

Home Children Canada September 2023 Newsletter

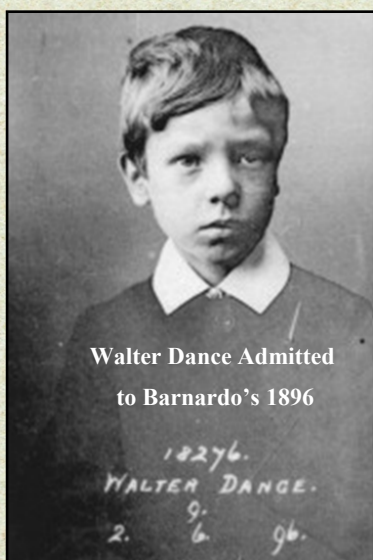
**September 28th is our
National British Home Child Day**

With articles by Marlene Dance, Andrew Simpson and Lori Oschefski



Walter Henry Dance

By his granddaughter-in-law Marlene Dance



We never knew anything about my husband's grandfather Walter Dance, and the only answer to any question was "he was an English Orphan who abandoned the family years ago". No one in the family ever talked about him it was like he had never existed.

In 1999 when my husband's father died, we thought that any opportunity to know something had probably died with him. But later on, going through old family papers three important items came to light - a book titled "The Little Immigrants" - The orphans who came to Canada by Kenneth Bagnell, next a letter postmarked England in 1918 signed your loving sister Ada, and lastly a certified true copy of a birth certificate for Walter listing his parents, his father's occupation and where in London he was born.

After reading "the little Immigrants", I decided that I would send an application to Barnardo's enquiring about a Walter Henry Dance. An immediate response confirmed that Walter

was a Barnardo boy. Then five months later a fat envelope arrived with a wealth of information about his family in England as well as dates of his arrival in Canada, the family he resided with and worked for, as well as annual personal inspection reports on his health, development and welfare.

The Barnardos file and pictures together with birth, death and marriage certificates of Dance family members listed in that file and obtained on a 2005 trip to England helped us piece together Walter's family in England and why his life was in Canada. It also eventually helped us meet Dance family descendants in 2010.

AND SO THE STORY BEGINS:

Walter Henry Dance was born Mar. 17, 1887 at 43 Rockingham St., Newington, London, England. His father was George William Dance (a Grocers assistant) and mother Mary Ann Minter. At the time of his birth, he had an older brother and sister, William and Ada, twins aged 9 years as well as a sister Edith Annie aged 3. Another sister Emily Ellen was born in 1893.

Less than three months after his father died on March 14, 1896, Walter now aged 9, was admitted as a student to Barnardo's Leopold House in London. His elder brother and sister now aged 17 were both in service. There were two sisters at home, Edith aged 12 and Ellen aged 3. Ellen was afflicted with enlargement of the brain and the mother Mary Ann was in very poor health and could not look after all of them.

While there were many maternal and paternal relatives listed in the report, it would seem that none could take him into their homes. This must have put quite a strain on the newly widowed Mary Ann and thus she decided that Barnardo's School for Boys might save her son from running wild in the streets. Walter received a good start to his education during his 15 months at Leopold House.

IN THIS EDITION

Sir George Beardshaw
celebrating his 100th
Birthday - page 4

Our Andrew Simpson -
Growing up in rural England
in 1851 pg 5

Lori Oschefski - Introduction
to Emma Stirling

2023 Beacons of Light
Pg 10

National Truth and
Reconciliation Day - pg 11

Release of our new
medallions - pg 12

The Forgotten Home Child -
Special offer
pg 12

Launch of our next phase of
the quest for an official
Government of Canada
apology
- pg 13

Early in 1897, brother William enlisted with the Essex regiment for a better life. And on May 9th, 1897, Walter's eldest sister Ada (twin to William) married George James Taylor. Could this be a home for Walter now, with family?

But Mary Ann must have decided that Walter should have an opportunity for a better life in Canada, because on September 23, 1897 he sailed to Canada on board the SS Labrador. He arrived in Quebec on Oct. 2nd and then arrived at the Winnipeg Branch House on Oct. 25th. He stayed in Manitoba until Dec. 2nd, when he was assigned to a Mr. Wm. N. Stiles in Innisfail, The Territories of Alberta. Walter traveled on the CPR for each leg of his journey in Canada. He arrived at the train station in Innisfail on Dec. 6th, 1897 to be met by Mr. Stiles.

By January 10, 1898 Mr. Stiles reported to Barnardo's: "boy who done first rate for a while will not hardly do anything. Will not cut a stick unless watched and although treated with every kindness, threatens to run away".

Walter's mother had died on November 29th, 1897. We wonder if the sad news had just caught up with him and he realized fully that he would never see her or any of his family again.

At first there is a note in the Barnardo's file indicating that Walter may have to return to England. But on Feb. 18, 1898, Mr. Stiles writes that he has procured a new situation for Walter with Mr. James Brown and wife Mary also of Innisfail.

Articles of Agreement were drawn up and agreed to by Mr. James Brown. This agreement was for board, lodging, washing and necessities to April 1, 1903, with 2 terms of nine months of school in each year. At the end of the contract \$100 would be payable to Walter.

Mr. Brown has been noted in the history of Innisfail "Candlelight Years" as raising good horse stock. The Barnardo reports record Walter as "likely to do well and is a remarkable fine horseman, and is able to handle any animal on a ranch". Thanks no doubt to Mr. Brown.

In April of 1903, correspondence to Barnardo's indicate that Walter (now age 15) wished to have his \$100 in wages paid directly to him rather than sent to Barnardo's first. Walter wished to invest in cattle and "put them out on shares". Mr. Brown approved this plan and Barnardo's agreed. Walter had also re-engaged with Mr. Brown for 6 more months at \$10 per month.

In October, Walter writes to Barnardo's to advise he "has given Mr. Brown his receipt for the funds paid him. He expresses thanks for the medal awarded to him".

