set against the cynical policy of exporting a perceived "problem" and often ruthless exploitation of the young migrants in the new country there were those who genuinely believed the policy was beneficial along with many success stories of children who "made it good."

Those success stories will be there in many of our own BHC and appear in the archives of the charities involved in the migration. The Together Trust was one of these. It was formerly the Manchester & Salford Boys' & Girls' Refuges, which was established in 1870 and from 1872 till 1914 migrated some of its young people. Their letters home to the charity record their success and the opportunities they seized on in their adopted country. These were not propaganda pieces published by the organization but were short personal testimonies of achievements.

Of course they can be matched by tales of abuse, and deep feelings of home homesickness, and rejection which often never went away and blighted adult lives.

All of which means there is a balance to find.

And it starts with those who fought in both world wars.

From the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 and again in 1939 BHC formed an important element of the men who volunteered for the Canadian Expeditionary Force or returned to Britain to enlist and also continued after the introduction of conscription.

For others the contribution is there in the factories, as well as the offices, schools and hospitals and in the highways, bridges and dams that were constructed in the century and half since migration started.

But in all of this we seem to miss the other British Home Children, the ones who weren't migrated but instead waved good-bye to siblings who pretty much went out of their lives forever.

We might not think of them as British Home Children and technically they weren't but they faced the same experiences and challenges.

In our case that meant great uncle Roger's two brothers and sister who like him had spent their child hood in care and whose early life was no less bleak than those who were migrated.

Writing in 1972 to my sisters our great aunt reflected that "none of us received much education and we were in the homes until twelve. I will say our lives were not too bad at the homes in Derby but I went to 6 different schools and I know that your grandfather went to some of them according to the teachers they hoped I was not like him."

Each when their time came was found suitable employment by the Derby Board of Guardians. Great uncle Jack was apprenticed to a blacksmith, great aunt Dolly went into service and my grandfather was placed in a naval training ship, leaving only great uncle Roger who while he had also been destined for that training ship was migrated instead.

Granddad and great uncle Jack held down several jobs in their lives including working at Rolls Royce and the Ministry of Supply, fought in the Great War and brought up families against a back drop of those two world wars, the great Depression and the peace time recovery.

They saw their children and grandchildren develop and make their own contributions in ways they could never have dreamed of.

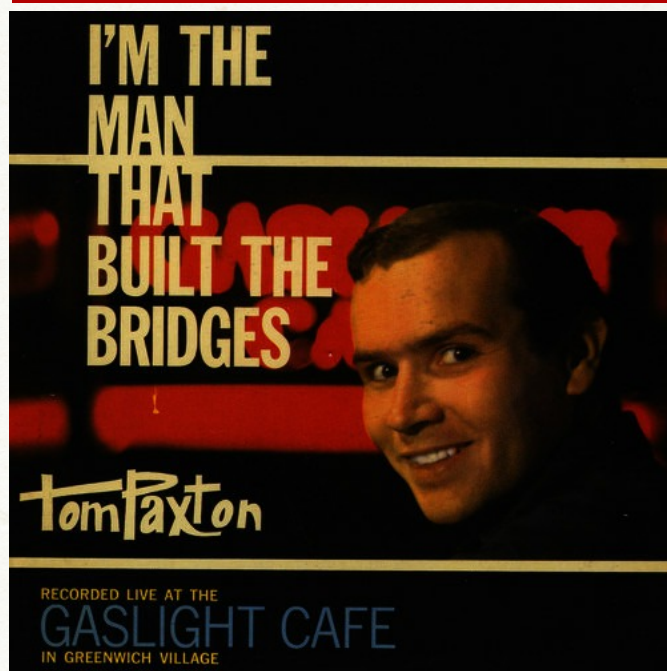
But there is one twist and it takes me and my family back to Canada, because my great aunt Dolly followed her brother across the Atlantic in 1925 on an Empire Assisted Scheme.

In the fullness of time she married and raised a large family which is spread out across Ontario and amongst their ranks can be counted those who served in the armed forces, worked the emergency services and were elected to public office.

All of us on both sides of the Atlantic owe much to our respective grandparents who overcame a hard start in life and set us off on our own paths which in the words of my cousin Marisa was down to "that grit and stubborn genes [from] our respective grandparents."

