



HOME CHILDREN CANADA

July 2022 Newsletter



We are excited to be moving back to in person events and presentations. Our 2016 Memory quilt had it's first public showing in 2.5 years this past June.

If you would like to book a speaker or exhibit please contact us at
Homechildrencanada@gmail.com

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Heroic Home Child

The John Pridmore Story 1897-1917

with excerpts from the novel Cyprus-on-Thames and based on real events

By Angela Jean Young

His headstone at La Chaudiere Military Cemetery in northern France reads simply: 838370 Private J. Pridmore, 4th Can. Mounted Rifles. 11th April 1917. He was one of the 1100 British Home Children to die fighting with the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War.

It was during research for my biographical novel Cyprus-on-Thames that I discovered the name of John William Pridmore on Ancestry.com. He was definitely a member of my London Pridmore family, but for some reason he had been placed in the West Ham Union Workhouse at a tender age by someone called Amelia Bateman, and that didn't make sense. That's when I encountered Kathy Mazzeo of Missouri, Amelia's great granddaughter. Believing Amelia had adopted John, she had included him in her family tree in America. She assumed that John had gone to Canada with her great grandmother after the Batemans emigrated in 1906. But this was not the case.

John William Pridmore was born in England in 1897, to Eliza Pridmore, my great grandfather's sister. Unmarried and unable to care for her son, she was told by her father that arrangements had been made for the child to be 'taken on' by a local family – the Batemans. Harsh though this may sound, it was not uncommon for it to happen. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, three generations of the Pridmore family struggled to survive in the poorest parts of the East End of London. Eliza went on to have seven more children after John. Six of them were born out of wedlock, three of whom were sent to Canada under the Home Children Scheme.

Wednesday, 14th July 1897
Eliza looked around the cheerless lying-in-ward at the West Ham Workhouse Infirmary, with its

high windows that you couldn't see out of, and wondered how long she was going to be allowed to stay. It had only been a few hours since her boy had been safely delivered, but the wardswoman, a pauper herself, already had her eye on Eliza's spot.

She picked up her baby from his shoe-box sized crib and drew the curtain around the bed for a moment's seclusion. He was a sweet little thing, perfectly formed, and as he eagerly latched on to her breast, she decided to call him John. John William – his second name being the only thing he'd ever inherit from his real father.

Sunday, 25th July 1897

John William's baptism was a sombre affair. The handful of people standing around the font looked in no mood for celebration. Henry had finally located a family willing to take on a healthy child and had broken the news to his daughter. As luck would have it, the child was going to remain in St Luke's Square, with a good, honest family – the Batemans.

John William Pridmore opened his eyes wide but didn't make a sound as the holy water dropped on his forehead. A few days later, Eliza handed him over to Charles and Amelia Bateman. They told anyone that asked that he was their adopted son, but there was no formal arrangement and they never changed any part of his name.

John was looked after by the Bateman family until Charles Bateman died suddenly. Knowing that she would be unable to make

ends meet, Amelia Bateman took the decision to emigrate to Canada with her family to start a new life farming land in Manitoba. But that meant leaving John behind because she was not his legal guardian.

Sunday, 24th June 1906

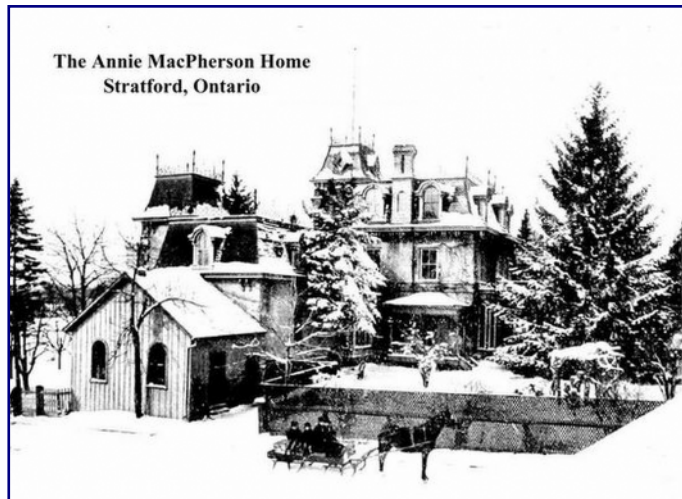
Eliza Pridmore was horrified to see Amelia Bateman on her doorstep and hurried her inside. It was quickly established that taking John back was out of the question. Amelia tried to explain that as John's unofficial foster mother there would be questions asked if the family tried to take him to Canada, even assuming they were in a mind to do so, but it made no difference.

With a heavy heart, Amelia left John in the hands of the West Ham Union Workhouse. For the Batemans, walking down the gangplank of the SS Kensington alongside other anxious, excited immigrants, their future was hopeful. The children missed John and didn't understand why he had been left behind in West Ham. Amelia simply thanked God that they weren't still there too.

Kathy Mazzeo was saddened to hear that John remained in the workhouse until 1909. Independently of the Batemans he, too, found his way to Canada, having been put forward as a suitable candidate for resettlement in one of the homes run by Annie MacPherson, the founder of the Home Children Scheme back in 1870. To tackle the problems of childhood poverty, destitution and moral decline in London, thousands of children had already been despatched in this way. It had been going on for forty years. What happened to the foundlings after placement was often poorly monitored and while some farmers genuinely cared for the boys, others just saw them as cheap labour.

