

British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association

August 2016 Newsletter by Lori Oschefski & Andrew Simpson



Mary Taylor and Samuel Usher - Part 1

By Lori Oschefski - related through marriage

Seven year old Mary Elizabeth Taylor and her younger sister, Sarah Jane Taylor's dire circumstances, was brought to the attention of the Barnardo Homes by an anonymous letter to the Liverpool's Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Initially hidden from the inspector, the children were found emancipated and filthy. Their little bodies were covered with sores, vermin and in Mary's case, deep scars on her head and buttocks.

Their mother, Mary Elizabeth Taylor (nee Dickson) had died in childbirth in 1897. The identity or survival of this child is still not known. Mary was born a twin, her brother Daniel only survived a few weeks. After their mother's death, their father Daniel Lawrence Taylor took up with a woman who is only known as "McPherson" in the Barnardo records. June 6th 1901, Daniel and the girls "step-mother" were convicted of neglect and ill treatment of the girls. He was sentenced to one month hard labour and she was sentenced to three. Barnardo's described them as "drunken and violent in nature". This newspaper article - source unknown, was published regarding this case:

SHOCKING NEGLECT OF CHILDREN

Daniel Taylor, a seaman and his wife Margaret Taylor, were summoned for neglecting two children, Mary aged 7 years and Sarah Jane, 6 years.

Dr. P. Dobell prosecuted on behalf of the society for the "Prevention of Cruelty to Children," and Inspector Wallace who stated that "the child Mary, before she was removed to the shelter six weeks ago, was so emaciated she hardly looked like a human being. She was quite unable to walk and she weighed 21 pounds which was much under the weight of a child of that age should have been and from the 2nd of May to the 30th of May she had increased in weight 5 1/2 pounds and was now beginning to walk".

Dr. House stated that on the 27 of April last, he visited the defendants house and found



it in a shockingly filthy condition. The furniture was broken up, the oldest child was in a terrible state of emaciation, and was merely a living skelton. She was shockingly dirty and there were three deep sores on her back. The female defendant, the step mother of the children, spoke of the little girl as though they were looking for her to die. The other child was also very dirty. A neighbor stated that she was called to the defendants house at Easter to attend to an old woman who was dying. Under the bed on which the woman was lying she saw the eldest child and her shocking appearance frightened her. The magistrates sent the male defendant to 2 month with hard labor.

THE CARE OF THE CHILDREN

Mr. Dobell of the Liverpool S.P.C.C. applied to Mr. Stewart today, at Dale-Street, for custody of the two children to be handed over to Dr. Barnardo. The children's names were, Mary Elizabeth and Sarah Jane Taylor, aged 6 and 7 respectively. Their parents were sent to jail on the 6th of June

The call for an apology

By Lori Oschefski

In 2012, I penned the very first, ground breaking, official parliamentary petition to be presented in the Canadian House of Commons. Although requested by many descendants and surviving BHC, it was met with a certain amount of resistance voiced in not only our group but also other groups and in personal e-mails to myself. So much so, I felt it was necessary to address this general hostility in an open letter published on our web site "[British Home Children in Canada](#)".

It became very clear; for our call for an apology to be successful, we needed to educate the general public about the background of the migration schemes, and what our members of Parliament and influential citizens of our country said about our BHC which was very derogatory and how little action they took to protect these vulnerable children in this country and how that caused the years of silence and abuse which rained down upon many of these poor children entrusted to their care.

With this thought in mind, I created the film "[Born of Good Intentions](#)", which explores the origins and the legality of the migration schemes; but more importantly, Canada's role in these programs and the attitudes of our citizens towards the children, where that attitude came from and how it affected the children's lives. Even those children who came to Canada and received good homes, faced the same stigmatization as those in bad homes. Collectively thought of as "trash, guttersnipes and degenerates" by the general population. A stigmatization brought on by our very own medical community, and our Members of Parliament.

In 2010, following the apologies of both the British and Australian governments for their roles in the migration schemes, our immigration minister Jason Kenny offered a statement saying that there was no need for Canada to apologize for the abuse and exploitation suffered by the thousands of children shipped here from Britain. "*The reality is that here in Canada we are taking measures to recognize that sad period, but there is, I think, limited public interest in official government apologies for everything that's ever been unfortunate or (a) tragic event in our history.*" Instead of an apology we received a commemorative stamp!