Correspondence between Barnardo's, Walter and Mr. Brown show that Walter leaves Mr. Brown in October of 1903, returns in June of 1904 and then leaves again in December of 1904 but continues to visit quite often. Walter also is said to be "working with a Hay pressing gang and getting along very well". He continued to be in touch with the Brown family for a long time.

In late 1905, a letter from Walter to Barnardo's indicates that the Mistress of the place he is now working is looking for another boy. We believe this might be Joseph and Mildred Simmonds, as we find Walter with them in the 1906 census. Walter still maintains his postal address as Innisfail, Alberta.

While the next few years are blank, we find Walter crossing the border in 1909 and going to Spokane. The US 1910 census shows a Walter Dance in a Yakima boarding house working for the railroad.

Then we know nothing of his whereabouts until his marriage to Laura May Latam in 1914. A copy of their marriage certificate shows they were married in Calgary, Alberta

While we do not know where or how Walter met

Laura May, we have a New Year Letter Card postmarked from Calgary, Dec. 24th, 1910? addressed to Laura Latam in Red Deer, signed from Walter. So they knew each other for a while before marriage and we can only guess that he may have met her while working on farms up and down the CPR corridor between Red Deer and Calgary.

In August of 1915, a son Walter Leonard (known as Len) was born to Walter and Laura May in Calgary, Alberta. They were residing at 116 - 9th St., N.E. Calgary, Alberta. We have been to the address and that entire block has been rebuilt. However the next block has not been touched, and looks much like it might have back then.

We think the family remained in Calgary for a few years as we have a postcard from Laura's brother John Wesley Latam, while serving in France during WW1 with the CEF.

Around this time a letter to the family dated March, 1918 and signed "your loving sister Ada" provides us with a look back at one of the family members in England. Ada tells of the rationing and of having 3 daughters and one son who was wounded in France. She also notes that another sister Edith has been visiting one of Laura May's brothers who had been wounded and in hospital in London. Ada also



Walter, Laura May and Len Dance, 1915

states that she has not heard from her twin brother "Will" for a very long time. This was not a good sign.

About 1919 we think that Walter was in the garage business in Bowden, Alberta. It was here that a second son Garfield was born November 16th, 1919 and died Jan 7th, 1920. We found confirmation in copies of the "Innisfail Province" held in the museum archives at Innisfail.

They also spent some time in Bassano as we have the birth certificate of a third son being born. This was William Melvin Dance (known as Melvin) born March 3, 1921. Again there is a gap of years, but we have some indication that they lived in Spokane in 1924 and 1925. We found Walter listed in the city directory and working for the railroad.

When Laura May receives the news that her mother is ill, the family packs up and moves back to Alberta about 1927 settling in Bremner.

It is here that Walter operated a garage at the SE corner of Hwy 16 and Hwy 21. The building used was a former school moved there. This area is now a cloverleaf where the roads meet.

Bremner was also the residence of Laura May's father Francis Melbourne Latam and many of her siblings. Francis was once the Bremner storekeeper and mailman. Many of the Latam family are buried in the Clover Bar Cemetery.

It is in Bremner that Len and Melvin went to school. Melvin died in Bremner, sometime in 1932 aged 11. His grave marker is also in the Clover Bar Cemetery.

In December of 1935, Walter leaves Bremner and begins a long drive to Vancouver, BC. He drives south through Calgary, then over to Spokane, on through the Snoqualmie Pass to Seattle and then he reaches Vancouver on December 29th. This is quite an undertaking especially in December. He spent Christmas in Spokane with friends.

In the summer of 1936, Len (now 21 years) and his mother Laura May drove to

Vancouver taking the same route with a stopover in Spokane, but in much nicer weather to join up with Walter. The family is together again.

Walter and Len had some land in south Langley, BC just off the Brown Rd. where they raised chickens and sold eggs. Laura May was a live-in housekeeper at a large home in the Fort Langley area.

One morning sometime in late 1937, Walter drove into Vancouver to sell the surplus eggs and never came home. A few days later, a letter arrived for Len indicating where the car was parked and enclosing the keys. Walter did not say where he was going or when he would be back. To the best of our knowledge, he was never seen or heard from again by any family members. No one knows what happened.

So from nothing, we now have a more complete picture of his life, both the sad and happy moments as with all families. We have a number of wonderful pictures of a very handsome man with very sad eyes.

While Walter's story ends here, we have found descendants of the brother William Dance who was killed in WW1, and in 2010 were able to meet a member of the family and again in 2014 meet others. We remain in touch.

July 18, 2020 at 9:19 pm

The final chapter can now be written. In late 2016, when new search parameters were introduced, we were able to find about 12 death certificates for "unknown". Eliminating by ethnic origin, region where body found and age we narrowed it down to just one. Right location, right age and right timeline. We feel we are now able to say that

Walter Dance committed suicide, age 51 about July, 1938 in New Westminster, BC. He is buried in an unmarked grave in Surrey Central Cemetery, Cloverdale, BC. May he rest in peace.



Home Children Canada President Lori Oschefski and her Grandson Logan on hand to celebrate Sir George Beardshaw's 100th Birthday!



100th Sir George Beardshaw turns 100!



Sir George's 100th birthday was marked on September 10th with a special celebration held by the Queen's Own Rifles in London, Ontario. There were many dignitaries on hand, including Home Children Canada directors to mark this special occasion.



There were many birthday messages sent, including a personally written card from Queen Camilla and one from Barnardo's.



Sir George, on his birthday, with sent by Home Children Canada on behalf of our members.



On hand, all the way from Holland was Robert W. Catsburg, author of Polder Fighting, The Battles for the liberation of Oostburg, 1944. This book is dedicated to George.



Below, George with his niece, nephew and their families



Growing up in rural England in 1851

By Andrew Simpson, Author of "The Ever Open Door"

British Home Children the story from Britain

Visit Andrew's Blog: <https://chorltonhistory.blogspot.com/>



My BHC was an urban kid.

