

Written by Lori Oschefski

With Andrew Simpson and special member
submitted story by Steven Shearer

Nick Hodson - passed away January 12, 2013 World Renowned Collingwood Artist

Nick Hodson was born in Russia where his family owned a cotton-spinning business. He was a British Subject of British parents who resided in Russia, working in the textile trade, until July of 1917. Nick's Grandfather and Great Uncles were already living in Russia, founding the Novikoff Mill in Moscow in the mid 1800's. The Hodson family were very successful in both England and Russia. Nick's father, Leo, served with British Intelligence at the outbreak of World War I. When the revolution began, and Czar Nicholas was overthrown, the business was confiscated by the Bolsheviks leaving the Hodson's with nothing. The family moved back to Manchester, England.

Back in England, Nick's father was employed with the emigration department of the Canadian Pacific Railway, responsible for bringing Mennonite and Doukhobors to Canada. The family moved once again, to Riga, Latvia. Nick began his education in Latvia however he was the only English

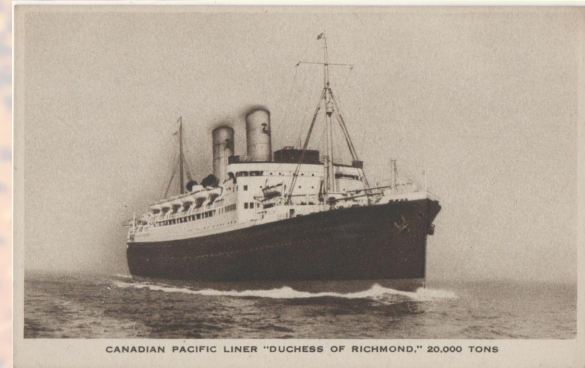


Nick Hodson
November 2012
taken by Lori Oschefski

student in this German boarding school and was often bullied by the other students. His parent sent him back to England, enrolling him into the private boarding school Highfield College in Leigh-On-Sea, Essex. By the time Nick was fifteen, his parents were divorced and could no longer afford to keep him in private school. Nick refused to be placed in the regular school system as boys from private schools were often bullied there. Nick's father Leo, knowing how difficult it would be for a boy who didn't graduate to find work, encouraged him to consider immigration to either Canada or Australia with the Oversea Settlement Committee (OSC). Nick's biggest challenge was deciding which country. While contemplating his life in a railroad station in London, he looked up to see a huge poster depicting Canada as a land of opportunity. He saw

this as a sign and Canada became his choice. Nick's brother, being five years younger, stayed in England. He attended regular school where he was treated in a "rather unfriendly manner".

Before leaving for Canada, applications had to be filled out, asking questions such as state of health, religion, social life, hobbies and habits. Smoking was frowned upon by Canadian farmers due to the threat of barn fires. A photo also had to be included to be shown to the applicant seeking a boy. Although the OSC usually sent parties of thirty boys, their participation in these migration schemes was drawing to a close and only fifteen boys, including fifteen year old Nick, were sent in their last party. The boys departed April 15, 1932 aboard the Duchess of Richmond. Nick said good bye to his parents and his younger brother, whom he would not see again for a number of years.

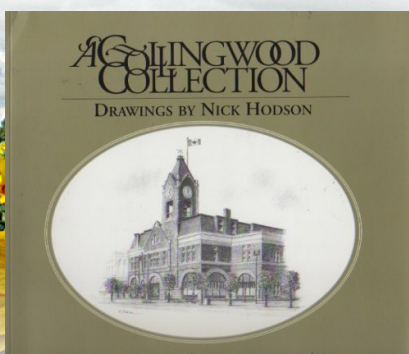


CANADIAN PACIFIC LINER "DUCHESS OF RICHMOND," 20,000 TONS

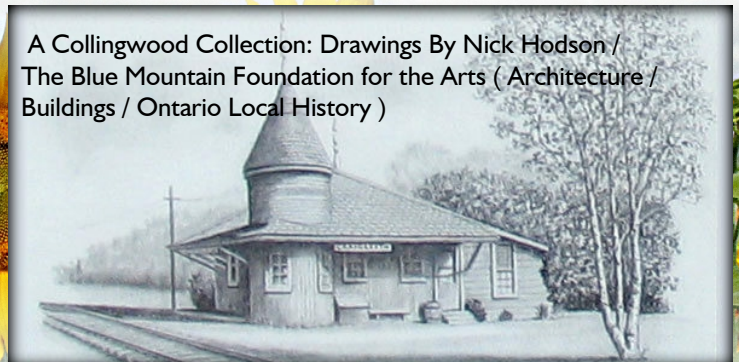
Nick started off working at a fruit farm in an area now part of Halton Hills, his pay only \$100 per year. He realized then that it would be a tough go to make his fortune in Canada. Often Nick thought about that poster back in England and how he felt misled. However, determined to make the most of his new life, Nick boarded a train in Georgetown, destined to a farmer in Pretty River Valley, in the Collingwood area. Nick recounts "this first job was a back breaker and a good initiation for what was about to come. Day by day I got accustomed to the heavy work, with practically no time off. No

mention of time off was in the contract, and believe me, most of the farmers took advantage of it." When Nick's three years was up, his money was deposited in a bank account in Collingwood for him. The recession was hitting the country hard and he was forced to stay another year on the farm however his pay was raised to \$125 for this year. Nick's health was starting to decline under the work load, he developed pleurisy which would continue to plague him. He took yet another farm job with hopes the work load would be easier but in his words "I found I had gone from the frying pan into the fire". Nick's story will continue on page: 4

Nick was interviewed on film by Eleanor McGrath with photographs taken by Lori Oschefski for the documentary "Forgotten" and for the book "Bleating of the Lambs" respectively. Three months later Nick peacefully passed away.



