

British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association July 2016 Newsletter

Written by Lori Oschefska, Andrew Simpson and Rev. Charles Smith



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Gipsy Simon Smith

Evangelist called London home
BY: REV. CHARLES SMITH JR



It was the Jamaican Pan-African nationalist Marcus Garvey who said, "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." This could be certainly true of our generation.

Many of the elder generation of London remember the "good old days," when revivals were part of the routines of local churches in the summer and fall. Who among them could forget the big names in evangelism, such as Oswald J. Smith, R. A. Torrey, J. Wilbur Chapman, Gipsy Rodney Smith and Billy Graham, who blazed through Canada.

Yet none of these could compare to the ministry of local evangelist Gipsy Simon Smith. He was a well-known evangelist in London. He, his wife Blanche and their nine children lived at 6 Carfrae Cres. Living at this residence for 24 years, Simon travelled extensively throughout Canada, Britain and the United States.

Known as the "Silvery Voiced Tenor from the Woods," Smith was an effective evangelist during his 40 years as a preacher of the Gospel. He was born in the midst of Epping Forest, England, on July 25, 1875, to Bartholomew and Susan Smith. Bartholomew's brother Cornelius Smith was the father to Gipsy Rodney Smith, another famous evangelist of his generation. Cornelius and Bartholomew were the first gypsies to be converted to Christianity after they had attended a mission at a Primitive Methodist church in London, England. After their conversion, they returned to the gypsy camp and led 13 of their family members to be converted, but Simon Smith was not converted until later in life.

Growing up, Smith enjoyed listening to his father and uncle preaching and singing the Gospel. But tragedy struck when his father died at 48 due to heart trouble. Smith, only 11, sought out Thomas Barnardo, a helper of orphaned children in Victorian England, who sent Smith with other children to Canadian farms to earn money for their families. Smith eventually returned to his mother's home and worked as a cab driver in London, England, for six years. It was on a Sunday morning, as Smith was preparing to go to work, he heard a woman singing a hymn. Then and there he was converted and went to work for the London City Mission. He sang hymns, preached and ministered to those in need.

Ten years later, Smith, Blanche and their children moved to Nova Scotia. Not too long after, they moved to Toronto, then Cobourg, and finally to Carfrae Cres. in London in 1919. Smith was a composer and singer as well and many of his songs were published. He was often termed a "one-man show in the pulpit."

Smith penned two booklets about his life, *The Adventures of a Rolling Stone* and *The Adventures of a Gipsy Boy and Other Stories*. It's in these books Smith wrote of his early life, his calling into the ministry and some of his adventures. Known for his quips, his sayings included: "Some people mistake perspiration for inspiration."

"We have too many won'ts from the young and not enough don'ts from the old,"

"Some people tell me that my ancestors hung to branches by their tails. I tell them that maybe theirs hung by their necks."

"The Scriptures do not say, 'Come, let us get excited together,' they say, 'Come, let us reason together.' " Simon died Aug. 12, 1943. Simon and Blanche Smith are buried in the historic Woodland Cemetery. May they never be forgotten.

Rev. Charles Smith Jr., a relative of Gipsy Rodney Smith, is a freelance author, Revival historian and preacher in Van Buren, Ark.

British Home Children in the News

It has been a busy and exciting year with our BHC in the media constantly. In 2012, when the BHCARA started doing presentations, people would mostly give a blank stare when asked if they knew who the BHC were. Now, it seems, the most common answer is "yes, I have read about them recently in the news". Well done to all who keep this story out there, educating Canada and the world about the BHC. Here are some of the articles published in June 2016.

- ▶ [Etobicoke Guardian](#)
- ▶ [The Beacon Herald](#)
- ▶ [Halifax Global News](#)
- ▶ [WEB ADMIN LEADERHUB](#)
- ▶ [The Rick Howe Show, Halifax](#)
- ▶ [Radio Canada International](#)
- ▶ [Cornwall Standard Free Holder](#)
- ▶ [The Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#)
- ▶ [Ivy Sucee at Buckingham Palace](#)
- ▶ [The Point Hamilton](#)
- ▶ [History Revealed](#)
- ▶ [Global Okanagan TV](#)

Apology petitions presented in the House of Commons

On May 31, MP Judy Sgro presented "[a lot of petitions](#)" to the House of Commons calling on the Canadian Government to offer an apology to the BHC and their descendants. Included were several petitions from the BHCARA, leading the call for an official apology since 2012.