He was born in Birmingham, lived briefly in Gravesend before spending a big chunk of his childhood in institutions in Derby.

His playgrounds were the streets, bounded by the railway line, a canal and a mix of factories, warehouses, and small iron works.

For most of us that will be the experience of our British Home Child, and so we gravitate to those smoky industrial landscapes when researching the background to our family member.

But it is well to remember that many who were migrated during the last quarter of the 19th century into the next, were just a generation away from the land.

Mine moved sometime in the 1830 or 40s from the countryside into the town, and like many of us they would have been "ag labourers", working on farms and market gardens in an occupation which was plagued by seasonal unemployment and back breaking work.

And despite living in the countryside, their living conditions were often as bad as those in the terraced houses and closed courts of all our urban centres.

Nor should we forget that some of the children sent to Canada were from rural backgrounds.

And so, with that in mind I have decided to explore one such country village in the 1850s and in particular the experiences of young children, many of whom will have been the parents or grandparents of a BHC.

The village was Chorlton-cum-Hardy just four miles from Manchester which had become a major centre of textiles and engineering and had seen its population rise from 9,000 in 1700 to 90,000

by the beginning of the next century. Contemporaries referred to it as "Cottonopolis" and one historian as "the shock city of the Industrial Revolution".

Chorlton-cum-Hardy was a young community with children out numbering all other age groups.

But they were vulnerable to many different illnesses. Amongst the very young in the warm weather, they were prey to diarrhoeal infections and in late winter and early spring from respiratory ailments while school children could die from diphtheria and scarlet fever. Added to all of this they might be prone to mumps, skin diseases, sore throats chicken pox, coughs, colds, bronchitis and

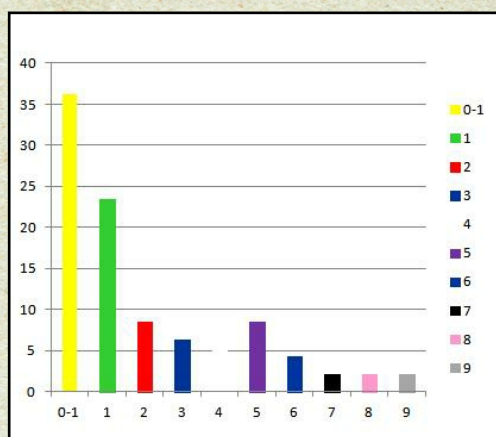
influenza. So, during the first half of the 19th century of the 27 children under the age of two who died during this period 18 succumbed in the warm or hot months.

You can get a sense of this by trawling the census returns and looking for the missing children who didn't make from the 1841 to the next ten years later and then there are the parish burial records which detail young lives caught short.

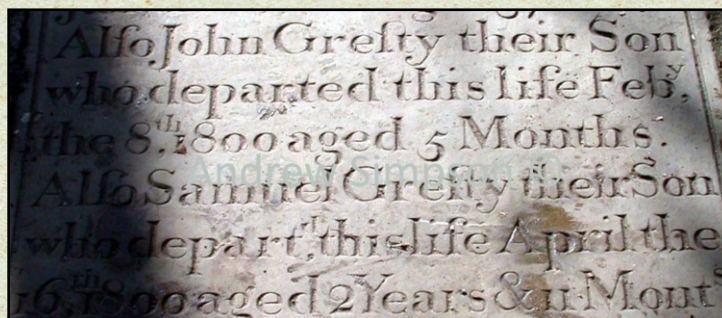
But it is the parish gravestones which more than any document brings you face to face with the awful sadness of child mortality. William Chessyre

was a month old when he was buried in 1831, Mary Bell Whitelegg and John Gresty just 3 months and William Cardrew Birley son of the Reverend William Birley and his wife Maria only five months. Some families were unluckier than others. The Holland's lost three of their children between 1840 and 1841 and James Gresty buried his two young sons and his wife in just a year.

Such events were common enough in both rural and urban settings and were partly at least due to the quality of drinking water which in our case was getting worse as the 19th century wore on, so that by the 1880s most of our



% of deaths of child burials in the parish church between the ages of 0-9 years



wells had according to one observer either dried up or were contaminated.

And if they survived to school age the provision of education was at best patchy and limited in what was taught.

In 1847 our village school was just two years old. It was the second National School here in the township and replaced the first which had been established in 1817. These were church schools and provided elementary education for the children of the poor. They were the product of the National Society

which had begun in 1811 and aimed to establish a national school in every parish delivering a curriculum based on the teaching of the church.

Ours was a fine brick building which could hold three hundred children which was just as well because we had 186 children between the ages of 4 and 15. Most were at school, a few were educated at home, and fifteen were already at work.

The youngest at just ten was Catherine Kirby who was born in Ireland and worked as a house servant, the rest did a mix of jobs ranging from errand boys to farm worker and domestic service. There were slightly more boys than girls and most were born here.

There may even have been more for when William Chesshyre interviewed their parents in the March of 1851 some children were described as farmer's sons and daughters. They may have been at school, or they may have already begun to work alongside their parents on the farm. And as we shall see just because parents described their children as scholars was no guarantee they attended school or even if they did that, they were there full time.

The national picture was one of children even younger than 10 being employed. A labourer's child could earn between 1s.6d and 2s. a week which was an important addition to an agricultural family's income and in the words of one government report was *"so great a relief to the parents as to render it almost hopeless that they can withstand the inducement and retain the child at school"*

But in some cases, this child labour would have been seasonal. In one Devon school up to a third of boys over the age of seven were absent helping with the harvest, while in another school during the spring upwards of thirty were assisting their parents sow the potato crop and then dig it up in the summer. It was just part of the rural cycle and which one contributor to the Poor Law Commissioners on the employment of women and children in agriculture

in 1843 said would at least teach children *"the habit of industry,"* which fitted in with the belief much held in the countryside that *"the business of a farm labourer cannot be thoroughly acquired if work be not commenced before eleven or twelve."*



There is every possibility that with so many market gardens in the township some of our children would have been called into help when needed.