A Collingwood Collection: Drawings By Nick Hodson /
The Blue Mountain Foundation for the Arts (Architecture /
Buildings / Ontario Local History)



British Home Child Day 2015

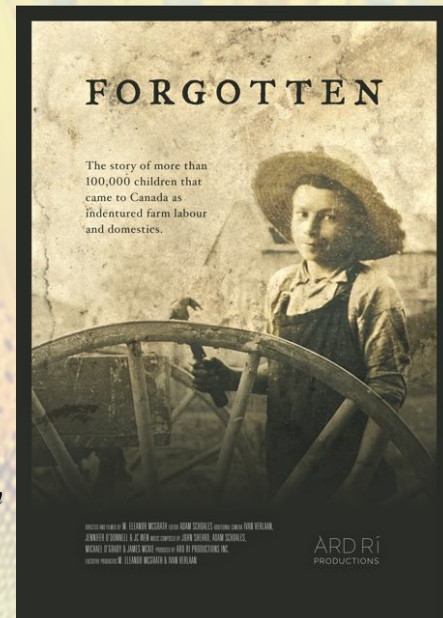
A weekend of Celebration in Toronto

Saturday September 26, 2015 - The World Premier of "Forgotten"
 Sunday September 27, 2015 - BHC Day at Black Creek Pioneer Village

Toronto Film Maker Eleanor McGrath is thrilled to announce the World Premier of her third documentary. "Forgotten", the story of our British Home Children, was filmed in Ireland and throughout Canada over a period of four years with over fifty interview done by Mrs. McGrath. Lori Oschefski, CEO of the BHCARA, was thrilled to have worked along side Eleanor for several months during this filming. She was able to introduce Mrs. McGrath to five British Home Children, John Vallance, Cyril Hewitt, George Beardshaw, Walter Goulding and Nick Hodson. Ms. Oschefski accompanied Mrs. McGrath on four of these interviews where the BHC were not only filmed for this documentary but also interviewed and photographed for a book Ms. Oschefski was planning. Ms. Oschefski is pleased that earlier this year, her book "Bleating of the Lambs" was released containing their stories. Sadly, two of these men, Nick Hodson and Walter Goulding have since passed away highlighting the importance of capturing their life experiences, essential elements of Canadian history.

In October 2011, Mrs. McGrath was walking south on one of Toronto's toughest streets, George Street. As she recounts: *"Once the home of the 19th century wealthy it is now a forgotten street of Toronto's homeless and marginalized. I knew it was significant architecturally but when I came to 295 George Street surrounded by construction hoarding I realized that an important part of Toronto's heritage might be lost. After calling the Heritage Board and beginning a campaign for its preservation, two days later on October 19th a 3-Alarm fire gutted the "Fegan Home for the Distribution of Boys". This story found me -- I couldn't walk away."*

"Forgotten" has been selected for its world premiere at the 10th Annual COMMFFEST film festival on Saturday, September 26th at 8:30pm in Toronto. St. Lawrence Centre for The Arts 27 Front Street East. For more information and tickets please visit: www.commfest.com



BLACK CREEK PIONEER VILLAGE

Our second BHC Day Celebration will be held at the Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto on Sunday September 27, 2015.

General admission tickets for this full day event are available at the door. A special afternoon tea, light lunch and open mic is available for those interested. Hosted by Black Creek, tickets for the lunch (which includes parking and admission) are available on their web site at www.blackcreek.ca

Exhibits & Artifact Display

John Sayers - Town Hall

BHCARA display - event pavilion

OGS BHC SIG - Dianna Hanson Fulton, on site help

Ellen Merven - Heritage Needlepoint, visit her web site at: www.ruachcrafts.com, Ellen boasts the I have the largest selection of Celtic needlework in Canada, a Canadiana line which included military insignia, base crests, and ship's crest and a pewter jewelry line!

British Home Child Exhibit

All day ~ McNair Gallery (In the Visitor Centre)

Lots of family activities all day in the park!

There are two hotels very close to the Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto

1. Extended Stay Toronto Vaughan hotel. For reservations: contact the hotel directly at 905 856 9600 or visit their web site at: [Extended Stay Canada](http://ExtendedStayCanada.com)
2. Super 8 Toronto North Hotel. For reservations: contact the hotel directly at 905-760-2120 or visit their web site at: www.super8torontonorth.com

Both hotels are located within minutes of the Black Creek Pioneer Village and close to the Pearson International Airport

10:30 am Registration

Speaker Schedule

11:30 - Opening ceremony - Key Note Speaker Kenneth Bagnell - "The Little Immigrants"

1:00 - British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa - John Sayers

1:30 - Toronto's Bold Step Dancers

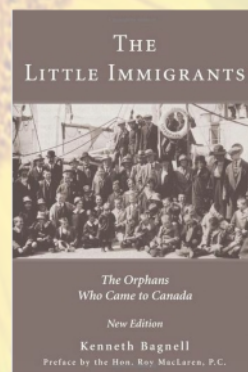
2:00 - Ontario Genealogical Society BHC SIG Chair Dianna Hanson Fulton

2:30 - Victorian Dancing - Town Hall Green

3:00 - James Gilchrist - "Distributing Home, Belleville, Ontario, 1870-1925"

3:30 - Viewing of the film "Breaking the Silence - The British Home Children" by Lori Oschefski inside the Weston Theatre

Mr. Bagnell will be on hand to meet the public and sign books. Bring your copy and have it signed! Copies will be available in the Black Creek Gift Shop.