The apology is not for giving destitute children a better life; it is for allowing ship loads of these children into this country without adequate protection, for the stigmatization that immeasurably damaged their self esteem, for the cruel labour they endured, and the varied forms of abuse many suffered in CANADA.



*British Home Child
John Vallance
Signing the first petition
in 2012*

*John worked hard but
was never abused, he had
a good life here in Canada.
He signed this petition not for him but because he
knew many boys who were treated horribly.*

[Click here](#) to read his story

Continued on page 2.....

for neglect. The application was granted. Mr. Cole, Liverpool agent for Dr. Barnardo, was present in court and received the children.

Mary and Sarah were removed to the West Kirby Convalescent Hospital where their condition slowly improved over several weeks. By September their condition had improved enough that they were then admitted to the Dr. Barnardo's Home. They were received first at Stepney Causeway then admitted to the Barkingside Girls Village. Mary and Sarah both stayed together in Burwell Park for eighteen months. From there, in 1903, the girls were placed in foster care in Romsey, Hampshire. Mary's foster parents names are unknown. It is also unknown if the girls were kept together in Foster care, but it seems unlikely. Mary was returned to Barkingside in June of 1903, Sarah in July that same year. The idyllic life Barkingside seemed to have provided children, must have been salvation to these two poor neglected children. They flourished under Barnardo's care while in England. However, for Mary at least, this salvation was not to last. In September 1903, Mary and Sarah were immigrated to Canada.

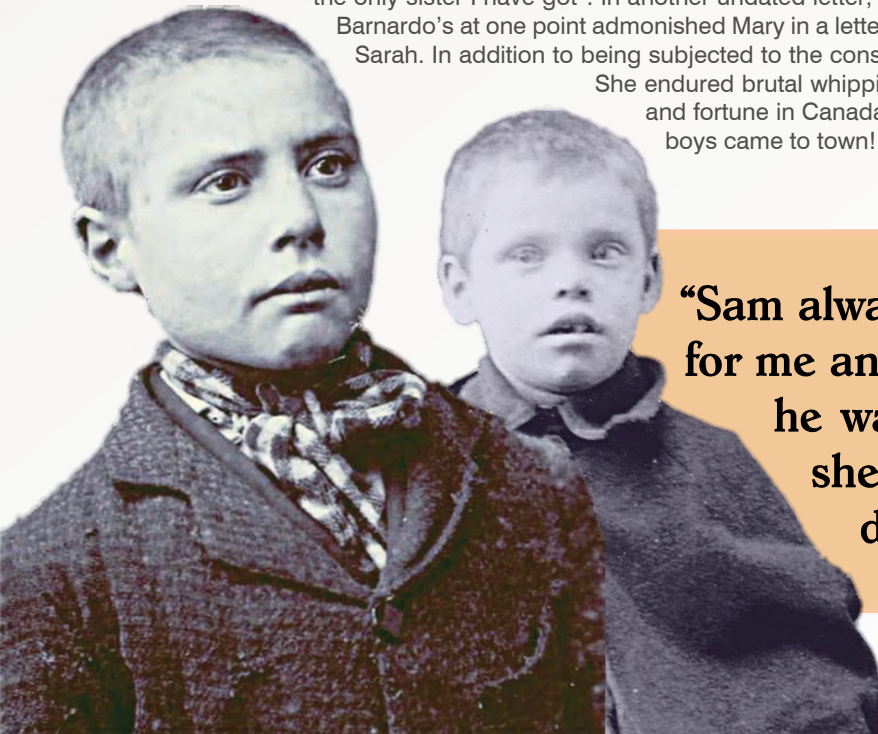
Arriving in Canada, aboard the SS Dominion, the two were taken to the Hazel Brae Barnardo receiving home for girls in Peterborough, Ontario. From there they were placed out for work as domestics. On October 13th Mary was placed with Mrs. Edward Pargeter in Port Perry, Ontario. In the spring time, after Barnardo's determined this was not a good home and that Mr. Pargeter was of bad character, Mary was returned to Hazel Brae, where she was placed with her sister Sarah in the care of Mrs. Herbert Brown. Mr. and Mrs. Brown were farmers in Fleetwood before moving with the girls to Lindsay. The girls seemed to do well with the Browns, they were initially reported to be happy and clean, however soon after the family's move, the girls were returned to Hazel Brae. Mrs. Brown was now complaining that the girls were too rough in manners and appearance and that she could not train them into nice ways. From there they were placed together with Mrs. Thomas Dewhurst in March 1905 who lived in Uxbridge. Reports were of poor conduct in the home and also at school. They were there a year, then because of an illness in the family, they were moved again, this time to Norwood and this time, not together. On March 19, 1906, Mary went to a Mrs. William Andrews and Sarah with a Mrs. E. D. Hubbell. Sarah seemed to settle in with the Hubbell family, however Mary did not fare out very well at all. By June of that year she was returned to the home, cited as too troublesome. This moving of home to home to home continued for Mary for years to follow.

