

# British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association

Written by Lori Oschefski, Book Review by Author Andrew Simpson

## March 2015 Newsletter

Contact us:

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### BRITISH HOME CHILD QUOTE:

**M**ARY WARRINER - I was not happy in my placements. The first place the son on the farm tried to take advantage of me and I fought him off and slapped him. The next place I just got tired of being their slave. So back to the home.

### BHCARA News!

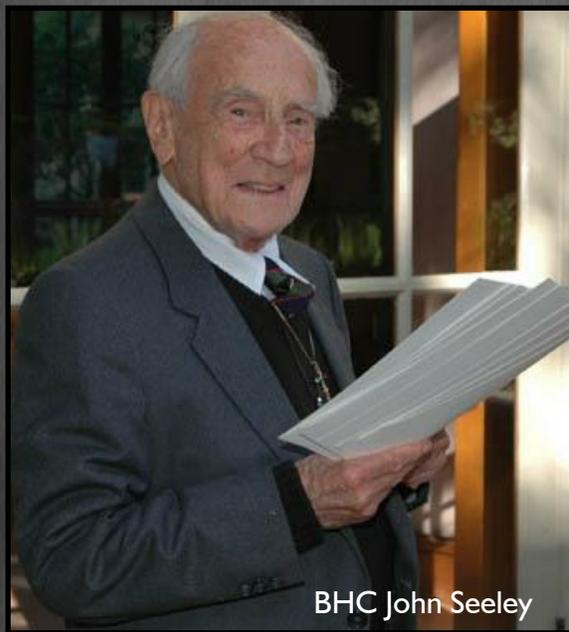
**Canadian Museum of History (formally the Civilization Museum) Quebec** - The BHCARA has just signed a ten year loan agreement with the CMH for items in our collections to be used in a BHC exhibit at the Museum. The BHC will be included in a larger exhibit on immigration in the Canadian History Hall. This exhibit is scheduled to open late 2016 or early 2017. Our Cecil Bennett and Winnifred Paye collection are now at the museum.

**Educational packages:** Our Educational Packages are being distributed among schools throughout Ontario and Quebec! Special thank you to Ronsdale Press for their generous donation of twenty Charlie books written by Canada's Beryl Young! If your at the Ontario Geological Society Conference 2015 in Barrie, Ontario, stop by the BHC SIG table to see one of these packages on display there.

**New to our BHCARA Web site:** A special page with relevant links and contacts for beginning searches of our BHC. Visit [www.britishhomechildren.com](http://www.britishhomechildren.com) .

### Events:

Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm, the Barrie, Ontario Legion will host the Barrie Historical Society and the Simcoe County Historical Association in a special event "Breaking the Silence" BHCARA guest speaker is Author Jayne Poolton Turvey. A listing of the upcoming events can be found at: <http://www.britishhomechildren.com/#!events/c109f>



BHC John Seeley

## Dr. John R. Seeley

**H**erbert John Ronald Friedeberg Seeley was born into poverty on February 21, 1913 in England. Escaping a cruel family situation, he was immigrated to Canada by the British Immigration and Colonization Association. The BIAC objective was to bring selected British boys between the ages of 14 and 18 years and place them on recommended farms where they would be trained in agriculture with the objective that they would become successful farm owners and good citizens of Canada. Founded in 1921, the Association had its headquarters and hostel at 87 Osborne St. Montreal.

John arrived in Canada on August 19, 1929 and was placed out of their Montreal hostel. John would find himself placed on a farm in the Lindsay, Ontario area where he was told he was too demanding when he asked take a bath. His placement family did not have a bath themselves! John liked to spend his evenings writing poetry and worshiped every Sunday at a nearby Presbyterian Church. The minister, seeing something special in John encouraged him to move, on his own, to Toronto. Whilst there, John soon became involved with the YMCA and was encouraged by their members to undertake IQ testing. The tests revealed that despite having very little education John, who had virtually run away to

Canada to escape a dreadful family life, was extraordinarily intelligent!

It took John until he was twenty seven to save enough money to enrol at the University of Chicago where he studied sociology. John served in the Canadian Army during the Second World War where he worked to reform human relations in the Canadian military.