Monthly column by Andrew Simpson



It is always exciting to be in on a project and see it grow.

I first came across the story of British Home Children in 2007 when like many I stumbled across a family member who had been migrated to Canada.

Now there was at the time little written on the subject on this side of the Atlantic and given the destination of my great uncle I went looking for help in Canada.

And I was not disappointed. It started with those who responded to newspaper appeals and went looking for the site of the farms he worked and descendants of the families he might have known. It progressed to a series of learned articles and books and ended with Lori and a few people who I now count as friends and colleagues.

They too were also on that quest to make sense of why our young people were migrated seeking not just a personal explanation but a wider understanding of the policy.

And by degree I came home starting with a one line reference in a book to the opposition from some Socialist Poor Law Guardians to the migration of children from the workhouse.*

It wasn't much to go on but eventually I tracked them down. They were Mr Thomas Skivington, Dr Garret and Mrs Garret, and they were active on the Board of Guardians of the Chorlton Union which administrated the Poor Law across the south of Manchester.

All of which was a coincidence given that this is where I live, and the old workhouse which became the local hospital was where some of our children were born, added to which the grand offices of the Union where Mr Skivington and the Garrets argued

the case against migration was also a familiar old haunt of mine.

The case that they put challenged that oft quoted mantra made by apologists of the migration policy that no one at the time opposed sending young people across the Atlantic.

Not only did the three raise serious doubts about the safety and happiness of some who went but were forthright in putting forward alternatives which would have made the policy unnecessary.

And that connection took me to the Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges set up in 1870 to help destitute children in the twin cities.

It developed into an organisation which provided homes and training, took negligent parents to court and campaigned against the exploitation of children as cheap labour.

The charity also sent its share to Canada, but stopped earlier than most.

Today it is known as the Together Trust and employs an archivist who writes a regular blog about the work of the Refuges and assists those whose family members were in the care of the charity.**

The archive is a wonderful treasure trove of material throwing light on the thinking that led to the policy of migration, reports from Canada by officials and the letters of the young people who went.

There are also detailed accounts of those admitted by the organisation which together offer a vivid insight into the social problems in the last quarter of the 19th century as well as the work of the Refuges. Now my great uncle was not sent by either the Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges, or the Chorlton Union but travelled in the care of the

Middlemore charity on behalf of the Derby Board of Guardians.

Sadly there are few of his records but what there is was supplied by a researcher in Birmingham who was herself nearly sent to Australia as a BHC and kindly undertook to go looking for me.

And that brings me back to the beginning because there are a growing number of people and organisations who share this common link and who are coming to together to exchange information and explore in ever greater detail the story of those children sent from Britain to Canada and later Australia and New Zealand.

Pictures; party of young people from Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges on the steps of Manchester Town Hall, 1897, Brass Band at Strangeways circa 1900, learning a skill, in the laundry at Rosen Hallas, circa 1883, courtesy of the Together Trust, <http://togethertrustarchive.blogspot.co.uk/p/about-together-trust.html>

** New Lives for Old: The Story of Britain's child migrants: The Story of Britain's Home Children, Roger Kershaw, & Janet Sacks, 2008*

*** Getting down and dusty, The Together Trust, <http://togethertrustarchive.blogspot.co.uk/>*

Visit Andrew Simpson's blog at
<http://chorltonhistory.blogspot.ca/>

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Descendants Community News

REENIE'S RUNNERS (& WALKERS) - The Terry Fox Run in Memory of Doreen Young

Doreen Young, a British Home Child descendant and a strong supporter of the BHCARA lost her fight against Cancer on September 30, 2014, a sad day for us all.

Her daughters have formed a team for this year's Terry Fox Run taking place at Island Lake in Orangeville on September 20.

Her daughter Dawn posts "My sisters and I may be the last ones crossing the finish line, but we will stand proud knowing that we have honoured our mother's memory and supported such a worthy cause."

Doreen had entrusted her father's precious British Home Child mementos, including his Barnardo Bible and his Second World War Flight Log book, to us, with our promise that we would use them to remember her father and to promote the story of all our British Home Children.

For those who wish to help support Reenie's Runners and Walkers please visit the "[Reenie's Runners](#)" on the official Terry Fox support page.



The Nick Hodson story continued

Nick remained at this farm for only a season, then moved on to other farms before finally being hired by a good family who treated him well. He was paid an exceptional \$25 per month and given lots of time off.