The next placement for Mary, she was returned after only three months, saying she had a skin disease. The next placement lasted six months before she was returned to the Home; she was found not equal to requirements. The next placement lasted three months, the next returned her finding her sullen and bad tempered. Descriptions such as "incapable", "untruthful", "naughty", "cross", "weak in body and mind", "dirty in habits", "demented" and "not mentally bright" filled the reports as poor Mary was moved through twenty one placements in her first eight years in Canada!! Mrs. G. Hunter from Peterborough returned her after two months saying "is much handicapped by her extreme plainness and sulky temper". One placement family demanded and was paid a refund for Mary! Mrs. Trick simply gave Mary to a neighbor who was "willing to give her a try". Then they decided they didn't want her and handed her to another neighbor. Barnardo's was quick to follow up on the paper work, but through these transfers, no inspection was done of the placement homes. In February of 1910, Mary, now fifteen, was placed with Mrs. William Smith. In April, Mrs. Smith writes to Barnardo's that she is happy with Mary, but that she was not quite satisfied with her health. Four weeks later, on May 19, 1910, Mary, completely innocent of what was happening to her, gave birth to a still born baby boy. Mrs. Smith herself was shocked, although her normal health had not been right for some time, nothing serious was expected. In fact, Mary had seemed to settle down with the Smith's and was reported to be doing quite well, a nice quiet girl who did her work well. Upon questioning Mary accused the farm hand at her former placement, the McKay's. Upon questioning them, they denied any knowledge of her condition.

Mary, missing her sister very much often wrote the home asking for news of Sarah (called Jennie). It had been decided that it was best to keep the girls separated. Sarah was doing well and it was feared contact with Mary would upset that. By March of 1911, Mrs. Smith returned Mary to Hazel Brae, citing her behavior had turned and that she could no longer cope with her. At this same time, reports from Sarah's placement, where she was doing well, came that she too was distressed that she could not visit with Mary. Sarah then writes to Barnardo's asking that she be moved closer to her sister. Mary also send a letter at this time, apologizing for her behavior and she asks to be returned to the Smiths. She also asks for Sarah's address, and again in another letter shortly after. In December of 1911, Mary receives a "friendly" letter from Barnardo's giving her news of Sarah. In February of 1912, Mary writes to Miss Kennedy of Barnardo's begging for a letter from her sister, saying that Sarah was "the only sister I have got". In another undated letter, Mary writes to Barnardo's that she is lonesome to see her sister.

Barnardo's at one point admonished Mary in a letter, telling her that she should not be writing bad and untrue things Sarah. In addition to being subjected to the constant moving, Mary's scarred back told the truth of her treatment.

She endured brutal whippings at the hands of her Mistresses. It seemed for Mary, her luck and fortune in Canada did not change for the better until one day, the Usher Barnardo boys came to town!



"Sam always told me he would come back for me and one day I looked up, and there he was all six feet of him in a big sheep skin coat, standing in the doorway."