And yet it may be that most of our children were in school for at least some of the time because while parents did remove children out of

season to help with other farm work or in the case of girls look after siblings, *"in the greater number of agricultural parishes there are day schools, which a considerable number of children of both sexes of the labouring class attend."*

Nationally in 1851 it was estimated that 61% of all children were in a school. But actual attendances varied enormously. In private schools the number of children attending on any particular day was 91% of the number belonging to the schools, while in public schools which catered for the labouring classes the number in attendance was 79%. Which the authors of the report on education calculated amounted to a loss of half a year's schooling.

No attendance figures have survived for the township. The best we have are attendance figures for south Manchester which formed the Chorlton Poor Law Union and included our school. These showed that on Friday March 29th, 1851, the attendance was 83%. This is not a good attendance figure judged by the expectations of our modern schools and can still be misleading. March is a quiet time in agricultural areas and a record taken in the summer or at harvest time might be more revealing of how many of our children had walked through the school doors.

But for those who did attend school the experience could be varied. The core was a rigid and austere style of teaching which nevertheless could provide young minds with the wonder of the wider world. There was strict discipline where lessons were delivered with the help of monitors who were trained on the job, and much of this would focus on learning by rote. Standing on the green outside the school the passerby would have heard the repetitive chanting as row by row the children repeated the prepared text. And if he had strayed inside, hanging from the walls around the room were embroidered verses extorting the virtues of thrift and hard work. Despite this grim scene there would have been much that could still stimulate eager imaginations. There were the stirring tales

of faraway lands and the dramatic episodes from the Old Testament which had the power to transport the young listeners.

The curriculum ranged from the basics of reading writing and arithmetic to languages, music, drawing and geography. The degree to which these were taught varied from subject to subject, and there was a gender split, so while almost all boys and girls were taught the 'three Rs', 10% of boys received tuition in mathematics compared to 4% for girls. In contrast 46% of girls were instructed in industrial occupations compared to 3.6% of boys.

These opportunities were defined by the fault line of class. Both boys and girls from private schools were more likely to study both modern and ancient foreign languages, mathematics, and music than their counterparts in the public sector.

It was with some concern that the report to Parliament of the 1851 Census on Education commented that.

"To find in the schools a large proportion of the children learning the mere rudiments of knowledge, while a small proportion only is engaged upon the higher branches, must be looked upon as an unfavourable sign, when it is remembered that, of those who appear to have engaged in the more advanced departments of instruction, a majority were probably belonging to the upper and middle classes." And that *"the children of the working classes go to school while very young, and remain but a very scanty period."*

This was complicated by the wide differences in the age groups that walked through our school doors. Of those who might have attended in the March of 1851, under a quarter were five or younger, just over a half between the ages of 6 and 10 and more than a quarter from 11 to 15.

The conventional way of dealing with such a spread was as we have seen to employ monitors or pupil teachers alongside the schoolteacher. These were abler students who passed on what they had already learned. To some it was a way of training working class children for responsible jobs, and a cheap way of extending primary school education. In 1851 a male National School teacher received a £1 a week, his female counterpart 6s [30p] and a monitor or pupil teacher just 1s [5p]. But there were critics who pointed out it encouraged larger class sizes and were no substitute for better trained teachers.



Renshaw Sampler 1877

We have no names of monitors or pupil teachers for our school until the 1860s. If they existed here in the township in the late 1840s, they chose not to describe themselves as such to the census enumerator although it is more likely they were just recorded as scholars. The school may also have had a second teacher employed to teach the infants, but again their names have not come down to us. Only in 1850 do we find that Eliza Johnson who taught the infants was employed alongside James Bugden who taught the older children. The following year John and Ann Ellison were in the school on the green and were still there in 1852. Not till 1861 do the names of pupil teacher appear in the records. These are Elizabeth and Martha Gresty aged 16 and 13 who lived up at Martledge with their parents who made a living as market gardeners.

As ever the concern also revolved around standards. The authors of the 1851 census on Education fell back on the simple test of how many people were able to sign their marriage certificate as against those who put a cross or mark. The "test of marriage marks" was not in itself an over accurate form of assessment as the report pointed out *"the art of writing is with great facility forgotten by the poor who find no application for it, while for various causes some who can write nevertheless decline to sign the register."* It did however show that the number of people signing with a mark had progressively been dropping from 1839.

There was also a gender divide, with more boys attending in south Manchester than girls. So, while there were 3,286 boys on the books of the 35 public schools only 2,028 girls were registered. But here it seems there was little difference.

By any standards it is a grim record of the lives of those who were the parents or grandparents of our British Home Children.

Sources;

Report to Parliament of 1851 Census of Education of Great Britain, 1854
Reports of the Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the employment of women & children in agriculture 1843

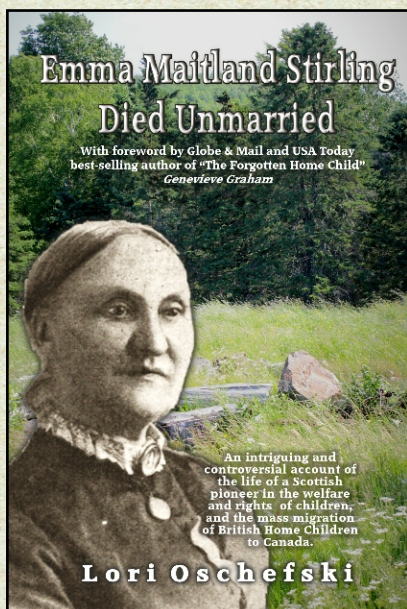
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% of deaths of child burials in the parish church between the ages of 0-9 years

Gresty family gravestone, 2011

Renshaw Sampler, 1877

Village school portrait, undated



Emma Stirling - Died Unmarried

Introduction By Lori Oschefski

In the mid-nineteenth century, a widespread movement of social intervention into the lives of impoverished people emerged in Scotland, England, and Wales. This Victorian phenomenon, known as "child-saving," was fueled by growing public awareness and outrage at child abuse, neglect, homelessness, and domestic violence.