Nick missed his family back in England and wrote them often and included drawings of where he was living at the time. He drew everything, barns, houses, farms and even outhouses! His drawings were extraordinarily detailed - the outhouse drawing included the Eaton Catalogue hanging on the wall! Nick's mother commented on how impressed she was that the farmers had provided reading material for the farm hands, Nick replying back that the catalogue was definitely NOT used for reading material!

Nick's health did not improve with his lighter work load, and by 1938 his pleurisy had turned into Tuberculosis. Nick spent a year in the Gravenhurst Sanatorium, after which he took up residence in Collingwood. When the Second World War broke out, Nick was not eligible for enlistment due to his health. However he contributed by making hand drawn War Bond Posters and by working at Collingwood's Bryden Electric company and then at Clyde Aircraft. Nick's brother George who had remained in England, was tragically killed while serving in the Second World War.

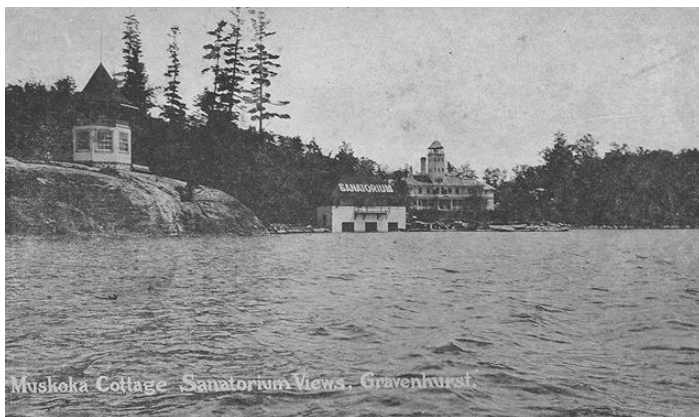
On his birthday, May 8, 1943, Nick married Flora Morrison. He bought a small photography studio in Collingwood, but the chemicals proved too much and caused yet another decline in his health. He worked for the Dominion Road Machinery Company, various drug stores, a travel business and even a cigar store before settling down at the Trott's Furniture Store. He stayed with this store for twenty five years, until he retired.

All throughout his life, Nick's artistic talents were recognized and for years he taught art students. He donated the proceeds from his very popular Collingwood Town Hall painting to fund young art students who could not afford art classes. In the 1980's he was commissioned to paint Lord Admiral Collingwood, whom the town was named after. This painting hangs in the Town Hall, Councillor's Chambers to this day. He is best known, however, for his amazingly detailed and historically significant pencil sketches. His work hangs in homes and offices throughout the world.

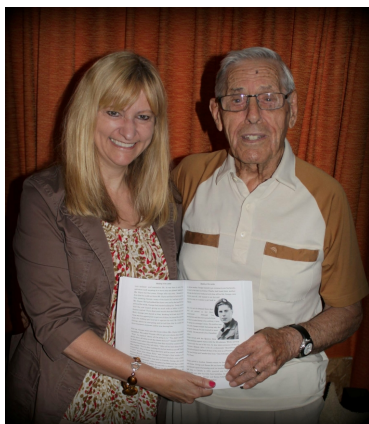
Nick has received many awards of recognition over the years, including the 1993 Order of Collingwood. In 2008 he received the Companion Order of Collingwood for his continued volunteer efforts at ninety plus years of age! Nick's sketches are preserved in the book "A Collingwood Collection - Drawings by Nick Hodson" published in 2002 by the Blue Mountain Foundation of the Arts.

Asked by his Grandson Dave Hodson in 1992: "How would you say the emigration program turned out?"; Nick replied:

"On the whole, emigration proved successful to most of the boys, having learned the existence of hardship and the value of money. I know personally that of the twenty one boys who came to this greater area just previous to me, the large majority benefited from their experiences. Records prove that of all of the boys who came out during these many years, most remained to become good citizens, and only a few returned to England."



British Home Children & Descendants News



On August 6, BHCARA CEO Lori Oschefski accompanied by two members of the organization traveled to London, Ontario to present ninety-two year old BHC George Beardshaw with his copy of "Bleating of the Lambs". In 2012 Ms. Oschefski accompanied film producer Eleanor McGrath to London to interview George for her film (being released in Toronto this month) and Ms. Oschefski's book (released this past June). A delightful afternoon was spent with George which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. George kept us entertained all day with stories about his life as a BHC, and also as one of Canada's few surviving Second World War veterans; stories of his service.

At the end of August ninety-three year old BHC Muriel Oschefski made the long journey from her home in Barrie, Ontario to Ottawa so that she could attend the wedding of her Grandson Jason Oschefski and Erika Dole. Mrs.

Oschefski sparkled in her beautiful gown and was delighted to have been present at the wedding.



We were distressed to learn of a horrible car accident, involving BHCARA member Bruce Skilling and his companion Inga. While making their way from Alberta to Ontario, the camper they were traveling in flipped over in Saskatchewan. Bruce and Inga are well and now back home in Alberta. Inga is recovering from bumps and bruising, Bruce from two broken bones in his neck. Grateful for their survival, the BHCARA members sent them best wishes in a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

THREE BROTHERS: BHC, WORLD WAR I VETERANS, FAMILY MEN

In the Beginning

James Britton was born 18 Aug 1872 at 77 Griffin Street in Workington, Cockermouth, Cumberland, England to James (an iron worker) and Jane (a dressmaker). He had 1 older brother (John, b. 1869) and 3 younger siblings (Thomas, b. 1876; Isabella Julia, b. 1878; and Adam, b. 1882). By the time James was 18, he was also a steelworker, like his father.