It was early July when John put his name to a piece of paper saying that he agreed to go to Canada. In fact he couldn't wait to go. They'd told him that instead of being confined in a workhouse, he would be living on a farm, earning his keep out in the fresh air. The SS Tunisian left Liverpool on the 29th July, breaking through the fog in the St Lawrence river nine days later. Baptist layman William Merry led the children to the Grand Trunk Railway Station. It was to be another twelve hours before they would fall into bed at the receiving house in Avon Street, on the outskirts of Stratford, Ontario.

Six weeks later, John Pridmore was standing in line waiting to see if he'd get picked out for farm work. He'd mastered how to milk a cow and to harvest hay, and the hard physical work was toughening him up. Notices had appeared all over Grey County, Ontario, announcing the availability of another batch of destitute boys from London, making clear that these children had come from the workhouse and not straight from the streets. That made a difference. Having had a degree of moral teaching and a



token education, they were more likely to be snapped up.

Chester Hammond went up and down the line of boys. He needed an agile specimen, not too heavy – one who'd be able to shin up the apple trees without bruising the fruit. He picked the tallest lad with blond curly hair and a cheeky grin.

John was lucky, the Hammond's were God-fearing, abstemious people who treated him well.

Another boy from a neighbouring farm was called 'street rat' by his master and told to make himself scarce if anyone visited.

Following the outbreak of the First World War many young men queued at Owen Sound to volunteer for military service. In May 1915, a 7,000 strong crowd watched a huge parade with four bands sending off the 37th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to Europe. Six months later, Grey County's own 147th Battalion was formed. John enlisted on 30 November and began training, for which he received fifty cents a day. Describing himself as 'a Methodist farmer, aged 18 years and 4 months, 5 feet and 4 and three quarters inches tall, of fair complexion with blue eyes, dark hair with a scar on his chin', he declared Andrew Holland of Shallow Lake, Ontario, as next of kin. Andrew was 75 in 1915. He and his wife were of Irish descent.

It was while John was marching around the streets of Owen Sound that he first met Stella Moore. On 25 September 1916 he wrote his will, leaving his estate to her should he not return from the war. Before sailing from Halifax on the SS Olympic that November, 838370, Private John Pridmore, of the 147th Battalion, changed his next of kin and guardian to Mrs J Moore, of Park Head, Ontario, Stella's mother.

John arrived in England on 20 November 1916 and began training at Shoreham. Keen to find members of his Pridmore family, he made contact with his cousin Ernest (my grandfather) who was a tug crewman with the Port of London Authority. Time spent with Ernie and his wife Ada proved invaluable for all concerned.

Now a member of the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, he arrived in France on 17 February 1917. Within days he was writing to Ernie:

February 28th, 1917

Hello Cousin,

Well here I am finally in France! I'm now with the 4th CMR and we arrived in strength on the 22nd. Wish I could say I was strolling down the Champs Elysees, but no such luck. I'm sitting in my billet where once there were farms so I should feel at home – hard to tell that from how it looks now, though. Constant rain doesn't help, of course.



More letters followed from the trenches south west of Vimy Ridge:

March 15th

I'm writing this in a real dugout, this time near the front line so please forgive the scribbling. Me and my mates sleep on the steps squashed like sardines. Things are still quiet with

us but we'll probably be seeing some action soon.

April 8th

Just a few lines before we go over the top tomorrow. We're resting in our billets after days of wire cutting.

The battle for Vimy Ridge proved a decisive, though costly victory which helped to turn the tide of the War. Tragically 3,600 Canadians died and 7,000 were wounded. The 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles lost sixty-two men in the actions of 9, 10 and 11th April.

Two weeks later the following letter dropped through Ernie's postbox:

Newlands Farm,
Park Head, Ontario
18th April, 1917
Dear Ernest,

It is with great sorrow that I have to inform you that your cousin John was killed in action at Vimy Ridge, in France on 11th April. I felt duty bound to write and tell you of this tragic news as John made me his next of kin prior to setting off for England.

I wanted you to know that John was extremely well liked by everyone in our family and we had become very fond of him. He was kind and thoughtful to Stella and they were a devoted couple. I was only too happy to give them my blessing when I heard they were planning to get married. John never spoke a great deal about his childhood, but I know that he didn't have much stability and being dispatched off to a foreign country must have been distressing. It all makes his courage and fortitude seem all the more remarkable to me. The poor boy wrote a will before going to the front, leaving everything he had to Stella. This, it turns out, is just his uncollected pay, bless him.

He will be missed, but rest assured not forgotten.

*Yours sincerely,
Jeanette Moore*

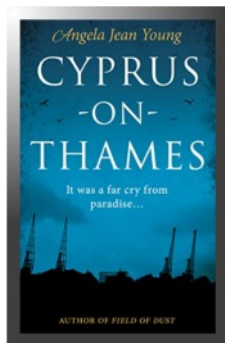
John was initially reported as 'in hospital wounded', but this was later altered to 'killed in action' on the 11 April.

He is buried alongside his CMR mates in La Chaudiere Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais.

His unclaimed pay of 160\$ was eventually forwarded to Stella Moore.