Part 2 of this story will run in September's Newsletter

Why saying sorry is important

By Historian and Author Andrew Simpson

Visit Andrew Simpson's Blogs at

www.chorltonhistory.blogspot.ca

Correction from the July 2016 Newsletter

We mistakenly reported that it was the High Commissioner for Canada who attended the Remembrance for the men who took part in the Battle of the Somme in the UK. It was Major David Charron of the Royal Canadian Army who attended. We regret this mistake and any inconvenience this may have caused.

Now it is easy to make out a case against the historical apology.

Many of the events deserving such an apology are long in the past, were perpetrated by Governments that no longer exist and the victims are dead.

All of which brings into play the validity of saying sorry, for how can a modern democratic Germany be held responsible for the Holocaust, Britain for the Irish Famine or France for the Terror?

That in turn raises the question of how far you go back into history to find an event worthy of an apology. Was the massacre at Amritsar in 1919 more appropriate because it was closer to us than say the slaughter at Wounded Knee or the total destruction of Carthage and the enslavement of its citizens by the Romans?

And what is the measure that triggers a public and national act of contrition? Is it sheer numbers, the degree of cruelty or the lasting impact on the victims and the generations that succeeded them?

Moreover there are some who would question the very notion that they were victims because to do so implies that they accepted what was happening without a fight and were complicit in the event and that was often far from the reality. There are enough stories of Africans resisting their transportation into slavery, as well as stories of Jewish partisans and the heroic struggle of the Warsaw Ghetto to challenge that notion.

But more than all of these there is that simple observation that "the past is a foreign country [and] they do things differently there."

So is it really legitimate to bring to call a 19th century politician whose outlook was framed by the night watchman state which was predicated on the idea that Governments should do little more than the minimum and blame him for the failure of the country to introduce welfare legislation? Or for that matter the Spartan State for its treatment of its weak and unhealthy children?

And if at the end of it all we still call for an apology has it any validity given that it is based on a misunderstanding of how history has worked? Well I actually think apologies do have a part to play in how the past is seen by us in the present.

Only last month Tony Blair made an apology for the consequences of Britain's involvement in the Iraq War while at the same time maintaining his opinion it was the right thing to have done.

It might not have offered comfort to those who were affected by the war but was part of the bigger enquiry into the issues surround that war by Chilcot which some hoped would bring closure.

And that is one of the reasons we should ask a Government to assume responsibility for an act undertaken by its predecessor.

To do so is not to link a present administration or even a modern country with unacceptable acts from the past but it is about saying that what went on was wrong and for that the successor Government is sorry.

But in the case of British Home Children it does go further, because there were those at the time who said the migration was wrong. Wrong because it shifted a perceived problem elsewhere, wrong because for some it was just about saving money and wrong because it denied that there were alternatives.

We know that from almost the beginning of the migration schemes there was evidence that the treatment of some young people was at best negligent and at worst downright criminal and that these criticisms didn't go away and were still being voiced at the beginning of the last century.

More than that that migration just avoided dealing with issues of poverty, destitution and inequality. The three socialist members of the Chorlton Poor Law Union argued that sending children to Canada failed to address the reasons which led these young people into the care of the Workhouse.

And in turn made it easier to avoid finding solutions in Britain to their needs and ultimately to challenging the status quo and advancing alternatives. That is not to rubbish those who did believe that migration was a positive way forward only to point out that there were enough people who rejected the policy at the time to allow us today to also argue it was wrong and expect that a Government should do the same.

Britain and Australia have done so and it provided some comfort to those whose families were involved and in the process is another step in bringing the story of British Home Children out of the shadows where it lay for such a long time.

It won't reverse the hurts, but it will be a step in the right direction.



Two women comfort each other during Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's November 2009 apology to the Child Migrants sent to Australia. In early 2010, the British Prime Minister also apologized.

Listen to the apologies: [Australia's Apology](#) [Britain's Apology](#) [Canada's statements November 2009](#):

"There's no need for Canada to apologize for abuse and exploitation suffered by thousands of poor children shipped here from Britain starting in the 19th century" Immigration Minister Jason Kenney stated. "The issue has not been on the radar screen here," "The reality is that here in Canada we are taking measures to recognize that sad period, but there is, I think, limited public interest in official government apologies for everything that's ever been unfortunate or (a) tragic event in our history."