To house neglected and orphaned children, institutions such as orphanages, houses of refuge, reformatories, industrial schools, industrial training ships, and day schools were established. However, with very few laws or regulations governing this movement, and little understanding of the physiological needs of children and the importance of the family unit, child-saving became a phenomenon of hysterical proportions.

The Industrial Revolution caused a severe economic crisis, leading to overcrowding in cities as rural people migrated in search of work. Economic collapse of the family unit left many parents unable to afford raising their children. To address this, legal duties were placed on parents to provide for their children, and if they could not, authorities were authorized to put the children to work or apprentice them out. Institutions became overwhelmed with "neglected" children, prompting philanthropists to seek alternative solutions. Emigration to colonies, particularly Canada, emerged as a viable option in the mid-1860s, relieving Britain's child poverty problems.

Many families were forced to choose to send their younger children to benevolent organizations, such as Emma Stirling's. This helped to ease their financial burdens and prevent the entire family from being forced into poorhouses. When researching Home Children, it is common to find cases where some children in a family were sent to these organizations, while others remained with the family unit.

The vast and promising lands of Canada were seen as offering children the potential for better opportunities and a chance for a better life. The distance from Britain to Canada, and the ocean in between, would sever ties with the children's old life, providing them with a "clean slate" to begin anew. As a result, the decrease in population in British institutions meant that more children could be "saved," allowing philanthropists such as Dr. Thomas Barnardo of England to adopt an "ever open door" policy for admission into their care. Between 1869 and 1948 over 100,000 vulnerable children were removed from the UK and brought to Canada as Home Children to become domestic servants and farm workers.

Looking back at these programs through a

contemporary lens, we now recognize them as fundamentally destructive to the family unit, causing countless children to suffer. These programs involved forcibly removing children from their homes, countries, cultures, and any hopes of being reunited with their families. For many, this separation was permanent, as they were forever cut off from their parents and siblings. The philanthropists of the time often cited moral rights above the law and viewed the parents and families of these children as obstacles to their supposed child-saving practices. As a result, many parents were wrongfully and permanently separated from their children.

The paper *Who Cares? Welfare and Consent to Child Emigration, from England to Canada, 1870–1918* points out that *children placed with a charity or in a workhouse [were] identified as 'friendless', belonging to nobody, deserted or orphaned, even if they still had relationships with close family.* They further state that *emigration was designed to permanently sever familial relationships and parental control over the treatment of their children.* Jeremy Seabrook, in his 2018 book "Orphans: A History" describes this separation of the poor from their families as "forced orphaning." This term captures the devastating impact that emigration policies had on families, as parents were often unable to provide for their children and were forced to give them up to institutions that would send them away to other countries.

Home Children were not placed in loving homes, compounding the psychological effects they suffered. These vulnerable children were used as servants and laborers, cast alone and dotted across the Canadian landscape from sea to sea, with no understanding of what was happening to them or what had happened to their families. The Canadian government left the oversight of the Home Children to sending organizations in the UK, which often left the children with nobody to help them in times of trouble. Many children were abused, neglected, starved, frozen, and murdered, and many acted out in pain by burning barns, damaging property, and even committing suicide or murder themselves.

Home Children lacked basic fundamental family skills that are typically learned in a nurturing home environment. Consequently, their suffering has been generational, and their descendants, especially those of the first and second generations, continue to keenly feel its impact. Children who grew up with parents or grandparents who were Home Children often describe them as distant, unloving, authoritative, and sometimes abusive. Unfortunately, no alternative family unit was offered to the Home Children, although some fortunate children did get good placements, but these were not true "homes". Dr. Barnardo's words resonate with this reality: "we are not so young and unsophisticated as to imagine that the farmers take our boys for love.....the primary object of the farmer in taking a boy is that his services may be useful to him".

In his book, Seabrook emphasizes the devastating impact of family loss on children, which would have been even more pronounced for Home Children due to the absence of an alternative support system. This loss greatly hindered their

ability to form relationships and move forward in life, compounded by the confusion surrounding their role and expectations. Seabrook also notes that many Home Children struggled to express their deepest emotions, unable to open up even to those closest to them. *Many also, he wrote, speak of an inability to show even the deepest feelings which lie choked within, unable to find expression in the presence of the loved other.*

Emma was born in Scotland near the beginning of the child-saving movement. The practice of child migration was already well established when Emma began her life's work of child-saving. At first glance, Emma appears to be a trailblazer. However, a closer examination of her practices suggests that she was copying ideals that had already been developed by others.

During her formative years, Emma had extensive exposure to poverty due to the proximity of her family home to the poor fishing community of St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland. This exposure, coupled with a strict Protestant upbringing and multiple family losses, profoundly impacted her life.

Despite being born into wealth and privilege, Emma rejected the interests typically associated with her social standing and instead developed a deep passion for helping impoverished children. With her inherited wealth and this passion, Emma became a global pioneer in promoting children's rights. Her work spanned Scotland, England, Canada, and the United States of America.

Emma's activities were not without controversy. At times, her methods were deemed injudicious, resulting in her contributions being overshadowed, overlooked, and ignored. In particular, Emma's involvement in child-saving practices led to the emigration of approximately three hundred children to Canada, a practice that is now widely regarded as unethical. Ultimately, Emma was forced out of Canada when her home was deliberately burned down.