\*I'm the man that built the bridges, Tom Paxton, 1962

[Click here to read more by Andrew Simpson](#)





OUR STUDENTS ARE  
RAISING THE BAR

## 2016 Student Achievement Award



The BHCARA is thrilled to announce that our third annual Student Achievement Award recipient, is Grade 8 student Thomas Dale. Thomas's father came to our group asking for help for Thomas's Heritage Fair Project, in February 2016. His Great Great Grandfather Arthur Thomas Dale, a British Home Child, was his chosen subject of this project. Thomas advanced to the provincial level and was awarded "The Parks Canada Award" for his project!

Arthur Dale arrived in Canada on the 11th of June, 1904 through the Middlemore Homes. With the help of our fantastic BHCARA Facebook Group researchers, Thomas discovered invaluable information about his Great Great Grandfather. Arthur was one of our BHC who fought for Canada in the First World War. In 1916 Arthur was injured severely, impairing his sight, later becoming blind. Arthur would often speak of this injury.

We are sure Arthur would be enormously proud of Thomas telling his story and keeping his legacy alive! Thomas will receive a framed certificate from the BHCARA and a \$50 cheque. Congratulations Thomas!

Lori Oschefski of BHCARA and Bob Huggins of Orphan Boy Films

### Announce: A bursary competition for students

We have had great success with our fund raising for a monument for the 76 BHC buried in the [Park Lawn Cemetery, Etobicoke, Ontario](#), but we still need a design. Bob Huggins has secured us a 4 ft X 4 ft plate of steel, donated to this project by Marine Recycling of Port Colborne. We need a design which is to be etched on to the steel plate and we are calling on our young students up to university level to come up with a design.

- Dimensions of the working space is 4ft X 4ft
- Must have room for the seventy six names of the children buried there
- An essay of no more than 1,000 words must accompany the design drawing. This essay should explain your design choice decisions and should show a general knowledge of the BHC migration programs, explain why these 76 lives should be recognized and honoured; and why this important piece of Canadian History needs to be remembered through the generations.
- Contest is open to submissions until the 15th of January, 2017
- Lori Oschefski, Bob Huggins and members of the BHCARA Advisory Board will select the top 10 designs.
- The top 10 designs and essays will be published in our [Facebook Group](#) where our members will then vote for the winning design. The top three designs and essays will receive a cash bursary as follows: First Place: \$1,000 and the design etched on the monument, Second Place: \$500 and Third Place \$250.
- All designs and essays submitted become the property of the BHCARA and Orphan Boy Films.

Suggested reading and resource materials for our students:

1. The Little Immigrants by Kenneth Bagnell - High school to adult level
2. Charlie - A Home Child's Life in Canada by Beryl Young - younger grades, youth to adult
3. Web site: [British Home Children in Canada](#)
4. Students and their family/parents are encouraged to join our [Facebook Group](#) where many members are available to help with questions. Mr. Huggins and Ms. Oschefski may be contacted through the BHCARA facebook group or through email: [info@britishhomechildren.com](mailto:info@britishhomechildren.com) or [bob.huggins@orphanboyfilms.com](mailto:bob.huggins@orphanboyfilms.com)

Please submit entries by Jan 15/17 to [info@britishhomechildren.com](mailto:info@britishhomechildren.com)



# Histories of the Receiving Homes

By Lori Oschefski

## Dr. Barnardo's 50-52 Peter Street, Toronto 1909 - 1922

**K**nown as the George Crookshank House, the former three story 19<sup>th</sup> century home, located on what was previously 50-52 Peter Street, was once a receiving home for Barnardo children brought into Toronto. The home, now a heritage property, is located in the now affluent area of Blue Jays Way. Once a home for disadvantaged children, a home where many children succumbed to illnesses and injuries, it is now a luxury condominium complex offering "the ultimate in style, sophistication, luxury, and amenities; all within an exquisite urban environment". Only the east facade remains of the original building.

George Crookshank, originally from New York City, was elected to the Canadian Legislative Council in 1821. He built the Peter Street, Georgian styled, townhouse in c1834. Its heritage attributed include its red brick construction, flat-headed window openings with stone lintels and sills.