* * *

© 2022, Angela Jean Young
Cyprus on Thames can be
[purchased on Amazon.](#)



George Beardshaw

**Last known surviving
Barnardo Home Child and last
surviving WW2 soldier of the
Queen's Own Rifles**

Our beloved George Beardshaw, our last surviving Barnardo child in Canada, is now the last survivor of the living Veterans of the Queen's Own Rifles, serving in the Second World War. While serving with the Queen's Own Rifles, George reached corporal status with the 8th platoon.

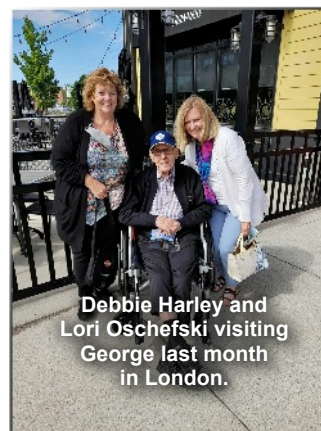


Near the end of the war, George was taken prisoner of war in Deventer, Holland. After "a bit of a schemozzle" George was captured and spent the final 28 days of the war as a Prisoner of War. That was George said "another fine mess." (Source: Ian Gillespie, The London Free Press)

We are privileged to call this man our friend and have had to pleasure and honour of listening to his many stories of his service and his experiences of being a Barnardo Boy in Canada.

George is now 98 years old and has recently move to the Parkwood Veterans Home in London, Ontario. We are very pleased to find him very happy, looking great and enjoying his new home. Many thanks to his friend, Judi Helle for her outstanding care of George and for making this transition comfortable for him.

[Click here to read George's story](#)



The scarf Ms. Oschefski is wearing was made by George for her at the Veteran's Home

Saying Goodbye to Kay Lorente

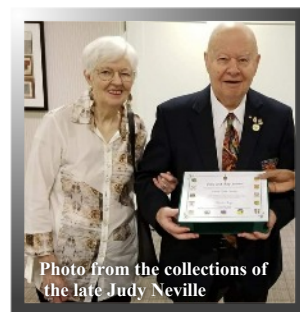
Home Children Canada is saddened to learn of the passing of Kay Lorente. Kay selflessly assisted her husband David in the groundbreaking work he did for the Home Children. David also recently passed away.

The Lorente's hold a special place in the hearts of many descendants and certainly the Home Children they knew personally. Their work opened doors for the migrants and their families that previously remained shut tight.

We have lost some of the most important BHC movers and shakers, recently, especially the last few years. They leave us with big shoes to fill.

Home Children Canada is committed to continuing this work. Our recent changes will help ensure this happens.

RIP David an Kay. Forever remembered



Leaving your mark the lot of my family in the 19th century

By Andrew Simpson

Historian & Author of "The Ever Open Door - 150 Years of the Together Trust



How easy we take writing our name. Even in an electronic age we still sign for things at the door, commit to a legal agreement and perhaps even sign a letter.

All of which made me think again about my family and how such a simple task was denied them.

In the summer of 1848 George Lowe died of TB. He was the grandfather of my great grandmother which takes me back in an unbroken line to the mid nineteenth century.

His death plunged a family already on the edge of poverty into real hardship. His wife Maria was just thirty-one and she had five children the youngest of whom was just twelve months old.

No records have survived of how they coped, but I know she took in lodgers and the children all went into the textile industry as soon as they could. She had a series of jobs including collecting old linen and in her later 50s as a charwoman.

Maria was illiterate as were all her daughters. They each left their mark instead of a signature on official documents. In the summer of 1848 Maria had left her mark on the death

certificate of her husband and twenty-seven years later Mary her daughter also put a cross when registering the death of her mother Maria.

And all the girls each left their mark on their wedding certificates.

As shocking as this seems to us today it was not unusual. In 1840 when Maria was bringing up her daughters over 30% of men signed the marriage register with a mark.

The level of literacy was in part measured by the test of the marriage mark. The authors of the 1851 census on Education fell back on this simple test of how many people

were able to sign their name on the marriage certificate as against those who put a cross or mark as a judge of the level of literacy.

They were gratified that the number who put a cross had been falling but felt that it was still not good that well over a third of the population accented to marriage with a mark.

In Derby* there were sixteen schools in the 1850s ranging from those catering for the well off to those aimed at catholic and Methodist families. But for the rest it would be a National School. These were church schools and provided elementary education for the children of the poor based on teaching of the church.

There were two of these not far from where Maria lived. What was offered was fairly basic ranging from reading writing and arithmetic, and maybe 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', few studied modern languages. Boys were more likely to be taught mathematics than girls while more girls than

boys were instructed in industrial occupations.

Nor were these gentle places of education. There was strict discipline and 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 outside the school the passer-by 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.

All of which I guess meant there was not much incentive for the girls to attend. And attendance was a problem, so while in 1851 in the private sector the number of children

attending on any particular day was over 90% in public schools which catered for the labouring classes the number was much less.

For families like the Lowe's the priority was bringing money into the house and so inspectors often commented that children were away from school and at work.

Not until 1870 was there universal provision for primary school education for working class children and even then it was still possible to gain exemption for even this limited schooling.