On 14 Dec 1895, James (now 23 and a railway worker) married 21 year old Ann Stamper Milburn, a housekeeper, daughter of William Milburn. 5 months after their marriage (!), their 1st child William James was born on 15 May 1896. The following year, Thomas was born on 03 Oct 1897.

In the autumn of 1900, the local steel industry was shutting down due to the high cost of fuel, labour, and coke outweighing the result's selling price - making iron's production unprofitable. This was a problem because the town, and the extended Britton family, were dependent on the industry.

On 27 Feb 1901, James and Ann's last child Arthur was born, meaning he was conceived in approximately June 1900, just prior to the local recession. According to the 31 Mar 1901 Census, Ann and the 3 boys were living with her father and brother (John) at 6 Wall St again. Where did James go?

Devastation

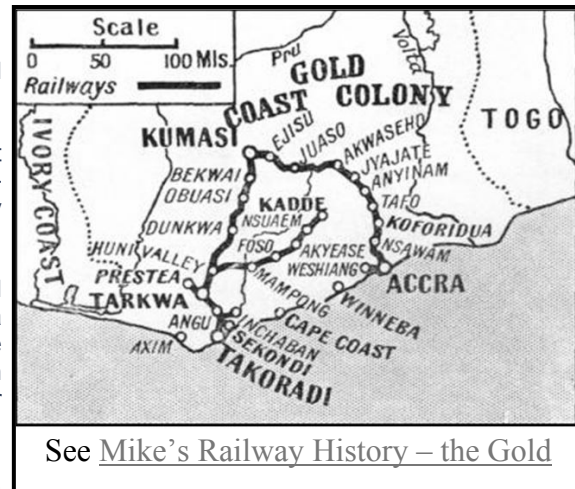
Apparently, at some point, James became a 'Foreman Platelayer' with the Gold Coast Government Railway in what is now called Ghana, in Africa.

Unfortunately, as this was a very gruelling environment, James, along with many others, died of malaria on 23 Mar 1907, far from his wife and boys.

Within 6 months, by 23 Sep 1907, Ann and the 3 boys were living at the local Workhouse at Ashton Under Lyne, Lancashire, just east of Manchester. This is 143 miles south by present-day road from Workington. That date is important because was when she signed the necessary papers to have the 3 boys (Walter, Thomas, and Arthur) placed into the local orphanage.

A month later (28 Oct 1907), all 3 boys were admitted to the Edgworth Children's Home and Orphanage in Edgworth, Lancashire, England (22 miles north-west of Dukinfield). I have a copy of their admission form. This was the 2nd National Children's Home established by the Rev. Thomas Bowman Stephenson that prided itself on turning-out productive workers with skills like blacksmiths, joiners (for construction & furniture), clog & boot makers, & farmer workers.

After 3.5 years at the Orphanage, the 3 brothers, William (14), Thomas (13), and Arthur (10), were sent to the Hamilton, Ontario, Canada based National Children's Home, also organized by the Rev. Stephenson.



BHC Department

Their ship, the S.S. Dominion, left the west coast of England from Liverpool on 09 Mar 1911. After steaming for 10 days in the North Atlantic they arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia on 19 March 1911. Along with 3 adults, they were part of a group of 77 under-age children. Only 4 were girls, and of the 70 boys: 8 were ages 7-12, 56 were ages 14, 15, or 16, 6 were ages 17 or 18. In the group of 77 children, there were 2 sets of 3 siblings, 6 sets of 2 siblings - the rest were alone.

Within a few hours, the brothers (and the rest of the group) then boarded a CPR train (according to a found schedule, possibly as late as 3am). The train would then use the CNR tracks to make their way to Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and finally Hamilton.

This orphanage was managed by Mr. Frank Mills from 1899 to 1928. He genuinely cared for the children and many of them kept in touch with him long after they were adults, sharing their adult experiences with him. It was his responsibility to coordinate with the Department of Agriculture to send boys to farms to work until they were 18 years old - under contract, then do annual visits with the placements. Of course, not all placements were happy.



The 01 Jun 1911 Canadian Census shows:

- " William at the home of the McNay family near Exeter, Ontario as a 'domestic'. About 160 km west of Hamilton.
- " Thomas still at the Orphanage in Hamilton, Ontario - at the same time as his future wife !
- " Arthur was adopted by the Hoffman family in Clinton, Lincoln County, Ontario. About 40 km east of Hamilton.

War & Marriage

Thomas Britton

2.5 years earlier than his older & younger brothers, on 25 Oct 1915, at age 18, Thomas married Alys Hilda Chaplin (who was ALSO a BHC sent to the same Orphanage in Hamilton) in Toronto, Ontario.

Five years earlier, on 8 Oct 1910, at age 16, Alys Hilda Chaplin was on the ship S.S. Dominion, as part of a 'Dr. Stephenson party'. Her ship left Liverpool bound for Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. She arrived on 17 Oct 1910. She was also at the National Childrens' Home, in Hamilton, Ontario. The 1 Jun 1911 Canada Census shows her, age 17, as still being there - which means she was there when the Britton boys arrived.