That year, the BHCARA launched the very first groundbreaking Parliamentary petition asking for an official apology from the Canadian Government. We were pleased to see in 2015, other groups followed suit and began their own petitions. We now have groups from Ontario through to BC who are lobbying our Government for an apology. On July 28 the BHCARA will open an on-line version of the petition for signing, supported by Judy Sgro. MP Richard Canning, through BC Author Art Joyce, in addition to those presented with Judy Sgro, will also present traditional petitions from the BHCARA.

[MP Richard Canning tables a motion for an apology in BC](#)

Copies of the petition for traditional signing by residents of Canada, can be printed in both English and French on our web site at: [British Home Children in Canada](#)



The BHCARA was thrilled to see that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police June 2016 newsletter featured a photo of BHC & WW2 Vet George Beardshaw with BHCD & WW2 Vet Len Brown. Dawn Heuston and Lori Oschefski attended a tribute event at the London, Ontario Remembrance Gardens in early June with George and Len. George is on our 2016 Memory Quilt and Len's mother, a BHC, is also on the quilt.

For more information on the Remembrance Gardens visit:

<http://www.rememberevenember11.com/>

KM's travelled by the quilt

Since the official unveiling of our 2016 BHC Memory Quilt in March 2016, the quilt has travelled an astounding 16,652 kilometres, visiting two countries and two provinces so far! The quilt is scheduled to be in Winnipeg in August!

You can track our quilt's travels, read about the making of the quilt, the stories behind the squares at:

<http://bhcara-memory-quilt-2016.silk.ca/>



Nova Scotia in June

June 21 saw almost ninety descendants and interested persons gather at Pier 21 in Halifax, our Canadian Immigration museum, for a presentation on the British Home Children. Guest speakers were authors Beryl Young (Charlie) and Lori Oschefski (Bleating of the Lambs). Bob Huggins of Orphan Boy Productions was on hand filming segments and interviewing descendants for his upcoming production "A Barnardo Boy".

Many thanks goes out to Janice O'Halloran Mersey for setting up this event with Pier 21 and for making Beryl and Lori feel very welcome in Nova Scotia. Janice and Lori were able to tour the farms of the Dakeyne Farm in Falmouth and the former Emma Stirling Farm in Aylesford. Only remnants of her barn and one small farm house remain of the Stirling Hillfoot Farm. The Dakeyne Farm is a fully intact and fully functioning facility which housed British Home Children. The farm is open to public visits, for more history and information visit their web site at:

<http://dakeynefarm.com/historic-farm/>

Orphan Boy Productions - "A Barnardo Boy" docudrama in preproduction.

So far this year, producer Bob Huggins and his crew have been filming in Ontario, England and Nova Scotia! You can now follow along with the film's progress on Twitter at:

<https://twitter.com/Abarnardoboy>, or visit their web site at:

<http://orphanboyfilms.com/2016/05/07/a-barnardo-boy/>



Joan O'Malley and the Canadian Flag

It was a blustery Friday evening, early November 1964, Joan O'Malley recounts: *"I'd come home from work and made dinner when my dad called. He said, 'we need your help. The prime minister's office called and they want three prototype flags to fly at Harrington Lake tomorrow morning.' It's your dad, how can you say no?"*

Joan's father was British Home Child Ken Donovan, an assistant purchasing director with the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission in the old Department of Trade and Commerce. Prime Minister Lester B Pearson's office, had contacted him with an urgent request to deliver three flag prototypes to 24 Sussex Drive, that evening. With the help of others, Ken was able to obtain the materials needed and by 9 pm the only thing left, was the sewing of the flag. Ken said: *'Well, I'm going to call my daughter, Joan,'* his daughter recalls, *'Betsy Ross sewed the first American flag. Joan is going to sew the first Canadian flag.'*

Joan set to work on sewing the flags, which Ken personally delivered to Prime Minister Pearson shortly after midnight. That weekend, at Harrington Lake, our Canadian flag flew for the first time.