Listening to my mother's experiences of school things had not changed over much by the 1920s. She had attended Traffic Street School as did my great grandmother sixties years earlier. Traffic Street School had been built in 1879 one of the new Board Schools of which many are still around today.

They were grand constructions, well-built of brick, with high windows and were warm in winter and cool in summer. By comparison their replacements which went up in the 1950s may have looked better but had plenty of their own problems.

The huge amounts of glass in these new wave schools made classrooms very hot in the summer and cold in winter and presented us with all the distractions due to being able to look out and see the passing world.

But as grand as Traffic School was it did not impress my family. Mother was regularly hit with an ebony ruler across her hands as an infant and during grandmother's time attendance still only stood at 89%.

Still my mother came out of Traffic Street able to read and write and later wrote plays which were published. The descendants of the Lowe's went on to university and some have become teachers. How easy it seems for one generation to make a living in a world denied to earlier members of their family.

Picture; the mark of Maria Lowe on the death certificate of George Lowe, 1848, the marriage mark of Maria Lowe in 1864, daughter of George and Maria 1864, from the collection of Andrew Simpson, pictures, of women at work in a silk factory, A Day in a Silk Mill, Penny Magazine, 1843, and Traffic School, 1991 from the collection of Cynthia Wigley

**Derby lies on the banks of the River Derwent in the south of Derbyshire, and was a market*

town, which grew during the Industrial Revolution with the development of the silk industry, and became a centre for rail motor car and aero engine manufacture.

***1851 Census of Education of Great Britain, 1854*

More from Andrew can be found at:

British Home Children the story from Britain,
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1624406061006317>

www.chorltonhistory.blogspot.com



FLORENCE EDWARDS

By Sandra Williams

It was a surprise to learn through a DNA analysis that I had a second cousin in Canada. It turns out that Florence Edwards, my Great Aunt, was separated from her London family by Barnardo at the age of 11 and shipped to Canada to work as a domestic servant. My new-found cousin, Kathy Dawson, is Florence's granddaughter. Grandfather never mentioned his family and I presume this was through a sense of shame about what happened to them. Florence was one of the 80,000 children shipped to Canada between 1867 and 1917.



Images from: Making Connections, Barnardo's, 140 Balaam Street, London, E13 8RD, England. or contact through e-mail: makingconnections@barnardos.org.uk.
Provided by Sandra Williams.

Typical ages were between 10 and 14. A number of charitable organizations were involved in what they saw was saving children. The largest of which was Barnardo who sent 24,854 children across the Atlantic (Parker, 2008). While some of these children were orphans living under Poor Law Guardianship in Workhouses many had families as was the case with Florence.

Kathy also knew little about her grandmother, who hid her BHC background, and has been researching what happened to her in Canada and I am doing the same in London focusing on what led to the severing of Florence from her roots.

It seems that a combination of events led to the breakup of the family. If circumstances had been different, Florence could have remained in London. The evidence I have comes from a number of sources: research on a genealogy site, Dr Barnardo records, London Metropolitan archives, Booth's maps of the London Poor and a photo album that belonged to my grandparents. Census data revealed the names of my great grandparents and their children, some of whom I could identify from the photographs. I also found two items of correspondence: a Christmas card from Florence and a postcard from Albert. Roy Parker's forensic research on the shipment of poor children to Canada has provided the context (Parker, 2009).

As I began to find out more about Florence and her family, I noted how unstable their life was. The 1911 census offered the information that her mother had given birth to 9 children, 5 of whom lived. Infant mortality was high and this is not out of the ordinary but it is still tough to read.

Further research revealed how often the family moved. Each of the 5 living children was born at a different address, was baptised in a different Anglican church and regularly changed schools.

1894-1914: From Marriage to Family Breakup

My great grandparents (George 1873-1918) and Emma (1877-1961) marry in 1894. George is a fish fryer and Emma a housewife. They are both from London families living in Clerkenwell (George) and Covent Garden (Emma). Both areas are in central London where there is a mixture of wealth and poverty. Booth's colour coded maps of the London Poor show where different classes of people lived. They are accessible on the London School of Economics website providing useful information about the locations where the family lived. The relevant categories are:

Lowest class: vicious, semi-criminal
Very poor: casual, chronic want.
Poor: 18-21 shillings a week for a moderate family.
Mixed: Some comfortable, others poor
Mixed: Fairly comfortable. Good ordinary earnings.
Middle Class: Well-to-do.
Upper Middle Class and Upper Class:
Wealthy

At times they live perilously close to the lowest class but most places are mixed with their dwellings sited in poor or very poor streets.

In 1896, Emma gives birth to their first child, Elizabeth, known as Bessie. At the time the family are living in Red Lion

Street (now Britton Street) Clerkenwell in the centre of London close to Smithfield Market. The area was the setting for Fagan's Den in Charles Dicken's 'Oliver Twist'. However, according to the Booth maps the area was mixed and the street the Edwards family lived in was poor. Bessie is christened in St. John's church which was a base for the Knights of St John and later is where the St. John's Ambulance Society was founded.

Two years later in 1898 my Grandfather John (known as Jack) is born. They are now living in Great Wilde Street, the same street where Emma's family live, in Covent Garden. According to the Booth map this is very poor area of chronic want with some streets in the lowest class. He is baptised at St. Giles-in-the-Fields in Soho.