A couple weeks later, he joined the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 08 Nov 1915. He was noted as being a farmer. Three years later, on 23 Sep 1918, he was discharged from the military.

They would have 3 boys and 1 girl, although the 1st boy would accidentally drown at the age of 11 while playing with the 2nd boy and a mutual friend on a row boat at La Salle Park, Hamilton, Ontario. History would repeat itself when, on 10 Aug 1941 at Rocky Point, Parry Sound District, Ontario, Alys drowned. At that point, the children were 22, 17, and 13. Thomas buried her 8 feet deep.

Within a few years, Thomas would marry Lavinia Mabel Stalker when he was 48 and she was in her early 60's. Based on a woman with the same name, she may: " have been a BHC sent to the prairies to get married or have been involved with the Home Children program.



William Britton

On 09 Mar 1918, at age 21, William and his youngest brother Arthur were living together in Toronto, Ontario. A few months later, William married Christina Ann Kilgour on 22 Jun 1918 in Toronto. Two days later, he joined the Canadian Special Service Force with experience as a machinist. He's also noted as having 3 years & 8 months of previous military service as a Private. William & Christina settled & stayed in the Toronto, Ontario, Canada area to raise their 6 children. William died at age 65 of lung cancer on 15 Dec 1961. Christina died at age 94 on 07 Nov 1983. They are both buried at Pine Hills Cemetery in Scarborough, Ontario.

Arthur Britton

On 09 Mar 1918, as a 17 year-old (by pushing his birthday back 2 years), and living with his oldest brother William Toronto, Ontario, he joined the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force, Depot Artillery Brigade. He was noted as being an electrician. The following year, on 14 Aug 1919, Arthur married Margaret Reid (Peggy) Leishman, but said he was a labourer. Arthur & Margaret started their family in Etobicoke, west of Toronto, Ontario to raise their 5 children.

3 families, 5 girls, and a boy - Part 2 by Steven Shearer

In the Beginning

The Chaplins

A history of the Chaplin family was commissioned by a descendent and written by Keira Quinn Lockyear a family history researcher, a portion of which was supplied to me for reference purposes. In it is noted that no relationship has been proved, nor is provable, that this family was related to Charlie Chaplin, the comedian and film director as Charlie was an orphan. Ms. Lockyear found a very interesting story with some amount of intrigue, scandal, and re-location to New Zealand - except for 1 little girl, described here, that I brought to Ms. Lockyear's attention.

Stanley George Chaplin was born in Oct 1867 in Lewisham, London, Kent, England. His father was George Hopper Chaplin (born 27 Aug 1841 in 17 Redcross Square, St Botolph, Aldersgate, Middlesex, England). In 1881, a directory lists him as Esquire, owner of Sherbrooke Parish, containing 2 residents. His mother was Alice Jane Rush (born 18 Oct 1844 in Sydenham Common, Lewisham, Kent, England). Stanley was born first, followed by 3 brothers (Howard Charles, b. 1870; Walter Robert, b. 1871; Percy Edwin, b. 1875) and 1 sister (Hilda Mary, b. 1878). According to census information, Stanley is listed as a 4 year old visitor in Tonbridge, Kent, England on 02 Apr 1871, and a 13 year old pupil in St Owen St, Hereford, Herefordshire, England on 03 Apr 1881. So there was some money in the family.

On 08 Dec 1890, Stanley (now 23 years old) married Edith Ellen Newsham. According to Ms. Lockyear's research, "the 05 Apr 1891 Census reveals Stanley and Edith Chaplin were resident in a Cecil Street boarding house in St Clement Danes, London with a group of writers and actors. 4 months later, on 26 April 1891 in Strand, London, the couple's son Cecil Stanley Chaplin was born. By 1893 the family had settled in Crediton, a market town in Devon, England. From there, the couple started having more children:

- " Mary Newsham Chaplin, b. 04 Jan 1893,
- " Alys Hilda Chaplin, b. 01 May 1894,
- " Kate Chaplin, was born 5 months premature in 1895 and survived for only 1 day.
- " Frank James Chaplin, b. 11 July 1900

Between late 1895 and early 1896, presumably as a result of Kate's death, Stanley and Edith moved to South Africa. Their son Cecil was sent to stay with Edith's father, but followed later in 1896. Neither Mary nor Alys went. No information has yet been found to indicate where they did go, but on 15 Jun 1897, education records show 3 year old Alys was admitted to the Crediton Hayward School in, Crediton, Devon, England as a ward of 'John, of East Street'. She attended there for 3 years.



Family Splitting

Stanley, Edith, & Cecil returned to England on 11 Apr 1899, where Stanley called himself a builder. However, on 31 Jan 1901, Stanley & his new lover, his brother Percy & ex-wife Edith, along with Cecil, Mary, and the baby Frank left on the R.M.S. Wakanui for New Zealand. Only 6 year old Alys did not go as she had been given up for at least 3 years.

The 31 Mar 1901 Census shows Alys as a 'Nurse Child' (a child sent to live with with another family to raise as their own) of the Richard & Emily Vanstone family. The Vanstone's registered Alys at the Crediton Hayward School, where she stayed until 07 Apr 1905 where she was noted as "gone to a home".