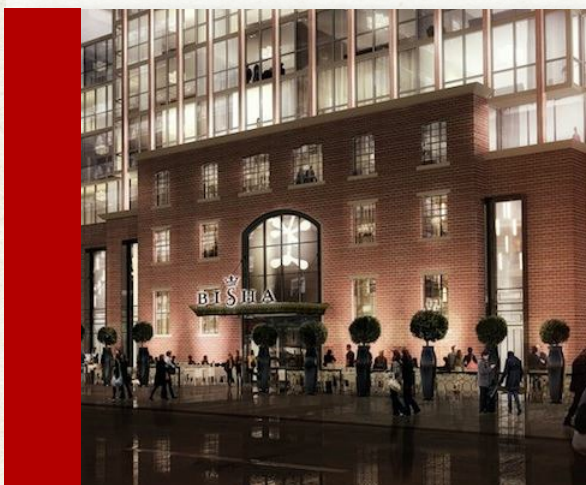
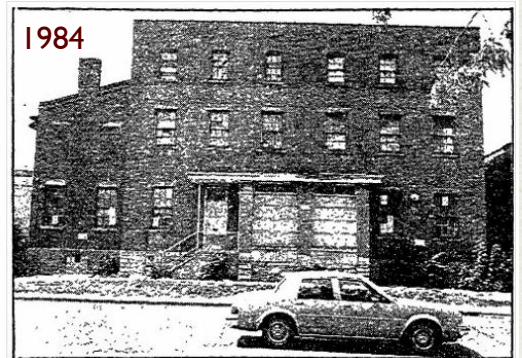
The building was occupied by a series of tenants until 1878, when a girls school opened there. The school remained until 1908 when the building was taken over by the Dr. Barnardo Homes. It became their Canadian Headquarters until 1922.

The front of the house was changed extensively in the 1980's, by Nick Di Donato and his Liberty Entertainment Group, with smoke glass and signs, opening as a single level sports bar and restaurant. In 1990 Di Donato developed it into the Kub Max dance club, a three floor "fun house". The location, they felt, was ideal given it's close proximity to "SkyDome", home of the Toronto Blue Jays baseball team, now called the "Rogers Centre". Game nights and concerts ensured a steady flow of customers to the club. The club boasted a capacity of over one thousand and one hundred people!

To celebrate the Blue Jays World Series win, in 1992, Peter Street south of King, was renamed Blue Jays Way. The club, now 56 Blue Jays Way was one of the most popular in Toronto. It closed for a period of time in 1993 to be heavily renovated and reopened in 1994 as the 3000 BC club. This club was not as successful as its predecessor, closing later that same year.

In 1998 "Second City Comedy" occupied the building and in 2005 to 2008, the building was taken over by "Diesel Playhouse". In 2009, the famous Canadian band "Blue Rodeo" played a concert on the roof top of the building. [Bisha Hotel](#) and Residences took over the building in 2010, earmarking it as the site of a trendy high rise condo building.

Today the building facade is one of the oldest on the street and is protected by the Ontario Heritage Act. The back of the home was not part of the original 1834 building and has now been destroyed. 2012 saw the start of the construction of the luxury building, keeping the original frontage. In July of 2016, the final floor was placed, making the building forty four floors high. The building is planned to be finished in 2017. The building facade, marks the transition of this area in Toronto, from a quiet residential area to a major urban centre.



### Sources:

[Why I love Toronto](#)

[Phil.blogspot.ca](#)

[Then and Now Toronto](#)

[British Home Children in Canada](#)

**R**eceiving Homes were not only places where the children came when they first arrived, but they were also facilities which housed the children when in trouble or ill. The following children are known to have died in 50-52 Peter Street during its time as the Barnardo receiving Home. They are all buried in the Park Lawn Cemetery, Etobicoke.

Walter Henry Beardmore, Mary Bird, George Henry Clapham, Charles Jenkins, William Rowland, Albert Robinson and George Reid.





# BRITONS NEVER SHALL BE SLAVES

Being an odiferous ode on Juvenile Immigration.  
Sung by John Bull ("In person") at "THE FOLLIES"  
The First Annual Review of the Social Workers Club of Toronto. April 16 1928.  
originally posted by Brian Rolfe - Roots Mailing list

O, there was a London urchin  
Of a feeble minded strain.  
His parents both were in the clink  
And he was raising cain.

The Poor Law guardians got him  
But he drove them near insane,  
'Till an emigration home got a subsidy  
For shipping him across the main.

Singing Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves  
For Britons never, never, never shall be --  
Made to care for dependent poor  
If Canada will do it free.

O, his tonsils were defective  
And his teeth were just a wreck.  
He had a spot upon his lung  
And he could not see a speck.

The government men were busy,  
So we used our own M.D.  
And we bluffed an exam and got him passed  
And hustled him across the sea.

Singing Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves  
For Britons never, never, never shall be --  
Scrutinized by Canadian eyes  
Before they cross the sea.

When he reached this land of promise  
With a hundred just the same.  
We sent him to a farmer on the mail order plan  
Though we hardly knew the farmer's name.

He may have been a trifle lonely  
For kicks are all he understands,

But why supervise -- when it's far from wise  
To get him back upon our hands.