It would fly again, officially, Feb. 15, 1965 on Parliament Hill.



Remembering two British Home Children on Canada Day

with High Commissioner for Canada

By Historian & Author Andrew Simpson

Visit his blog at www.chorltonhistory.blogspot.com



Today I attended a service of Remembrance for the men who took part in the Battle of the Somme a full century ago. The ceremony took place in Southern Cemetery. Today marks not only the first day of the Somme, but is also Canada Day and with 31 men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force buried here it was fitting that the service was attended by Major David Charron of

the Royal Canadian Army.

All of the 31 died of their wounds while in local military and Red Cross hospitals and in the last two weeks I have been attempting to uncover something about all of them. They were a varied group, including farmers, a salesmen, and even a mining engineer. They came from the rural heartlands and the big cities and they served in a variety of units. And of the 31 two were British Home Children and both were Barbados's Boys.



Thomas John Loveland, enlisted in the August of 1915 and was in the First Battalion of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps, and here the story becomes a little personal. Like me he was born in London not that far from where I grew up and like my great uncle who was migrated by Middlemore enlisted in the August of 1915. I had suspected he was a British Home Child because his Attestation Papers showed that his next of kin was an Eliza Loveland living in London and she was his sister. Their father who had been a gas labourer had died in 1903 at the age of 35 leaving his wife Eleanor to bring up five children on her own. The eldest who was Eleanor was eleven years old and the youngest was just two.

By 1911 they were living in a four roomed house at number 4 George Street at Walsoken in Cambridgeshire. But only Eliza and her mother were in the property which they share with a William Fearis and his daughter who was 18 months old. Both Mr Fearis and Mrs Loveland give their status as widowed and she describes herself as "Domestic housekeeper." In time I am minded to explore the story of Mr Fearis but for now I am content just to record that on the night of census Mrs Loveland's youngest son was visiting. He was eleven years old, is described as a "scholar" and this offers up the possibility that he too was in care. I doubt that he could have been living with either of his elder siblings because they were only sixteen and fourteen.

And with the help of friends it seems I was right. Liz Sykes who is the Archivist at the Together Trust thought that he may have been a Barnado boy and Catherine West and Dawn Heuston dug into the archives of the Library and Archives Canada and confirmed it. He arrived in Canada on board the SS Dominion in 1907 and had been migrated by the Barnardo Charity. Like my great uncle he was the only one of the direct family to have been sent to Canada. Somewhere there will be the records of how that migration came about and the decisions which led him to Canada but his siblings to stay in the UK. Some of these will be locked away in the Barnardo records and as I am not a family I will never get to see them.

One of his brothers I know was killed on the Western Front in the August of 1917. He was Edward Loveland who was 27 when he died and he is buried at Lijssehoek Military Cemetery in Belgium. Now I had chosen Private Loveland by sheer chance simply because someone had left a small Canadian flag by his gravestone and later in the week I uncovered the story of Private Arthur Wisdom Ervine of the 2nd Battalion of the Canadian Infantry who had been born in Dorset in 1898. The evidence trail for his life here in the UK is sparse and there may more be information on the BHC databases all of which means I know more about him once he enlisted than before.



His Attestation Papers show that he gave his next of kin as the Barnardo's Home on Peter Street in Toronto. I know also that he left Halifax for Liverpool in the June of 1917 and arrived in France the following January. He seems to have missed the vicious fighting when the Germans staged their last counter offensive but was part of the allied counter attack. He was wounded on October 17th, evacuated to Britain five days later and died on November 15.

Now I shouldn't be surprised that both his final resting place is a cemetery I know well or that Salford Royal where he died is a hospital I have visited on several occasions.

But it does still make for a powerful connection.

Pictures; from the collections of David Harrop and Andrew Simpson

Histories of the Receiving Homes

Annie MacPherson Stratford, Ontario

Annie Parlance MacPherson was born in 1833 in Campsie, near Milton, Stirlingshire, Scotland. Annie was one of seven children, including two sisters Rachel (who married Joseph Merry) and Louisa (who married Charles Birt). Annie was one of the pioneers in the BHC movement, second to Maria Rye. Annie immigrated fifty families in 1869, but it was not until 1870 she focused on children alone.