I have not yet found anything about where she went, although, based on her emigration to Canada as part of the 'Stephenson group', she was in one of the Dr. Stephenson Orphanages.

The Mearsbecks

Henry George Mearsbeck, a middle child, was born in Aug 1868 in Paddington, Kensington, London, Middlesex, England.

His father, also called Henry (born in 1841 in St James, London, Middlesex, England), was a 'French Polisher' - a specialized cleaning skill needed by well-off families of the time. His mother Phoebe Baldwin was born in 1837 in Chenies, Buckinghamshire, England. Henry George had 3 older sisters and 4 younger siblings.

On 19 Nov 1888, Henry George (now a 20 year old French furniture polisher, like his father) married Mene Ballard who was 25 years old and also living at the same address on Artillery Road in Ramsgate, Kent (!). Her father was Edmund George Ballard.

Almost a year later, their 1st child Alice Mene was born in Oct 1889 in Ramsgate, Thanet, Kent, England. On 19 Aug 1891, Mene gave birth to Phoebe in Wandsworth, London. The next month, on 25 Sep 1891, Mene is admitted to the Bethnal House Lunatic Asylum on Cambridge Road in London as a pauper. She was discharged 3 months later on 26 Dec 1891 having 'recovered'.

Family Splitting & Destruction

A few weeks later, on 14 Jan 1892, Henry George left England, by himself, from Liverpool to go to Halifax on the S.S. Sardinian as a 24 year old labourer. Given the distance from London to Liverpool, he must have left London some time earlier. He arrived at Halifax on 27 Jan 1892. No further documentation has been found beyond his arrival.

In the meantime, his wife Mene and his daughters Alice & Phoebe need to survive: they moved back to the Kent area. While there is no documentation for another marriage (which could have been lost during the war, or not), starting a year after Henry left:

- " In 1893, Phoebe died in January, age 2 ½, in Thanet, Kent,
- " In 1893, Minnie was born in Canterbury, Kent,
- " in 1895, Maud was born in Canterbury, Kent,
- " on 31 May 1897, Albert was born in Canterbury, Kent.

Mene's husband Henry had returned at some point from Canada and was in the Ramsgate, England area around 1896 - but remained estranged from the family.

According to the census on 31 Mar 1901, Mene, Minnie, Maud, and Albert were living at 37 Oswald Rd, Dover, Kent, England, with 2 boarders.

Unfortunately, as a single mother with no husband, Mene continued to have financial hardship: starting 26 May 1904, from the Chartham Lunatic Asylum in Canterbury, Kent, Mene applied to send Albert (only) to the National Children's Home and Orphanage on Bonner Road, Bethnel Green, in London, England. By late September that he was actually in the Orphanage.

The girls were staying with Mrs. Fakely at Buckland Farm on Dover Rd near Sandwich, Kent. Later, Minnie & Maude were, prophetically, at the Britton Farm, Ickham, Canterbury, Kent.

The National Children's Home and Orphanage at 84 Bonner Road, Bethnel Green, in London, England. Circa 1900.

Much more information about this Orphanage can be found at: <http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/BethnalGreenNCH/>

In April 1913, his mother Mene died at Bridge, Kent, England.

On 02 Apr 1911, at 16 years old, Maud was a kitchen maid at National Children's Home and Orphanage on Bonner Road, Bethnel Green, in London, with her brother Albert and Rose May & Nellie Wilkinson (Albert's future wife) !

On 23 Apr 1913, at 20 years old, Minnie was living at 1 Draycott Ave, Sloane Square, S.U., London, England, probably as a servant. On 02 Nov 1915, at 22 years old, she was living at 61 St. Stephens Ave, Shepherds Bush, London West, England.

In 1918, at 23 years old, Maud was living at 102 City Rd, Finsbury and Fulham, London. In 1925, at 30 years old, she was living at 8 Little Essex St, London. By Jun 1935, at 40 years old, Maud was married to Robert Wall.

Sometime around 1896 Henry George Mearsbeck did return to Ramsgate, Kent, England. But he again left and eventually died on 08 Jun 1914 in Coventry, Warwickshire - sick and alone:

The Wilkinsons

Henry William Wilkinson was born in Dec 1861 in St Saviour, Southwark, London, England. His father, also called Henry William, was a 'cow keeper'. Henry William (the son) had 1 (known) younger sister: Alice, b. ABT 1871 in London, England. Nothing is currently known about Henry's childhood, like the various places he lived, or went to school.

On 25 Nov 1883, Henry William married Margaret Puddiford, both of whom were 21 years old and living at 35 Dean Street (!) in the Parish of St. George-in-the-East, Middlesex, England. Henry was a 'labourer', and Margaret was a 'spinster', her father was George Puddiford, also a labourer.

By 05 Apr 1891, Henry was a cement hawker living with Margaret and his first 3 daughters at 9 Williams Bld, Mile End Old Town, London, England.

" Elizabeth Mary Ann (Lizzie) Wilkinson, b. 4 Oct 1884 in Mile End, London

" Alice Rebecca Eliza Wilkinson, b. in Dec 1886 in Mile End, London

" Annie Margaret Wilkinson, b. in Mar 1889 in Mile End, London, England

The census on 31 Mar 1901 shows Henry was a wirework hawker at 1a Ames St, Bethnal Green, London.