After the war, John returned to Canada where he embarked on a very distinguished teaching and research career. Along with one of the YMCA's major benefactors, Murray Ross, he became one of the primary influences in the creation of Canada's renowned educational institution, York University.

Eventually returning to the United States, he served as Dean of the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions and later became involved in the Disney-funded California Institute of the Arts. John published over four hundred articles and several major books on Sociology.

In 1980, when author Kenneth Bagnell published his best selling book "The Little Immigrants - The Orphans who came to Canada", John, then an academic in California, once again returned to Canada. At the invitation of CBC Television, he appeared with Mr. Bagnell on the show "Front Page Challenge". John passed away in 2007 in California.

### Special Announcement!

**K**ENNETH BAGNELL, AUTHOR of "The Little Immigrants - The Orphans who came to Canada" will be speaking at the Black Creek Pioneer Village, Toronto, at the September 27<sup>th</sup> British Home Child Day Celebration! Information on this event can be found on the Black Creek Pioneer Village web site:

[www.blackcreek.ca](http://www.blackcreek.ca)

[www.kennethbagnell.com](http://www.kennethbagnell.com)

# Book Review by Andrew Simpson

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Read Andrew's blog at  
<http://chorltonhistory.blogspot.co.uk/>

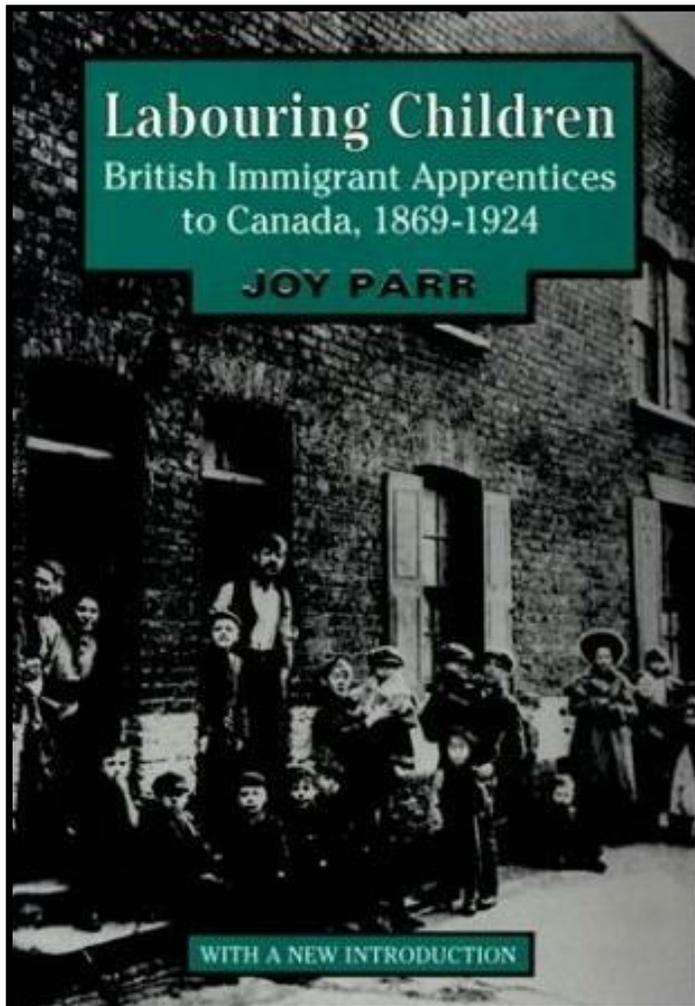
## LABOURING CHILDREN

I am re-reading *Labouring Children* by Joy Parr.\*

Now in British Home Children studies I know I am a later comer and so apologise for all of you who have come across this book already. It did after all arise out of a paper presented by Joy Parr in 1980, was published as a book in 1994 and was reissued with a new introduction in 2000.

So as I say I am a bit behind the door on this one.

It is an excellent "class analysis" by which I mean it sets the British Home Child policy in the wider context of the economic as well as the cultural background of the period.