After this comes the third child, a son, Albert who is born in 1900 at Lloyds Row, Clerkenwell: a poor street. He is baptised at St. Marks' church. Bessie then Jack are attending Myddleton Street School. At that time the school leaving age was 12.

When Florence is born in 1904, the family have moved further East to Talavera Place, Haggerston, Hackney where she is baptised at St. Augustine's church. This is a poor area. Bessie and Jack are now at White Lion Street School, Islington. They move again to Charlotte Place, nearer to Islington a year later in 1905. After that a big move to South of the river where the children attend another school, Plough Road.

The consequences of this movement is instability with no close community to build up a relationship either with a

church congregation or neighbours. In addition changes of schools mean further disruption with less connection with teachers and any friendships the children make. When I compare this to my grandmother's family, who were equally poor working class, I find more stability in that they were living at the same address for long periods of time. George's parents too seem to have remained in their flat in Portpool Place, off Leather Lane. So the question arises as to what was happening. Was this something to do with George's work as a fish fryer? Where they unlucky with their landlords? Were they not paying the rent on time?

The major move happens around 1906 which cannot be underestimated for Londoners, when they move south of the river Thames to Battersea. Between 1906 and 1911 they have moved another 3 times in that area. Their last living child, Annie is born in 1909, baptised at St. Peter's Vauxhall. Sadly she dies of TB in 1924.

As referred to above according to the 1911 census all the family are together but this is for the last time. After that a series of events leads to a family break up and the subsequent fate of Florence.

Most of the evidence comes from the records of Barnardo. According to them, Emma takes to drink, staying in the pub for long periods and is then ashamed to come home. She meets another man and leaves her husband taking their youngest daughter with her. George then returns to Clerkenwell with Bessie and Florence. It is unclear what happens to the sons. The Barnardo records mention Albert but not Jack. This is what I have been able to piece together about the children and their father.

John (Jack) Edwards

This is what we do know about Jack. On June 1st 1912 he has left school and is working for Southern Railways as a trainee signal boy at Tulse Hill. His starting wage is 7 shillings a week, raised to 8 shillings three weeks later. This is looking like a promising start but then on August 9th, just 3 months into his job he has 'left without notice'. This indicates that something significant has happened and could be the time that George and Emma separate. There is now a gap of 2 years with no record of where he is. He reappears on 29th January 1914 when he joins the Navy as a boy in signals. There is now a full Navy record of the ships and submarines he served on. He marries in 1920, leaves the navy in 1928 joining the Post Office. It is a secure position with a pension. He has two children born 1920 and 1924 and later man-

ages to put down a deposit on a house in Stoke Newington, North London, where he lives until his death in 1971.

This shows that given a chance, members of the family are able to work, save money, maintain a marriage and bring up their children. I assume that the small number of children is due to new knowledge about birth control.

Albert Edwards

According to Barnardo, in 1914, Albert is in an Industrial School in Poole, Dorset. These schools were for children who were deemed to be in danger of criminality and were sent away to boarding schools. The school in Poole was for girls but there was a boy's school in nearby Blandford. There they trained boys for useful work which included musical education as preparation to become bandsmen in the armed forces. I have found a number of photographs of Albert in a bandsman's uniform so this is his likely trajectory. Further evidence of military service is provided after Barnardo forwarded his address to Florence in 1918: 4th Dorsets in

Londonderry/Derry, N. Ireland. I also have a postcard sent in 1922 to Jack from Aldershot, a huge army base, on his return from service abroad. A final piece of evidence is a photograph of Albert in summer army uniform holding a rifle which has useful information on the back. He is in the 2nd battalion of the Royal Fusilliers in Landikotal, a British army base on the North West frontier near the Kyber Pass. Unfortunately there is no date but his regiments were there in 1925.

Elizabeth Edwards (Bessie)

Bessie's story is initially not a happy one. After the move back to Clerkenwell, George is no longer a fish fryer but is working long hours on a stall in Leather Lane market mending pots and cutting keys. Bessie finds work in a nearby factory while Florence is at school. The 1913 address is in Somerstown, a poor area located behind St. Pancras Station. On the 4th November 1913 Bessie gives birth to Richard, out of wedlock, in the local Workhouse. The father also lives in Somerstown but his name is not given. A few days later on the 6th November the child is baptised in St. Pancras Old church. Subsequently, Bessie leaves the area, apparently abandoning her child in the workhouse. But in 1920, she re-appears in Greenwich, South East London, marrying William Carter after which she gives birth to two boys. She has recovered from a poor start

and lives a family life as wife, mother and grandmother. I have been in touch with another newly discovered second cousin, Janet, who has shared some memories of her grandmother, Bessie. Hence it seems that, like Jack and Albert, she too was able to make her way in the world.

Florence

After Bessie has gone, George is left alone with Florence. He is working long hours on his market stall and is close to destitution. He moves to a place close to Leather Lane and then back to Somerstown where he rents one room. Florence is attending Manchester Street School, Bloomsbury but is largely left to her own devices. This is when she comes to the attention of Barnardo who consider her in need of rescue. The first thing I note about their records is they have the wrong year of birth. They state she was born in 1903, thus assuming she is 12 in 1914. In fact when she is admitted to Barnardo on 16th March 1914, she has just turned 11. They report that she has pilfered from school, played truant and is in moral danger. Her parents give permission for her to be sent to Canada. George writes that he '...does not want to stand in her light.' This is one of the saddest pieces of evidence I have read so far.