Singing Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves  
For Britons never, never, never shall be --  
Supervised or Canadianized  
In their homes across the sea.

O, we've heard of the thing called case work  
In our Island of the Free.  
But what it has to do with the problem child  
We never yet could see.

O, we know a technique far from easy,  
For family break-ups cause us small concern.  
To keep a home together costs real money  
But emigration brings a cash return.

Singing Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves  
For Britons never, never, never shall be --  
Taught their jobs by social worker snobs.  
They're colonials -- "We own 'em," don't you see.

We've unloaded eighty thousand hopefuls  
On Canada, the loyal and the fair.  
Australia built a nation on our convict population,  
So Canada should take her share.

They are ninety-nine per cent successful,  
But we're certainly not going to say  
Why we think that is so -- for we very well know  
Facts are stubborn -- and they point another way.

Singing Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves  
For Britons never, never, never shall be --  
Said to fail unless they're sent to jail  
Or deported to their own countree.

## Apology Petitions

23 Sep 2016 - Richard Cannings, MP (South Okanagan - West Kootenay) presented to the House of Commons two petitions, from the BHCARA, in support of a formal, unequivocal and sincere apology to Canada's British Home Children and child migrants, including their families and descendants. On May 5th 2016, Mr. Cannings tabled Motion M-51 in the House of Commons calling on the Government of Canada to issue this apology. You can view this reading on [YouTube](#).

Mr. Canning also presented a petition from the BHCARA last year. Judy Sgro is also presenting our petitions.

### Our on-line petition progress

Since our online petition was launched on July 28, 2016 we have gathered 424 of the 500 signatures needed to have this read in the House of Commons. We still need 76 more signatures. If you have not signed, are a citizen of Canada (no matter where you live) or you are a resident here and agree with the call for an apology please click on the icon, to the right, and lend us your support.





# Meet Margaret Ward Warren:

## From Orphan to Nurse 1924

Written by her Granddaughter  
Mary Ferguson

Margaret was born in Liverpool, England, in the Walton Workhouse, February 7<sup>th</sup> 1894 to a poor Irish mother and English father. Many poor women went to the work house to give birth as there was no fee. Food and clothing would be given to the mother upon leaving with her baby. A sister was born, Alice, also at the workhouse, in 1897. In 1903, Margaret's father abandoned the family leaving them destitute. Poverty, unemployment and homelessness were rampant at that time in England. Margaret's mother gave the girls up to an orphanage, the Liverpool Sheltering Home, believing they would have a better life there.

At that time in England a million orphaned and abandoned children wandered the city streets or lived in government or privately supported Work Houses or Orphanages. Amongst these shelters there was room for only 5,000 children. In response, in the mid 1800's to about 1940, a scheme was in place to improve the lives of these children. Canada was a developing colony and needed farm, factory and domestic workers. More than 100,000 children immigrated to Canada from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to work, and in exchange, were provided a home, education and opportunities. Margaret and Alice were among these children.

The girls parted the orphanage on February 18, 1904 by steamship with 70 other children to their new homes. As in many cases, they were separated, both taken in by farming families in the Province of Quebec. Alice was 7 and Margaret 11. Very soon Alice was adopted and moved to Manchester, NH. Margaret remained with her farm family until she was 16. Records tell us that Margaret's job involved milking 20 cows per day. In 1910, Margaret went to visit Alice in Manchester and was allowed to stay. It is unclear where she lived or what employment she found there, but she remained close to Alice. About this time Margaret began studying art and painting. Many of her paintings survive today and grace the homes of her children and grandchildren. In 1921 Margaret decided to become a nurse and enrolled in The Tewksbury State Hospital Nursing School in Tewksbury, Ma. She was 27 years old.

Margaret lived and worked at the hospital until her marriage in 1929. The hospital was in its heyday. It had 50 wards and about 2400 patients. The iron lung was invented there during that time. Margaret graduated in 1924 and became an employee of the hospital. Letters tell us she worked on the wards as well as in the community as a private duty nurse. She made enough money to send some to Alice, and made dresses for her. She sent money to her mother, Catherine, in Liverpool, who was still living in poverty and dying of cancer. Her mother lived with another daughter, Jessie, born to her a few months after the girls moved to Canada. Letters to Margaret from her mother and sister, starting in 1920 until about 1930, survive today.

British Home Children, as they were called, were encouraged to keep in contact with family back home. The letters show a loving adult daughter reaching out to her mother by sending money and offering to make a home for her and Jessie in the States. In 1924, Catherine dies and Margaret arranges for Jessie to come and live with her at the hospital. There are poignant letters that show Margaret trying in vain to locate her father in England. Perhaps she had some warm memories of him and hoped he was still alive. As far as we know, she never found him and never saw her mother again after she left England.