My fascination with Emma Stirling began during my early years of working with British Home Children (BHC). BHC refers to children who were transported from the UK to Canada between 1869 and 1939. Historically, these children were known as "Home Children". However, in the 1990s, Perry Snow, a Canadian author and Home Child advocate, added the term "British" to distinguish between the children transported from the UK and children born in Canada who lived in children's homes, also called "Home Children". From the early 1940s to 1948, the Fairbridge Farm Schools was the only remaining organization bringing children to Canada, using the term "Child Migrants". In this book, the children will be referred to as "Home Children" to be inclusive.

These schemes, as they were historically called, were controversial programs at best. The UK and Canada seemed to be at odds with their reasons for transporting the children out of the UK, and also Canada's reasons for accepting them. Concerns for the wellbeing of the children were voiced in the UK but silenced by the powerful societal influence of the sending organizations. Canada wanted the children as a cheap, desperately needed source of farm labour, but opponents of the schemes decried the children as defective degenerates who would contaminate the good Canadian gene pool. Follow-up with the children after placement in Canada was inadequate, leaving them at great risk of harm and abuse. Some of the sending organizations simply did nothing to oversee the welfare

of "their" children in Canada, while others had better intentions but were hampered by the vast lands and harsh winters.

Emma became involved with the migration of children to Canada in the early 1880s as an outspoken advocate for the rights of children. On the surface, it appeared that Emma, unlike most of the sending organizations, truly cared for the welfare of her children. Her decision to emigrate children to Nova Scotia, Canada in 1886 was coupled with her decision to move there herself so that she could personally oversee the welfare of her wards - or so it seemed.

As I delved deeper into Emma's story, a more sinister side began to emerge. Despite the commandment "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," Emma engaged in dishonesty and deception.

Emma was a prolific writer who published many books, booklets, and articles throughout her life. Her activities were always of interest to the press in Scotland, Canada, and the United States because there were many layers to Emma and her life's work. She was a woman ahead of her time. Emma's story ignited a passion in me and called me to share her whole story - the good and the bad. In 2007, I became involved in the work with the Home Children when I discovered my family's deep connection to these children. In 2012, I formed Home Children Canada (formerly the British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association) as an international platform for research cataloguing information, and sharing our families' stories. Emma sparked my interest at that time, and the more I discovered about her, the deeper I was drawn into her story. I thought many times that somebody should write a book about this woman, and that somebody became me. I feel strongly that Emma's story needed to be told, with the hope that this book will spark greater interest and studies not only of her work, but also of the child migration programs as a whole.

Despite the controversies surrounding Emma Stirling and her work, she deserves recognition for her pioneering efforts in the welfare of children and animals. Emma was a trailblazer who courageously spoke out in a male-dominated world and tackled difficult societal issues with unwavering determination.

Her selflessness and commitment to helping those in need set her apart. Emma's accomplishments in Scotland, Canada, and the United States spanned several decades, and she made a lasting impact on the communities she served.

It's time to give Emma Stirling her rightful place in history and celebrate her contributions to society. In this book, we delve into the fascinating story of Emma's life and work, shedding light on her remarkable achievements and unwavering dedication to making the world a better place. Despite her significant contributions, this woman received little recognition for her philanthropy. Her generosity and dedication make her one of the greatest philanthropic women of all time.

"Emma Stirling - Died Unmarried" is available to purchase on Amazon. It is available in Canada, the United States, the UK, Australia and many other places world wide!



Beacons of Light 2023 confirmed as of 13 Sept 2023

September 28th, 2023

15 days to go...and counting! Keep them coming!

NOVA SCOTIA

- Illumination - Nova Scotia Legislature- Halifax
- Illumination of Halifax City Hall - Halifax Regional Municipality
- Proclamation - County of Antigonish
- Illuminate of Waterfront Lighthouse - Town of Digby
- Proclamation - Cape Breton Regional Municipality
- Illumination - Big Fiddle - Port of Sydney Waterfront, Sydney, Cape Breton Regional Municipality
- Social Media posts - Municipality of the District of Yarmouth
- Illumination - Astor Theatre - Liverpool
- Dakeyne Farm's Sunflower Maze 1137 Hwy 1, Mount Denson - HCC handouts to visitors

NEW BRUNSWICK

- Downing Street, Downtown Place Avenir Centre - City of Moncton
- Illumination - Legislative Building - Fredericton, NB

ONTARIO

- Proclamation, Belleville Sign & Belleville Bridge Light up & Quinte Sport and Wellness Centre QSWC, Belleville
- Illumination of Kingston City Hall
- Illumination Springer Market Hall, Kingston
- Proclamation - Quinte West (formerly Trenton)
- Proclamation - Prince Edward County
- Trent Hills Library Display and Presentation, Trent Hills
- Illumination - Clock Tower & Flag raising, Trent Hills
- Lighting the Veterans Skyway Bridge - Quinte West
- Lighting the Quinte West Sign in RWB - Quinte West
- Proclamation & lighting the falls - Napanee
- Proclamation - Bancroft
- Proclamation & lighting of fountain - Stoco Lake, Tweed
- Proclamation - City of Ottawa
- Illuminations - City Hall & Hazelbrae Monument - Peterborough
- Illumination - Centennial Fountain - Little Lake
- Proclamation - Clarington
- Proclamation - Port Perry, Township of Scugog
- Proclamation - City of Whitby
- Proclamation - Pickering
- Proclamation - Markham
- Proclamation - Milton
- Proclamation - Collingwood
- Proclamation & flag raising 27th - Aurora
- Proclamation & Illumination of Fred A Lundy Bridge & Riverwalk Commons & Flag Raising - Peace Park -Sept 25-29, 2023 - Town of Newmarket
- Illumination - CN Tower - Toronto
- Illumination - Clock Tower - Mississauga
- Illumination & Proclamation - waterfront - Oakville
- Brampton City Hall Clock Tower, Brampton
- Illumination - Pier & Proclamation - Burlington
- Illumination - Hamilton Signature Sign - Hamilton
- Sunflower placing on BHC graves - Grimsby
- Illumination - Downtown Bridge Lighting - Welland
- Proclamation - Town of Bancroft
- Brock University - St. Catharines
- Proclamation - Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Illumination - Civic Centre - Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Illumination of City Hall & Proclamation - Windsor
- Proclamation - London
- Illumination of Niagara Falls - [Live Cam](#)
- Proclamation & Flag Raising - Town of Fort Erie

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

- Illumination - City Hall (yellow) & social media posts - Summerside
- Illumination - City of Charlottetown

NEWFOUNDLAND

- Lets get one shining here!