There are before and after photographs taken by Barnardo held on their files. On the right is the scruffy but feisty girl looking straight at camera while on the left she has been cleaned up but is looking far less bold. Already she is being tamed. She leaves for Canada on 10th September 1914 on the *Corinthian*, arriving on the 22nd after which she is taken to the receiving home, Hazelbrae in Peterborough. She has 13 placements as a domestic servant. She never sees her family again.

British Home Children in Canada, like Florence, had very low status. They were seen by many as children from the slums of England's major cities with a strong sense of the dregs being '...dumped' in Canada as cheap labour, cheap labour that was likely to end up in its prisons and reformatories.' (Parker, 2008:155). Sensationalist articles in 'The Toronto Mail' fuelled prejudice supported by doctors with unfounded opinions of syphilis:

'Any family would be extremely careful and injudicious to allow one of these little waifs to come into the family, because we know that the syphilitic (sic) taints, although the child may appear healthy, may be carried to the other children of the family playing with them and

they become diseased in the same manner.' (Parker, 2008: pp162,163).

As such it is no surprise to learn that Florence hid her London roots. In the 1921 census it states she is an Irish Presbyterian arriving in Canada as an adult in 1919. This is replicated in her marriage certificate when again she is described as an Irish Presbyterian.

George dies in a Poor Law Hospital in Greenwich in 1918. Emma re-married after the death of George and dies in 1961. Bessie's first son, Richard, has appeared on shipping lists 1929 as an officer's boy in the Merchant Navy and later as a steward. It seems he is doing well after such a poor start.

I would argue that given more opportunities in London, Florence would have been able to stay in school, keep in touch with her family and make a life for herself. And this must be the case for so many of those children who were taken from their families. Charities who wanted to help children living in dire poverty might have taken an interest in the reasons: poor and insecure housing, low rates of pay, unemployment, inadequate health care plus low horizons of expectations of what the poor had to offer. Canada may well have been a place of opportunity, but that was for consenting adults who had made a conscious decision to emigrate. This was not the case for the thousands of children who made their way alone to a new and very different country.

References

Parker, Roy (2008) Uprooted. The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867-1917
LSE Booth Maps of the London Poor :
<https://booth.lse.ac.uk/map/14/-0.1174/51.5064/100/0>

Home Children Canada is thrilled to receive the Fegan and Home Child related items from the son of Fegan Boy James Oudney, Harold Oudney. James arrived in Canada on 27 April 1913. Among the items are many personal photos, presentation material, books, and magazines. We are now going through the items creating a digital copy and adding these items to our inventory.

It is wonderful to have Fegan related items to add to our collections. Barnardo's tend to dominate the work done simply because of the amount of information available. Thank you once again, Harold, for trusting us with your father's precious items.

New to our collections!



The 1912 Annie Macpherson Trunk of Agnes Phillips

Agnes came to Canada in 1912 through Annie Macpherson to Stratford, Ontario. She married Ernest C. G. Atkins in Saskatoon, Canada. In 1924 the couple moved to the United States and raised a son there. Her first husband passed away in early 1960. Later that year she married Forrest W. Dietrich.

Agnes passed away 22 Jun 1987 in California and is buried in the [Goleta Cemetery, Goleta, Santa Barbara County, California, USA](http://www.britishhomechildrenregistry.com/Person/bhcInfo/75695).

For more information visit our Registry

<http://www.britishhomechildrenregistry.com/Person/bhcInfo/75695>

The James Oudney Collection



Home Children Canada News

A big thank you to Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto, Ontario!



In 2014, in collaboration with Jennifer Harrington, former curator of the Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto, we created a 450 sq foot exhibit that was housed in their McNair Gallery for the past seven years. This was a first, not only for HCC but also for Black Creek, as it was their first community-sourced exhibit. Many of our members loaned their precious family items for this exhibit. The exhibit featured words that described the experience of the Home Children, contributed by our members. Those words could be read throughout the exhibit.

When Ms. Oschefski first approached Jennifer Harrington, she had not heard of the Home Children before. She quickly started reading about the children and our one showcase exhibit quickly grew to the large award-winning exhibit it became.

We were excited to have the son of BHC Richard Palamountain, Mr. Don Cherry, on hand to help open

and launch the exhibit. The worldwide press coverage his participation gave to the plight of the Home Children that day has been unequalled.

In 2016 the exhibit won the Ontario Museum Associations Award of Excellent in Exhibition. Both Jennifer Harrington and Lori Oschefski were on hand to accept this prestigious award.

Thousands of people visited the exhibit, including bus loads of school children. Black Creek has stated that this was one of their most commented on exhibit. It has touched the hearts of many.



Barb Perkins and the cast of HOMECHILD the MUSICAL performing at our 2014 BHC Day celebration at Black Creek. Over the years, BC hosted many events for us. (At no cost for using their facilities!)

This past winter, the exhibit was dismantled and is now closed. Although we are saddened to see the exhibit close, we remain forever grateful to Black

Creek for recognizing that this story needed a platform to tell this story. When Ms. Oschefski first approached Jennifer Harrington, she had not heard of the Home Children before. She quickly started reading about the children and our one showcase exhibit quickly grew to the large award-winning exhibit it became.