Annie's inspiration behind her work was her exposure to the horrors of child poverty, notably the matchmaking children, in East London - so called because they were forced to work making matchsticks. Annie opened three smaller homes in England, before opening the larger "Home of Industry" in Spitalfields, London. Annie referred to this home as "The Bee Hive".

Annie brought her first party of children to Canada in 1870, placing them in various locations including Quebec, Toronto, Hamilton and Belleville. Ellen Bilbrough and Leslie Thom accompany her. Her sister Louisa Birt and brother in law Joseph Merry began working with Annie on the immigration of children to Canada in this same year. She was invited to use a home in Belleville, rent paid for by the County of Hastings. Annie placed Ellen Bilbrough in charge of this home, calling it Marchmount.

Two more home were added in 1872, one in Knowlton, Quebec and a training farm in Galt - now Cambridge, Ontario. 1872 also saw the loss of the Marchmount home in Belleville through fire. The home was rebuilt, at another location in Belleville, but it too burned in 1875. The third Marchmount was quickly built on the site of the second. Most of this building is still standing today.

Louisa Birt, Annie's sister, took over the running of the Knowlton, Quebec home and Marchmount was turned over to Ellen Bilbrough. Annie spent the majority of her time in England, but continued to travel to Canada. In 1882 the farm in Galt was sold and 51 Avon Street in Stratford, Ontario was purchased. Annie attended the official opening on October 18, 1883.

The original Avon Street home was built in 1861 by John Sharman, a local business man who established



Hosted by the Stratford Perth County Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, the almost 100 guests who attended the BHC Luncheon at the Rival House in Stratford, June 5, were treated to a private tour of the Annie MacPherson Avon Road receiving home, now a privately owned home.



The first House of Industry, 60 Commercial St, Spitalfields, England. The second would be located at 29 Bethnal Green Rd

the Stratford Foundry, making agricultural tools. In 1872, Henry MaFarlane purchased the home, enlarging it considerably. The home design was "Second Empire", with a two storey east wing and a three storey west wing. Built onto the back of the home was two towers. Features of this home include:

- two storey, buff brick exterior
- mansard roof
- brick chimney
- projecting frontispiece
- arched transom and sidelights of the main entrance
- curved door ways
- 12 foot ceiling,
- ornate moulding's
- acre of property backing onto the Avon River

The main hallway of the home features a three storey, "one of a kind" spiral staircase of forty two steps, leading to the third floor of the home. When Annie took over the

home in 1883, the top floor was used as the boys dormitory, the second for the staff and the girls. Up to 1916, approximately 8,100 boys and girls were processed through 51 Avon Street. This home also received Middlemore children from 1891 & 1892, providing aftercare for them until 1898 and Smyly Homes of Dublin, Ireland also brought children here. The home was supervised by Annie's sister Rachel and her husband Joseph, until Rachel died in 1892. Their son William Merry took over supervision following his mother's death. Annie herself passed away in 1904, but her work continued in Stratford until 1919. At that time all the work was transferred to the Marchmount home in Belleville, which officially closed in 1923.

The Avon Street Home was sold, and in 1923, while owned by William Collie, a fire destroyed the wing which was once the original home. In 1924 Harry Griffith and his family purchased the home, living there until after 1940.

In about 1970 Virgil Burnett purchased the home. Graham Television Productions used the home to shoot a pilot for a television show on haunted homes in Stratford. The home was one of the buildings featured on the walking tour of haunted buildings led by actor Tony White each Halloween.

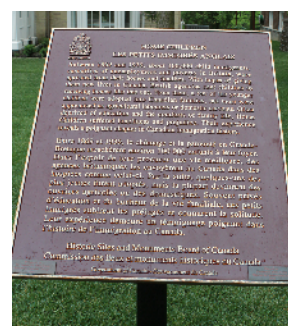
The property was designated, by the City of Stratford in 1987, for its heritage value, under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (By-law 209-87). In 2001, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada installed a plaque on the front lawn to commemorate the homes significance to the British Home Children. A reunion was held after the unveiling which was attended by over a thousand people.