By 07 Nov 1897, 3 more daughters had been born:

" Kate N Wilkinson, b. 14 March 1893 in Mile End, London

" Rose May (Maise) Wilkinson, b. in Jun 1895 in Bow, Poplar, London

" Nellie Maud Wilkinson, 07 Nov 1897 in 42 Clayhall Road, Bow, London

In Oct 1902, the couple had their 1st son: William Henry Wilkinson.

By 1905, the family was living at 48 Leabourne Rd, Stamford Hill, London and Henry was a Wire worker, journeyman. Henry died on 13 Feb 1906 at 15 Mace St, Bethnal Green East, London, England from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, asthma - a.k.a. consumption.

According to Wikipedia, "at the beginning of the 20th century, tuberculosis was one of the UK's most urgent health problems. After it was learned in the 1880s that TB was contagious, there were campaigns to stop spitting in public and the infected poor were pressured to enter sanatoria that resembled prisons; the sanatoria for the middle and upper classes offered excellent care and constant medical attention. 50% of those who entered were dead within five years". Successful immunizations didn't begin until 1906 - too late for Henry.

Henry left behind his 43 year old wife Margaret, and 7 children: Elizabeth Mary Ann, 21; Alice Rebecca Eliza, 19; Annie Margaret, 16; Kate, 12; Rose May (Maise), 10; Nellie Maud, 8; and William Henry, 3.

Margaret re-married 2.5 years later in Oct 1908 to James Robert Needham. Robert had previously been married to Matilda Ann Seabrook, and they had had their own family. Unfortunately Matilda had died and Robert was looking for a mother for his children - so they combined families. Partly.



While Elizabeth was already married, Alice would soon marry, and shortly after that so would Annie - in the new household, there was room only for 12 year old Kate and 3 year old William Henry.

Sometime before the 02 Apr 1911 census, Rose May and Nellie Maud were placed in the National Childrens' Home and Orphanage, Bonner Road, Bethnal Green, London, England.

Deporting, Marriage, & War

Chaplin and Britton

On 8 Oct 1910, at age 16, Alys Chaplin was on the ship S.S. Dominion, as part of the Dr. Stephenson party - just like the Britton brothers (as documented in the previous article) would experience in the coming months. Her ship left Liverpool bound for Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. She arrived on 17 Oct. By November she was also at the National Children's Home, on Trolley St in Hamilton, Ontario.

The 01 Jun 1911 Canada Census shows her, age 17, as still being there - which means she was there when the Britton boys arrived.

Alys Chaplin and Thomas Britton were married on 25 Oct 1915. He was 18, she was 21. A couple weeks later, he joined the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force. They would eventually have William James, Walter Stanley, Hilda A., and Frank.

William James, would drown at age 11 while his brother Walter (age 8) and a friend frantically watched from a row boat. Then, on 10 Aug 1941 at Rocky Point, Parry Sound District, Ontario, Alys drowned. Walter was 22 years old, Hilda was 17, and Frank was 13.

Within a few years, Thomas married Lavinia Mabel Stalker when he was 48 and she was in her early 60's. Based on her travel patterns, she could have been involved with the Home Children program, but no documentation has been found to confirm that.

Mearsbeck & Wilkinson

After 8 years of residing at the National Children's Home, Albert Mearsbeck (15) was sent on 08 Mar 1913 to the Hamilton, Ontario, Canada based National Children's Home - the same home the Britton brothers and Alys Chaplin.

His ship, the S.S. Canada left the west coast of England from Liverpool on 08 Mar 1913 (exactly 2 years after the Britton brothers). After steaming for 9 days in the North Atlantic they arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia on 17 March 1911.

He was accompanied by 80 other boys.

Using the same rail route as the Britton's, 3 days later he was at the National Children's Home in Hamilton, Ontario.

Until 02 Nov 1915, Albert was living with J J Bowslaugh, at R.R. 1, in Grimsby, Ontario.

On 02 Nov 1915, Albert, at age 18, joined the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force. He was noted as being a farmer, with his next-of-kin being Minnie at her address in Shepherds Bush, London, England.

Almost nothing is known about Rose May and Nellie Wilkinson's time at the National Childrens' Home and Orphanage, Bonner Road, Bethnal Green, London. They would have been placed there sometime between 1908 & 1911.

Rose May probably left the Orphanage at age 18, or about June, 1913.

Rose May married Charles Henry Ernest Woodnutt. They had one son (Eric Charles) who would later marry, but have no children.



Nellie probably also left the Orphanage in 1916 at age 18.

While stationed in England, Albert Mearsbeck re-connected with Nellie Wilkinson (at the time she was living at 48 Leabourne Rd, Stamford Hill) and married her on 27 Aug 1917. Finally, on 20 Apr 1919, Albert was discharged from the military.

The picture, to the left, was taken about 1917, roughly when they married.

They would have 1 daughter, Kathleen, who would then marry Walter Britton, son of Thomas Britton.

On 10 Apr 1920, at 27 years old, Minnie had landed at Halifax, Nova Scotia before continuing on live at 305 Province St, Hamilton, Ontario with her brother Albert.

On 20 Oct 1928, age 35, Minnie married William Henry Cardwell. They would celebrate their 50th anniversary in Ancaster, Ontario with family & friends - but no children.