In 1928 Margaret married George Warren. She is 34 years old. She knew him well because he was Alice's brother by her adoption into the Warren family. It is interesting that in order to marry George, a private detective had to be dispatched to California to find his first wife so he could divorce her and marry Margaret. Several love letters from George survive as well as payment requests from the detective. The couple settled in Scituate, Ma where George finds work as a boat builder. She has two children, a daughter Jessie and a son George. She stops nursing for a few years but returns when the children are in school to work in a Doctor's office in town until his death. New laws are passed about this time which would require her to pass tests to continue working as a nurse and she chose not to do so. She found a job



near her home caring for blind persons at a retreat for them called Sunlight House. From about 1950 through the late 60's she worked there as a housekeeper, cook, seamstress, whatever was needed. She spoke lovingly of the blind folks who became her friends over the years. In gratitude for all her years of service a plaque with her name was placed at the home.

Margaret stopped working when she was 80 years old because Sunlight House closed and she could not find another job. Her husband passed away and she was alone for the last 15 years of her life. She was a loving and warm grandmother who brought comfort and joy to all who knew her. She loved to tell stories about growing up in Canada on a farm and about her nursing days too. It was because I admired her so much that I became a nurse. She loved animals, reading and gardening. She often complained about not having enough money and paid her bills the day they came in. While in her 80's she began wearing pants and pantyhose although she would not give up her corset. She was fun to be with and grateful for the care and attention her family gave her. She lived in her own home until her death in 1983 at age 89.

A few weeks after she died was when a box of my grandmother's letters were found in her attic. My sister thought they might be important but forgot about them until another 30 years passed. One rainy day Margaret's daughter and 3 granddaughters opened the box and began reading. It was truly like opening Pandora's Box. It led us to the realization that Margaret had kept many facts about her early life a secret. The letters inspired my sister to explore Margaret's genealogy, leading us to the shocking truth about the poverty and abandonment she endured. Over time and research into the lives of British Home Children we began to understand that she probably was ashamed of her early life. She led us to believe that her Canadian family was her real family, making much better stories to tell. We all have secrets to keep!

Reading the letters, in a way, brought Margaret back to us. One day, my sister and I visited the Public Health Museum on the campus of the former Tewksbury State Hospital, now Tewksbury Hospital. To be where she had spent so many years of her life brought us even closer to Margaret. Most of the buildings of the campus are beautiful and intact and look quite like they did when Margaret was there. We donated Margaret's nursing school textbooks, some photographs and a set of surgical instruments that were hers. Again, we felt she was with us and that her belongings had come home. We arrived in heavy rain that day, but as we were leaving the sun was shining and there was a beautiful rainbow. Margaret was giving us her blessing and happy to see us again.





## October and November Presentations

### **Saturday October 1st**

Mississauga Cultural days  
4141 Living Arts Drive  
Mississauga, Ontario  
Speaking: John Jefkins  
10 am start time

### **Saturday October 1st**

Family History Festival  
Orillia Public Library  
36 Mississaga St W, Orillia, Ontario  
Hosting: Carol Black  
10 am to 4pm

### **Sunday October 2nd**

British Home Child Day  
Black Creek Pioneer Village  
Details on page 1

### **Tuesday October 4th**

Guelph Historical Society  
St. Andrews Presbyterian at  
161 Norfolk St, Guelph, ON N1H 4J7  
Start time: 7:30  
Speaking: John Jefkins

### **Thursday October 20th**

Ramara Historical Society  
Udney Community Centre  
Concession Road 10, Ramara, Ontario  
Speaking: Lori Oschefski  
Start time: 7pm

### **Thursday October 13th**

Creative Retirement Manitoba  
1075 Portage Ave, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Room 101  
Speaker: Ralph Jackson  
Start time: 1:30 pm

### **Wednesday October 26th**

Georgina Pioneer Village  
26557 Civic Centre Road,  
Georgina, ON L4P 3G1  
Start time: 7pm  
Speaking: Lori Oschefski

### **November 9th and 10th**

Orillia Public Library  
Orillia, Ontario  
School Remembrance Event  
Hosting: Carol Black and JoAnn Clark

### **Sunday November 20th**

Scugog Shores Museums  
181 Perry Street, Box 780  
Port Perry ON L9L 1A7  
Start time: 1pm  
Speaking: Lori Oschefski