Sources: Sara Wise
- Annie Macpherson
& The Gutter Children

Canada's Historic Places

Stratford-Perth Archives

Receiving Homes of the British Home



Four British Home Children Remembered

by Judy Neville

On Wednesday, June 22, 2016 I, Judy Neville visited Grosse Ile in the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This is a Parks Canada Site and is also known as Grosse Isle and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site.

In 1832 the government of Lower Canada set up a station on the island to examine the immigrants arriving from overseas. It was believed that these new comers were carrying contagious diseases such as typhus. People were also quarantined for chick-pox, eye infections, etc.

After Confederation in 1867, Canada continued to use this island as the first stop for people arriving by ship. The facilities and equipment were improved and continued to be upgraded as things changes over the years. Grosse Ile continued as a quarantine station from 1832 to 1932 when it was closed. Hundreds of thousands of people passed through this quartering station on their way to Canada.

As of today, it is known that only four of the people buried on the island, of which there were some 5000, were British Home Children.

These were boys who arrived from England on the SS Montcalm from Liverpool in 1922. On May 19, 1922 they left Liverpool and the ship they were on arrived in Quebec on May 27, 1922.

These boys had signed their 30A Landing Card. After going through the quarantine process the four boys were detained on Grosse Ile and the rest of the party carried on to Quebec and then onto Ottawa by train. It was not recorded why the boys were detained.

It is known that sometime after the boys were detained they found a boat by the island and rowed to their deaths. They all drowned accidentally, in the St. Lawrence River on June 4, 1922.

Their bodies were recovered and Father H. Nicole officiated at their burial on Grosse Isle. There was no known grave marker for them at the time of death. They were buried in the East Cemetery. Much of the East Cemetery is under the island's airstrip today.

Their names are etched into a huge glass memorial wall and are the only deaths recorded for 1922. They were as follows William Ellis age 13, William Mahon age 15, John Brier age 14 and James Holland age 12.



Photo credit: Jim Brownell



Lapel Pins

These lapel pins were created by David Lorente of Home Children Canada several years ago. David created his organization in 1991, running it with great success until his retirement. With kind permission to Judy Nevill, he has allow us to reproduce these pins with hopes they will become our National symbol for the British Home Children. The BHCARA joins Judy in this quest and have ordered pins to offer to our members at a small cost. Each pin will sell for \$3 each, or two for \$5 - plus postage. Contact me at info@britishhomechildren.com if interested.

What each symbol on the pin represents:

The top banner suggests that our interest is National.

The LION against a FIELD OF RED represents the sending country, the Mother country.

The SILHOUETTE OF THE URBAN INDUSTRIAL CENTRE suggests the places from which most poor child migrants came.

THE SHIP GUIDED BY THE STAR OF GOOD HOPE brought the children west.

THE GOLDEN SKY, MOUNTAINS, FIELDS, RIVER AND SHEATHES OF WHEAT represent the promise of the children's new home.

THE FALL MAPLE LEAF AGAINST A FIELD OF WHITE are our national emblem and colours.

THE MOTTO is in age-old Latin: SPES IN CANADA "OUR HOPE IS IN CANADA"

The BHCARA in Winnipeg this August!

We are pleased to be speaking at the MILLENNIUM LIBRARY in Winnipeg on August 4th, then we are participating in the British Home Child Display for Folklorama August 7-13th. CEO Lori Oschefski will be speaking at the library and will be at the BHC exhibit on the 7th and 8th. The BHCARA 2016 Memory Quilt will be on show at Folklorama for the entire week!

For more information on Folklorama visit: <https://www.folklorama.ca/festival>



Breaking the Silence:

Lori Oschefski presents a history that is largely unknown to most Canadians. From 1867 to 1949 close to 120,000 children were sent to Canada without their parents. Only two percent of these "British Home Children" were truly orphans. They worked as indentured farm labourers and domestics. Many in the current Canadian population are descendants of the Home Children, although many are unaware of their heritage.



Lori Oschefski

OMAH History Award Nominated Author, Lori Oschefski, is a Genealogical Researcher and Advocate whose work is recognized worldwide. She is the founder and CEO of the British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association, Canada's leading organization for the British Home Children and she is the creator of the website "British Home Children in Canada."

MILLENNIUM LIBRARY

Carol Shields Auditorium, 251 Donald Street

Free. Tuesday, August 4: 7-8:15 pm