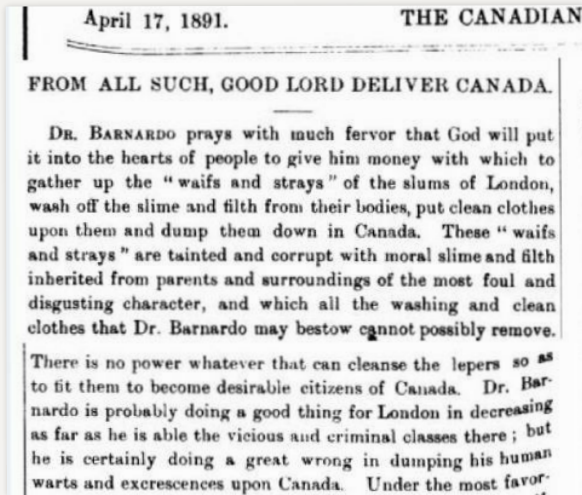
Sources: Photo credit: [CBC News](#)

Jason Kenny statements: [The Toronto Star](#)

A reason for the silence?

Many British Home Children felt a deep sense of shame in their history. What was behind this wrongful stigmatization of the BHC which has lasted decades?

By Lori Oschefski from the book "Bleating of the Lambs - Canada's British Home Children"



By 1897, the immigration of pauper children into Canada was at an all time high. The number of organizations bringing these children was increasing at an incredible rate. Concerns were being voiced that these children were not being supervised properly after their arrival into Canada and that they carried diseases and degeneracies which were infecting the good Canadian stock. The outcries of the public in Canada, especially in Ontario, against the immigration of these "waifs and strays" caused an amendment to the immigration laws with the 1897 "An Act to regulate the Immigration into Ontario of Certain Classes of Children". This was mandated in efforts to protect the people of Ontario from defective children and to license the receiving homes forcing them to keep track of the children after their arrival.

Of the many articles printed in the press which spoke out against these children, one written by the The Honorable Frederick Nicholls, from Toronto, Ontario, was particularly detrimental to the reputation of these children. Mr. Nicholls was a member of our Canadian Parliament who served, among many seats, on the Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour. He also served on the general council of the Canadian Patriotic Fund and the executive committee of the Toronto branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society. He was the second vice-president of the Canadian General Electric Company and was a highly regarded

spokesperson for the manufacturing and hydroelectric industries in Canada. Mr. Nicholls was also the vice-president of the Toronto Press Club and creator and publisher of the official magazine for the Canadian Manufacturers Association the "Canadian Manufacturer and Industrial World" Among the many articles written about the Home Children in his magazines, one lengthy article published in his April 1891 edition entitled "Undesirable Immigrants" stated: "These waifs and strays are tainted and corrupt with moral slime and filth inherited from parents and surroundings of the most foul and disgusting character, and all the washing and clean clothes that Dr. Barnardo may bestow cannot possibly remove.....There is no power whatever that can cleanse the lepers so as to fit them to become desirable citizens of Canada." Further it was stated that Dr. Barnardo was doing a great wrong in "dumping his human warts and excrescences upon Canada".

Dr. C. K. Clarke was a prominent Canadian psychologist, member of the Canadian Parliament and he was the Dean of Psychology at the Queen's University in Kingston. In one warmly received lecture he stated: "A pretty strong proof that the general public has not awakened to its responsibilities in regard to the problems of heredity is the fact that in Canada we are deliberately adding to our population hundreds of children bearing all the stigmata of physical and mental degeneracy. And this is being done openly and apparently with the consent of many who are really anxious to prove themselves philanthropists. I refer to the children who are brought to Canada in order to benefit themselves and the country. It is asserted that these children pass a medical examination and are invariably of healthy type. Could anything be more misleading, more untrue?" - Kenneth Bagnell, The Little Immigrants

Ontario was not the only province with this opinion. "We are to have emptied into our midst 78,000 of these poor creatures, who are too young to work, and too ignorant if they are not too young; who have been gathered together from the streets, the lanes, the gutters, the slums, the thieves' resorts, and all the other haunts of vice. They are to be precipitated upon Canada, into our cities, our towns and country places to live in idleness and corrupt Canadian children. The chances are the great majority will be advised to wend their way towards Manitoba where they would almost outnumber our present population....We cannot, we must not submit to this raining down of thousands upon thousands of these embodiments of poverty, ignorance and often of crime, upon our country and among our people" - Stated in the Manitoba Daily Free Press, November 1897.