QUEBEC

- Illumination - Montréal Tower, Montreal - (Info shared on Social Media)
- Illumination - Canterbury Christchurch - Canterbury
- Flag Raising 11 am - Musee Missisquoi Museum - Stanbridge East
- Proclamation - Township of Melbourne

MANITOBA

- Manitoba Museum of Human Rights - Winnipeg (Information to be shared via social media)
- Manitoba College of Social Workers - Article in their newsletter - Winnipeg
- Lt.-Gov. of Manitoba - Anita Neville - Yellow Lighting of Government House - Winnipeg
- Illuminations - Esplanade Riel & Winnipeg sign - Winnipeg

SASKATCHEWAN

- Proclamation & Library Event - Prince Albert
- Frenchman Butte Heritage Centre, Frenchman Butte
- Proclamation - City of Saskatoon
- Museum display - North Battleford Library
- Museum display at Lloydminster, AB/SK
- Proclamation - North Battleford, SK
- Illumination of entry way at city hall- City of Regina

ALBERTA

- Calgary Tower, Calgary
- Illumination of Telus Spark Center, Calgary
- Olympic Plaza, Calgary
- Reconciliation Bridge - Sept 21- Calgary
- Proclamation & Illumination & presentation by Mayor - City Hall - Red Deer
- Illumination - Light House - Sylvan Lake
- Leduc Library Display, Leduc
- Illumination - High Level Bridge - Edmonton

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- The Bastion - City of Nanaimo
- Lighting various locations throughout town & website link - Lady Smith
- White Rock Pier - White Rock
- BC Place Illumination - Vancouver
- Illumination of Vancouver Convention Center - Vancouver
- Illumination - Science World - Vancouver

USA & INTERNATIONAL

- Buffalo and Fort Erie Peace Bridge - Buffalo NY
- Ringing the Bells & Prayer Service - Christ Church Cathedral Oxford England -
- Possible Australian participation - TBD

PRESENTATIONS, EVENTS & TABLE DISPLAYS IN SEPTEMBER

- Sept 14th - Sir George Beardshaw's 100th birthday celebration - Last known British Home Child survivor & veteran
- Sept 14th - GHS Archives volunteer, Ev Page will be presenting at 7:30 pm - Livingston Activity Center, Grimsby
- Sept 16th - North Battleford Library, SK- Susan Hillman Brazeau
- Sept 17th - Sylvan Lake Church - Mill Bay, BC - Presenter - Patricia Skidmore at 1:30 pm
- Sept 19th - Home Children Canada Director, John Jefkins - presenting at Probus Club - Richmond Hill, ON
- Sept 20th - Sackville Hill Senior Centre - Hamilton ON - Sept 20th - 1pm - speaker Joan Knighton
- Sept 23rd - Joint Presentation with Susan Hillman Brazeau & Joan Brewerton - Prince Albert, SK
- Sept 23rd - Edmonton - Presentation & display table - Alberta Genealogy Society 50th Anniversary conference - speaker Kim Farrell with guest author Genevieve Graham
- Sept 28th - Great & Share - Lloydminster, AB - with Susan Hillman Brazeau
- Sept 28th - Table display & information - St. Albert Place (city hall) St. Albert, AB
- Sept 30th - British Home Child Day Event - 1:30 pm - Peterborough & District Sports Hall of Fame at the Peterborough Memorial Centre - Ivy Sucee presenting (Hazelbrae Barnardo Home Memorial Group)
- Oct 6th - Frances Morrison Central Library- Saskatoon, SK - Presenter Susan Hillman Brazeau
- Oct 19th (Presentation to the Mayor of Red Deer, Alberta, and members of his Council and Staff)



Our Beacons list continues to expand daily, and we are excited to share some special landmark additions to our list this year. For the first time since our inception in 2019, Australia will be participating in our Beacons event, thanks to the heartfelt efforts of Home Children Canada member Nicki Horne. [Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Merredin, Australia](#), will be lighting a prayer candle and dedicating Mass for the day in support of our cause.

Additionally, [The Ranger Red's Zoo & Conservation Park](#), located on the banks of the Murray River in Western Australia, will leave a special light on in the zoo as a gesture of support.

Nicki has reached out to numerous city councils regarding participation in our Beacons celebrations. While they may not be able to join us this year, she is sowing the seeds for future involvement. It's important to remember that our Beacons of Light began with a single person, Kim Crowder, and one bridge, the High Level Bridge in Edmonton, Alberta.

Furthermore, Nicki has initiated a Facebook group for child migrants who were sent to Australia. We invite you to stop by and visit her group.

Stay tuned for an updated list of participating locations, which will be posted before September 28th. We are grateful for the growing support for our cause and look forward to a successful Beacons event this year.



Every Child Matters

HWDSB
Indigenous
Education

Art by Devyn Perton, CC:ROSE member and HWDSB student.

Every Child Matters Event - September 28th

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, located in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, is proud to announce a special community event titled "Every Child Matters: Walking Together." This gathering is co-hosted by Cultivating Community: Reclaiming Our Spaces in Education (CC:ROSE) and HWDSB's Indigenous Education department, in collaboration with Survivors of the Mohawk Institute Residential School, the Mohawk Village Memorial Park, and the Woodland Cultural Centre. As part of this celebration, they will also be recognizing British Home Child Day.