Our exhibit may no longer be in the village, but if you are in the Toronto area, we encourage you to visit for an amazing step back in time.



Jennifer Harrington, Don Cherry and Lori Oschefski at the exhibit opening.



The Home Children call us back to Black Creek

As we leave Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto, our Home Children are calling us back. Just discovered in the attic of one of the buildings is this Maria Rye trunk. The curator spotted it and suspected right away it was BHC from the name "Maria Rye". She is correct! We contacted David Hemmings from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum to see if he could help identify this girl. From the writing on the trunk, her name was Mary Self. Mary is not in any of the records that either David or Home Children Canada holds despite extensive searching on both sides.

As David mentioned, some of the ship's manifests have parts that are impossible to read and require them to be rephotographed. He estimates that there are about 200 missing undocumented Home Children that came through Maria Rye.

Nonetheless, finding Maria Rye trunks is difficult, so it is wonderful to know the location of this one. We look forward to working with David to help figure out this mystery.

First in person meeting of the Home Children Canada directors!



Since late 2020 our Home Children Canada Board has worked very hard to obtain our Charitable Status in Canada. This passed one year ago this past June and we have been making great strides in laying the foundations upon which this charity will operate. There is still lots of work to be done and we appreciate all the faith, loyalty, patience, and support from our community and our HCC members. One of the things to be done is to hopefully open a museum and archive - planned for the City of Orillia, Ontario. As well as exploring funding and grant opportunities, we are busy creating a proper inventory of all the artifacts and holdings of Home Children Canada.

This past June, the Directors met for our first in-person meeting and dinner in Etobicoke, Ontario. We missed our Diversity Director, Susan Pearson, as she resided in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We had many things to discuss as well as enjoyed each other's company. Big thank you to Director John Jenkins and his lovely wife Marissa for hosting this dinner.

After dinner, we visited the Park Lawn Monument in the local Park Lawn Cemetery to assess the leaning of the ship's porthole and discuss future restoration plans.

Our directors are on a bit of a well-deserved summer break and will be back at it again in August.

Coming soon!!



Of our most requested items to help promote the story of the Home Children are tee-shirts, baseball hats, and other related items. It is not possible for Home Children Canada to carry an inventory of these items, so we are exploring online store options. We have it narrowed down to two sites and will be opening a trial store soon! We are hoping to have tee shirts available soon for British Home Child Day, September 28th, 2022.

Memorial Stone Plaques

We are now actively seeking companies who can create bronze cemetery stone markers. The International Bronze company from the United States (who made this rendition) are able to make the plaques, however they are costly. We continue to seek alternative Canadian companies.



Beacons of Light 2022

As we move closer to this year's British Home Child Day in Canada, we are pleased to have several illuminations secured so far. These include:

London, Ontario - City Hall
London, Ontario - RBC Building
London, Ontario - Canada Life building
Niagara Falls, Ontario - illumination of the Falls
Toronto, Ontario - Illumination of the CN Tower
Windsor, Ontario - City Hall
Edmonton, Alberta - High Level Bridge
Municipality of Tweed - British Home Child Awareness Day
Tweed, Ontario - Illumination of the fountain in the park
Quinte West, Ontario - Illumination of the Veteran's Skyway Bridge
Quinte West, Ontario - City Hall
Burlington, Ontario - Brant Street Pier
Halifax, Nova Scotia - City Hall
Wirral, England - Leasowe Lighthouse
Trent Hills- Clock tower
Vancouver, BC - BC Place - The Northern Lights Display
Hartland, NB - The Dr. Walter Chestnut Public Library will be illuminated.
Woodstock, NB - Blink Box Signs in Woodstock will display a message for BHC Day.
Hartland, NB - Beacons of Light Memorial Service at Hartland Baptist Church, Hartland, NB, September 28th at 7:00 p.m
Calgary, Alberta - The Telus Spark Museum
Peterborough, Ontario - The Hazelbrae Monument
Peterborough, Ontario - The fountain in Little Lake



Other activities include:

- Plans for a gathering at the Park Lawn Cemetery in Etobicoke
- Our annual BHC Grave Commemoration - hundreds of burial sites of Home Children have been added to our burial index since last year
- Asking the community to leave their porch light on in memory of the Home Children.

If you know of any landmark that illuminates in Canada, United States, the United Kingdom, please apply to them for illumination for the Home Children. Our colours used are white, red and blue - in any order. We have added a letter to this newsletter which may be used.



**"We will leave the light on
for you"
In memory of our
Home Children
28 September 2022**



Join us on September 28th in celebration of our Home Children by leaving your porch light on in their memory. This is something collectively we can do. It is symbolic of the lost children of the UK. In Canada, it is recognition of the children received. We are all vastly proud of the Home Children and what they accomplished. We mourn the many children who died young. If you do not have a porch light, then leave a light in your window for them.

Please post your photo of your lights to our Facebook group at:
www.facebook.com/groups/Britishhomechildren

Or on Home Children Canada's page at:
www.facebook.com/HomeChildrenCanada

In special remembrance of Judy Neville. We are committed to continuing giving these children a voice in your memory.