The BHCARA is pleased to present a new petition calling on the Government of Canada to apologize to the BHC and their descendants.

It is somewhat confusing all these "petitions" circulating around. What you need to remember is that each petition "bundle" is considered brand new in the House of Commons, therefore you can sign each one, each and every time.

As this petition is brand new, it can be signed by residents or citizens of Canada - even if living in a different country. If you have signed previous petitions, you can sign this one as well - and are encouraged to do so. OPEN UNTIL NOV 25/16

[Click here to sign this petition](#)

PARLIAMENT of CANADA

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Signature _____

e-312 (Immigration)

BHCARA E-Petition opened from
July 28th 2016 to November 25th 2016

42ND PARLIAMENT
Initiated by Lori Oschefski from Barrie, Ontario, on July 28, 2016, at 1:55 p.m. (EDT)

BHCARA NEWS

www.CanadianBritishHomeChildren.weebly.com

Park Lawn Monument Update

We are thrilled to find that after only a few short months, we have surpassed our original goal of raising \$16,000 for a monument in memory of the lives of 76 children who lay in two unmarked mass graves in the Park Lawn Cemetery, Etobicoke, Ontario. We are now considering all design options to determine if more funds are necessary.

Bob Huggins, producer of "A Barnardo Boy" being filmed now by [Orphan Boy Films](#), suggested a monument made from scrapped ship steel. Bob sourced out steel and was able to secure, through the generous donation of Jordan Elliot, President of Marine Recycling, riveted steel from the American Fortitude. We are hoping to have a fully completed steel monument that would need to be bolted to a cement base. Bob is now sourcing donations of labour and service to complete it once a graphic design is established. The design needs to have a place for the 76 names and also a space for a short dedication. The monument is to be dedicated to not only the 76 children buried there, but also to all the BHC who died as children or young unmarried adults across the country.

And here is where our members come into play. The only thing lacking here is a design. We are opening up this project for any creative people out there to come up with designs for this monument. Once collected, we plan on hosting a voting pole so that our members will be able to choose the final design.

Design ideas can be submitted to info@BritishHomeChildren.com, please include "monument design" in the subject line.

TVO will be airing Orphan Boy Films first production: The Greatest Freedom Show on Earth on Saturday August 6th as a commemorative of the anniversary of the August Emancipation Celebration in Windsor/Detroit.

The American Fortitude was first launched as the Ernest T. Weir. In 1978, Olgebay Norton purchased the ship as the replacement ship for the ill fated Edmund Fitzgerald.



AIR VIEW - S. S. ERNEST T. WEIR UNDER WAY

Reunion of two Home Boys



We were thrilled to be in Sarnia, Ontario this past month to reunite two Barnardo Home Boys who came to Canada in 1938 in the same party of boys. Cyril Hewitt (right) and George Beardshaw (left) had kept in touch over the years but had not seen each other for a very long time. This amazing reunion was captured on film by Bob Huggins and Anthony von Seck for the docudrama in production "A Barnardo Boy". Bob and Anthony were in Southern Ontario on a filming blitz which saw them interviewing BHC and descendants in eight cities during their five day tour.

Winnipeg events!

An interview was featured on July 31 in the CBC Manitoba Radio show, with Lori Oschefski, and also an Internet article, which was shared over 520 times in two days! [CBC News Winnipeg](#).

CEO Lori Oschefski will be speaking at the Winnipeg Millennium Library 251 Donald Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3P5 - start time 7pm - Thursday, August 4th.

Following the Library event, the BHC are included in an exhibit at the [UK Pavilion](#) for the second week of Folklorama!

During Ms. Oschefski's visit to Winnipeg, she will be attending a meeting with Jodi Giesbrecht, MA, PhD Manager - Research and Curation, of the Human Rights Museum.

On Friday August 5, a visit is scheduled to the site of the Barnardo Training Farm in Russell, Manitoba.