Here are no jibes at nasty dubious philanthropic individuals. Instead we get a range of explanations rooted in the history of the mid and late 19th century all of which at their heart have that simple question, what should we do with the poor?" This of course had exercised the Establishment from as early as the 17th century with the Elizabethan Poor Law and rumbled on across the next few centuries, and made more urgent with the French Revolution, and the economic hardships caused by frequent poor harvests, cyclical trade depressions, and the growing mechanization of many trades including that of the farm labourer.

So you can take your pick from the Luddites and Swing Riots to the General Strike of 1842, and the vicious State repression. This ranged from the frequent use of the Riot Act, the dispatch of troops to the north as an occupying force and those high points of class conflict as witnessed at Peterloo, and the transportation of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, and on the way took in the Gag Acts, the dismissal of the great Chartist petitions and many more local incidents now lost to history.

And against this back drop Joy Parr examines earlier attempts at shifting the poor and more particularly children out of Britain, and for me a special bonus is a reference to our own three socialist Guardians on the Board of the Chorlton Union who opposed the BHC policy on both ideological grounds and on concerns for the children's safety.

So today in between time in town taking in an art gallery, there are chapters to read on *The Promised Land*, *Family Strategy and Philanthropic Adoption*, and *Apprenticed or adopted*, which I suspect will go to the very centre of the discussions we have all been having as we try to arrive at a balanced understanding of why so many children were sent from these shores just because they were poor, or might have had parents judged incapable of looking after them but really because one of the richest countries on the globe who boasted of the size, wealth and abundance of its empire did not look after its own.

\*Parr, Joy, *Labouring Children British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924*, Toronto Press, 2000

# UPCOMING 2015 BHCARA OPEN EVENTS

## The Barrie Historical Association, The Simcoe County Historical Association and the Royal Canadian Legion, Barrie, Ontario Branch

Tuesday March 24th at 7:30 pm

401 St. Vincent Street, Barrie, Ontario

These three organizations are coming together to present "Breaking the Silence - The British Home Children". The speakers are Lori Oschefski and Author Jayne Poulton Turvey. This event is open to all ages, admittance is free.

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## Mono Mills United Church

Wednesday April 8th at 7:00 pm

60 Richmond Street, Caledon, Ontario.

Speaker: Lori Oschefski.

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## Severn Bridge Woman's Institute Hall

Saturday May 30th 7:00 pm

1035 Southwood Rd, Severn Bridge, Ontario, Canada.

Speakers: Lori Oschefski and Beverley Schulz

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## Join us for a special British Home Children's Descendants Tea, Scones & Open Mic!

### White Lion's Tea House

Saturday June 13th 2015 starting at 1:30 pm

33 Westmount Drive, Orillia Ontario

Join us for tea, scones, creams and fresh fruits! Bring your information and artifacts, meet other descendants and share your stories! Hosts: Lori Oschefski, Carol Black and Beverly Schulz

Ticketed event - \$10 - tickets will soon be available at [www.britishhomechildren.com](http://www.britishhomechildren.com)

\*Tentative book launch date for "Bleating of the Lambs - Stories of the British Home Children" by Lori Oschefski with story contributions from BHCARA members!

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## Muskoka Boat and Heritage Centre

Thursday August 13th 2015

275 Steamship Bay Road, Gravenhurst, Ontario

Speakers: Lori Oschefski and Carol Black

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## Black Creek Pioneer Village - British Home Child Day Celebration 2015

Sunday September 27th 2015

1000 Murray Ross Parkway, Toronto, Ontario

Our second BHC Day Celebration with special guest speaker Kenneth Bagnell, author of "The Little Immigrants - the Orphans who Came to Canada." Event to begin at 11:30 am, afternoon luncheon and tea/open mic. Host for the afternoon tea is Cory-Lee Maddock-Stiles, Editor/CEO of Your Town Magazines. More details and complete schedule to follow, ticket sales to be announced. Canada's largest and most comprehensive long term running BHC exhibit will be opened!

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## Etobicoke Historical Society

October 29th 2015

Montgomery's Inn, 4709 Dundas St W, Toronto, ON M9A 1A8 - See more at:

[www.etobicokehistorical.com](http://www.etobicokehistorical.com)

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Information updated regularly on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bhcara) or at [www.britishhomechildren.com](http://www.britishhomechildren.com)