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Home Children

By: Roberta Horrox

The British Child Migration Scheme officially started in Canada, in 1869, when Maria Rye arrived with sixty-eight children from England. In Canada, the children from this scheme became known as Home Children, or British Home Children. Home Children Canada recently decided to utilize the term Home Children to be inclusive of all the children sent to Canada under this scheme. Maria Rye's idea grew to over fifty organizations sending over 100,000 to Canada between 1869 and 1948. These children ranged from a few months to 18 years of age; the vast majority being sent to Canada to work as indentured labourers and servants. The child migration scheme was supported by both British and Canadian governments which paid organizations for each child sent; additional bonus fees were paid for sending more children; however, no bonus was paid for children from workhouses. This scheme was viewed as a win-win situation, Britain reduced the cost of caring for many poor destitute children; while Canada gained cheap labour for a country that was just starting to expand. Many believe the children were all orphans, this was not the case as only 12% were true orphans; the majority where from single parent families, most often due to a parent dying or from families that had fallen on difficult times. Many factors led to Britain having so many poor, destitute people. These children through no fault of their own were caught up in this tragedy. As child migration to Canada came to a halt, it increased to Australia with approximately another 7,000 children being sent there. Child migration to Australia ended in 1970s. The major difference was that children sent to Australia were most often institutionalized. New Zealand took in 549 child migrants, with fewer children being sent to Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Cape of Good Hope Colony in South Africa.

In Canada, while some of the children were treated well, most were seen as nothing more than cheap labour, some suffered abuse; some cases of horrific abuse resulted in death. Whether these children were treated well, or abused, one thing in common is the feeling of loss; loss of family, friends, country and culture. Some were sent to homes that didn't speak English. Often ¹orphanized, lied to by sending agencies, telling them they were unwanted, uncared for, or that their parents had died, while their parent(s) were told they were adopted by good British families. If siblings arrived in Canada together, they were more often than not separated once they got here. Although checks were to take place on a regular basis, things fell short due to vast number of children, lack of enforcement, shortage of inspectors, the immense distance, and difficulty traveling to remote places in order to perform the checks on the children. When inspectors did visit, the children didn't necessary get to speak to, or even see, the inspector; and if they did it often occurred with the master present. Therefore the children would hide the truth for fear of being reprimanded or further abuse.

Many Home Children were stigmatized by members of the communities they came to live in, often being told they were street rats, guttersnipes and a multitude of other derogatory terms. If a Home Child lived in a community and something bad happened, usually a Home Child was blamed. They had no one to turn too, no one to stick up for them, they suffered in silence. As a survival mechanism they shut down, blocking memories; they became silent of their trauma, silent of any abuse; silent and ashamed of their past, and their lives as Home Children. Most carried this stigmatism throughout their lives, refusing to tell even their immediate family where they had come from. Some children had their names changed or spelling of names became corrupted, while some where too

¹ Orphanized - If one deliberately severs contact between child and family, the child

young to know their correct names, birthday dates, or the names of their parents. These children were not given the necessary documents to prove who they were; this became an issue when they became older wanted to travel, or needed proof of identity such as applying for pension. The children were promised an education, the vast majority did not receive the education promised. Silently and unwittingly aspects of their traumatic experiences were often passed down to their children. As a corruption of their BHC experience, when they became older with families of their own, many were unable to show love or affection for their own children.

During WWI nearly every eligible Home Boy voluntarily signed up for the Canadian Expedition Force; 1,000 Home Boys paid the ultimate sacrifice. The most common date of death was April 9, 1917, the first day of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

In November 2009, then Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, issued an apology for their governments role in the Child Migration Scheme; then in February 2010, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown issued an apology for Britain's role. In Canada, Canadian Parliament declared 2010 Year of the British Home Child. On February 16, 2017 the Canadian House of Commons issued an apology, and on February 7, 2018 MP Guy Lauzon's private member's motion M-133 was unanimous passed declaring September 28th, National British Home Child Day in Canada. To date our prime minister has not issued an official apology on behalf of the government of Canada.

On January 31, 2019, the Government of the United Kingdom issued a press release entitled "Ex-Gratia Payment Scheme for former British Child Migrants" to compensate former child migrants that where still alive on March 1, 2018, "in recognition of the fundamentally flawed nature of the historic child migration policy". In a background Statement, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse Interim (UK) report stated, "The Government has long acknowledged and accepted, assessment at the time of the national apology in 2010 and went further, calling it a 'shameful episode of history' and this failure in the first duty of a nation, which is to protect its children". For the Child Migrants sent to Canada this payment is much too late, as so few are still living.

Home Child organizations in Canada, and Child Migrant organizations in Australia and the UK that have been formed to give voices to all Child Migrants. These organizations were formed to help educate the public on The British Child Migration Scheme, as well as help descendants search and reconnect with lost family members.

"Home Children Canada" is an excellent and widely acclaimed website - CEO Lori Oschefski website <https://www.homechildrencanada.ca> The group also has a facebook group "British Home Child Advocacy and Research" which is based around volunteer research assistance for those seeking help in locating BHC family.

Of note, "The Guest Children" who were children sent to Canada by their parents for protection during the war are not part of this British Child Migration Scheme. The two are entirely different, but often misconstrued.