Every year, on September 30th, Canada observes the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This significant day pays tribute to the survivors of the residential school system, along with their families and communities. This public commemoration plays a vital role in the reconciliation process in Canada, deepening our collective understanding of this historical trauma and encouraging ongoing reflection across the nation for generations to come. It is a poignant moment to honor the memories of survivors who endured horrendous abuses at residential schools and the families who continue to bear the scars of intergenerational trauma. We remain committed to respecting and upholding the cultural sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, as well as the principles of self-determination for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

Within Home Children Canada, we have diverse backgrounds and stories. Suzanne Pearson, our Diversity Director, known as Little Rock Standing Hawk Woman, traces her paternal lineage to a family that served the Hudson Bay Company during the fur trade era and also experienced residential schools. They are descendants of the Shuswap people in Williams Lake, BC. Our President, Lori Oschefski, has children who are Métis descendants from Huron Wendat heritage. Both families are also direct descendants of Home Children. We believe in celebrating the rich tapestry of Canada's history as well as engaging in acts of decolonization that support all Canadians to rediscover, revalidate and restore lost identity, family and cultural ways of knowing.



Hazelbrae - Barnardo Home Memorial Group

Peterborough, Ontario

Will be hosting a British Home Child Day Event
Saturday, September 30, 2023

1:30 p.m. at the

PETERBOROUGH & DISTRICT SPORTS HALL OF FAME
located at the PETERBOROUGH MEMORIAL CENTRE
151 Lansdowne Street, Peterborough, Ontario

Enter through the East Doors of the Memorial Centre

Parking is available at the Memorial Centre

NO CHARGE

Ivy Sucee will be present to share her vast
knowledge of BHC based on her 25+ years of research
and helping others find family members.

It was Ivy who spearheaded the drive to build the Hazelbrae-Barnardo Monument.



PLEASE CONFIRM IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND

The Hazelbrae Barnardo Home Memorial Group will be hosting a special event on Saturday September 30th. Please contact Patricia Bronson at pbronson@cogeco.ca if you are planning to attend.



In recognition of British Home Child Day, The Forgotten Home Child is being offered at a discounted rate from September 18 until October 1st. You can purchase either the Audio book for \$5.99 or the E-Book for \$2.99 Click here to order:

<https://www.kobo.com/ca/en/ebook/the-forgotten-home-child>



We are pleased to announce the release of our new medallions for the British Home Children. These medallions can be attached to surfaces using an epoxy glue.

Follow this link to order:

https://homechildrencanada.com/shop?fbclid=IwAR202r0hl9Cu5C84hFGC2ocHD6yPaULCAwwHE_9VWV7yKIjOCTs2OIKEk9w

Read Today!

E-Book \$2.99

Audiobook \$5.99

The Forgotten Home Child

GENEVIEVE GRAHAM

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *TIDES OF HONOUR*

Coming Soon!

SNEAK PEEK

ORDERING SITE GOES LIVE
SEPTEMBER 11TH

\$50
INCLUDES SHIPPING

- 3 inch diameter
- cast zinc
- weather-coated
- limited stock

Anticipated delivery late October 2023

Home Children Canada are pleased to announce the commencement of the next phase in our pursuit of an official Government of Canada apology.



Our efforts began with the initiation of official petitions in 2012, which garnered significant attention through readings in the House of Commons. In a significant milestone, in 2018, Gilles Duceppe, a descendant of a Home Child, successfully championed a formal apology in the House of Commons. Buoyed by this achievement, we are steadfastly advancing our call for an official apology from the Government of Canada itself.

Home Children Canada in collaboration with MP Yvon Baker, Member of Parliament for Etobicoke Centre, are proud to reopen our petitions for an official Government of Canada apology.

Our concerns encompass a myriad of critical issues, notably:

- Education, Service in the Wars and proper recognition, Representation in our national museums, Funding for a museum/archive/research centre/archive, Reels of unreleased file of our ancestors held by Library and Archives Canada, Access to our ancestors' records

Why an apology is important: It signifies official recognition that a grave injustice was inflicted upon the Home Children and Child Migrants as a collective group, involving the fundamental violation of their human rights through the separation of these children from their families, friends, culture, and country. Additionally, it acknowledges the damaging stigma that was unfairly imposed on the entire group, with some members of our medical community and members of our House of Commons derogatorily referring to them as "guttersnipe" and "British trash," among other derogatory terms. Regrettably, many Home Children carried this burden of shame with them throughout their lives, even in death.

Our government's response to this historical injustice was woefully inadequate, with minimal action taken until 2010, and even then, the efforts were quite limited. We are conspicuously absent from our Nations museums and our school curriculums. Shockingly, as late as **2021** there were still articles being published that portrayed Home Children in a negative light, perpetuating untruths and disparaging comments. This underscores the pressing need for national recognition and education to shed light on the true nature of these child migration schemes.

Our government, both during the programs and in the years that followed, failed these children. It bears responsibility for not ensuring the widespread dissemination of this story, neglecting to incorporate it into the educational system, and failing to properly honor the children whose sacrifices played a significant role in building our nation.

An official apology would bring national clarity to this chapter of our history, granting it the recognition it deserves. It would attract media attention and provide numerous opportunities to promote this narrative and continue educating Canadians about the vital role these little nation builders played in Canada's development.

It is essential to remember that Canada was built upon the contributions of Home Children and Child Migrants, a crucial facet missing from our Canadian history narrative. To the residents of Canada, we kindly urge you to consider signing our apology petition. This effort goes beyond a simple "I'm sorry." It's about solidifying this chapter in our Canadian history and ensuring widespread education about the hardships endured and the invaluable contributions made by the Home Children to our nation. Your support will help preserve this vital aspect of our heritage for generations to come.

[Click here for residents of Canada to sign our official Government of Canada online petition](#)

[Click here for non-residents to sign a version of this petition](#)